

## Cultural Setting

### ORIGIN OF MANKIND

There is no direct evidence to show when the first man appeared on the earth and at which place he was born. In fact, the origin of man is shrouded in mystery. But the protagonists of the 'Theory of Evolution' believe that man is the last product of slow evolution of life on the earth. The anthropologists opine that the ancestors of the first man were born in the region to the east of the Victoria Lake in east Africa. The oldest fossils of the ancestors of *Homo Sapiens* (Modern Man) are found in that part of Africa. From this region, modern man migrated and entered into Asia, Europe and the Subcontinent of India around one million years back (**Fig. 13.1**).

### Subdivisions of the Human Species

#### ***Race***

It is difficult to give a precise definition of race. Man is one of most variable tool-making animals, and each man is a distinct individual, differing in greater or lesser degree from each of his fellows. But just as all men have sufficient general resemblance to be classified as human, to a lesser degree, certain groups of man have enough characteristics in common to be classed, somewhat arbitrarily, as races.

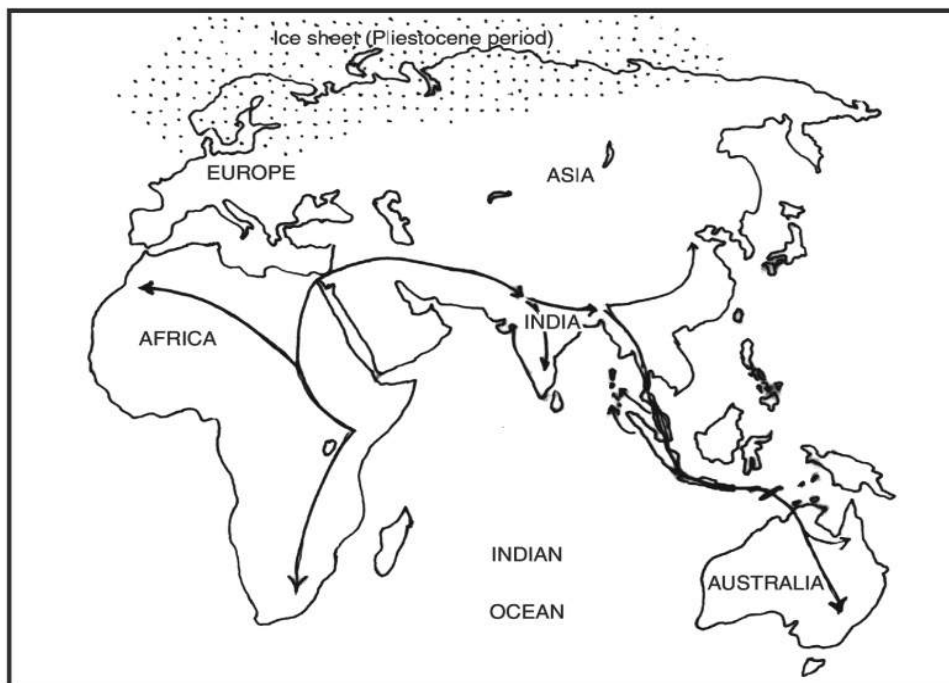
In the opinion of Kroeber, 'A race is a valid biological concept; a breed of genetic strain or sub-species. It is not a valid socio-cultural concept'. In the opinion of J.B. Birdsell, 'A race is an interbreeding group whose gene pool is different from other populations.' Haddon considers 'Race as a biological breed based on a combination of physical traits which are transmitted.'

#### ***Ethnic Group***

An ethnic group is a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from that of the society. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are sought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture. In other words, a group of people having common racial, religious, linguistic, or national characteristics is known as an ethnic group.

### 13.2 | Geography of India

The cultural elements, i.e. language, religion, faith, belief, nationality, customs, and traditions that have been passed on from one generation to another are of paramount importance in the division of mankind. In fact, division of mankind can be most accurate and precise when based on ways of living and thinking.



**Fig. 13.1** Dispersal of Homosapiens

#### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF INDIAN SOCIETY**

Indian society is one of the oldest in the world. India's social structure and cultural pattern are characterised by unity as well as diversity. Historically, India has been hospitable to numerous groups of immigrants from different parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe, but the culture of each group has undergone enough change over the centuries to become an integral part of the Indian mosaic. The institution of caste may be mentioned as a typical example of the paradox that is Indian society. Each caste stands for a way of life that is to some extent distinctive, but at the same time the castes of a region form part of a single social framework. It is important to note that caste is found not only among the Hindus but also among Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. Caste is ubiquitous, and this has resulted in an ideology tolerant of diversity.

Factors making for diversity are apparent even to the casual observer. The population of India is racially and ethnically diverse, containing elements from six main racial types: (i) Negrito, (ii) the Proto-Australoid, (iii) the Mongoloid, (iv) the Mediterranean, (v) the Western Brachycephals, and (vi) the Nordic. All the great religions of the world are represented in this country. The tribal

groups enjoy varying degrees of contact with one or the other of the great religions. The major literary languages alone number fourteen. Diversity is seen in the patterns of rural as well as urban settlements, community life, forms of land tenure, and agricultural operations. In kinship, marriage rites and customs, inheritance, and general mode of living, there are striking differences between groups.

Diversity is, however, only one side of the picture. There are underlying factors as well. India is a political entity, every part of which is under the same constitution. The process of unification developed as several great rulers—Asoka, Samudragupta, Akbar—brought large parts of the country under their power; but it was only during the British rule that India became for the first time a single political entity.

The concept of unity of India is inherent in Hinduism. There are sacred centres of Hindu pilgrimage in every corner of the country. India is a sacred land not only of the Hindus but also of Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. The Muslims and Christians too, have several sacred centres of pilgrimage in India. The institution of caste cuts across diverse religious groups and gives them all common social idiom.

The declaration of India as a Secular state provides one more evidence of the tolerance of diversity which has been characteristic of Indian history from its beginning. The process of economic development ushered in the Five-Year Plans and the spread of egalitarian ideals have brought about revolutionary changes in the Indian pattern of social life. A single government and a common body of civil and criminal law, a developing economy, and a secular approach to public life and problems are now providing substance and reality to India's claim to be a nation.

### THE CASTE SYSTEM

The first literary traces of the caste system are to be found in the Rig Veda, where three groups are mentioned: *Brahma* (priests), *Ksatra* (kings and rulers), and *Vis* (common people). The *Purusasukta hymn*, however, mentions of four classes originating from four parts of the body of the Creator (God). These four classes—*Brahmana*, *Rajanya*, *Vaisya*, and *Sudra*—are referred to in later literature as *Chaturvarna*.

The post-Vedic period saw the growth and consolidation of the power of Brahmins. Brahmin writers continually discussed and defined the duties and rights of each caste amidst its place in the hierarchy. Justifications and rationalisations of the hierarchy were also produced during this period. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, for instance, the caste system is sought to be justified on the basis of the ideas of *Guna*, *Karma*, and *Dharma*.

The 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. saw the rise of Buddhism, which is believed to have questioned the basis of the caste system itself. Some scholars, however, have said that Buddhism on its social and political side was chiefly a *Ksatriya* movement against Brahmanical supremacy.

The Bhakti Movement with its long history contained elements which ran counter to caste ideology. The Bhakti saints came from all castes, including Harijans. The movement was more or less continuous in Indian history, and it spread right across the subcontinent. The movement attracted converts from all castes including Harijans. The followers of Kabir (Kabirpanthi) also became a caste. Caste even survived conversion to Christianity and Islam. During the last century, there came into existence the Arya Samaj in the Punjab and Brahmo Samaj in Bengal. These movements, as well as the Ramakrishna Mission, represented a shift towards the liberalisation of castes.

### Main Features of Castes

The main features of caste prevailing through the past centuries may be described under nine heads: hierarchy, endogamy, and hypergamy; occupational association; distinction in custom, dress, and speech; pollution; ritual, other privileges, and disabilities; and caste organisation and caste mobility.

### Caste and Village Community

The caste living in a village or a group of neighbouring villages, are bound together by economic ties. Generally peasant castes are numerically predominant in villages and they need carpenter, blacksmith, barber, water-man, watch-man, washer-man and leather worker castes to perform agricultural work. Servicing castes such as priest (Brahmin as well as non- Brahmin), barber, washerman, and water carrier cater to the needs of everyone except Harijans. Artisan castes produce goods which are wanted by everyone. Most Indian villages do not have more than a few of the essential castes and depend on neighbouring villages for certain services, skills, and goods.

In rural India, with its largely subsistent economy, the relationship between the different caste groups in a village takes a particular form. The essential artisan and servicing castes are paid annually in grain at harvest. In some parts of India, the artisan and servicing castes are also provided with free food, clothing, fodder, and residential site. On such occasions as birth, marriage, and death, these castes perform extra duties for which they are paid a customary sum of money and some gifts in kind. This type of relationship is found all over India and is called by different names: *Jajmani* in the North, *Mirasi* in Madras, *Bara Balute* in Maharashtra, and *Adade* in Mysore. The relationship between the *Jajman* and his *Kamin* is unequal, since the latter is regarded as inferior. The right to serve is hereditary, transferable, saleable, mortgageable, and partible.

The Jajmani system bound together the different castes living in a village or a group of neighbouring villages. The caste-wise division of labour and the consequent linking up of different castes in enduring and pervasive relationships provided a pattern of alliances which cut across the ties of caste. The modern 'caste problem' is to some extent the result of the weakening, in the last sixty years or more, of these vertical and local ties and consequent strengthening of horizontal ties over whole area.

The relationship between landowner and tenant, master and servant, creditor and debtor, may all be subsumed under a single category—patron and client. This relationship is widespread and crucial to the understanding of rural India. Voting at elections, local and general, is influenced by the patron-client tie.

Ritual occasions like life-cycle ceremonies, festivals and fairs, require the co-operation of several castes. Certain rituals which are common for all the castes occur at birth, girls puberty, marriage, and death. Several castes are also required to cooperate in the performance of calendar, festivals, and festivals of village deities.

The functioning of the village as a political and social entity brought together members from different castes. Every village had a headman usually belonging to the dominant caste. The accountant was always Brahmin in South India. Every village had a watchman and messengers. In the irrigated areas, there was always a man to look after and regulate the flow of water in the canals feeding the fields. The headman and accountant collected the land taxes with the aid of Harijan village servants.

The village council performed a variety of tasks, including the maintenance of law and order, settling of disputes, celebrations of festivals and construction of roads, bridges, and tanks.

of race is visible. In the opinion of Prof. Aijazuddin Ahmad, “Those who managed to drift into the isolated and remote parts of the subcontinent could preserve their original ethnic traits which remained by and large unaffected by the fresh waves of incursions witnessed along the main corridor of movement connecting the Kabul Valley with the North Indian Plain”. The Indian population has been classified by a number of scholars. Some of the important classifications are as follows:

### **Risley’s Classification of Indian Races**

Sir Herbert Risley, the Census Superintendent of India, 1901, made a pioneering effort and classified the Indian races into seven groups as follows:

#### **1. Indo-Aryans**

The Indo-Aryan tribes migrated into India from Central Asia. They are presently found in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. Their main physical traits are tall stature, fair complexion, long arms, broad shoulders and heavy to slim bodies. Their representative communities are the Rajputs, Khatri, and the Jats of northern India.

#### **2. Dravidians**

They are found particularly in South India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu), Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, southern Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and southern Rajasthan. Their representatives are the Santhals of Chotanagpur Plateau, the Todas of Nilgiri, the Juangs of Odisha, the Gonds of Bastar, and the Bhils of Rajasthan. They were probably the ancient people of India, but have been influenced by the admixture of Aryans, the Scythians (Ukrainians) and Mongoloid people. They are characterised by short stature, dark complexion, hairy bodies, curly hair, long heads, and broad nose.

#### **3. The Mongoloids**

They are found in the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan regions stretching from Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir) to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the Hill states of North East India. They are of short stature, yellow in complexion, have medium broad nose, flat face, and oblique eyes with an epicanthic fold. Their representatives are the Kinnares of Lahul-Spiti and Kullu, the Lepchas, and Bhutias of Sikkim, and the Tharus of the Tarai region of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

#### **4. Aryo-Dravidian**

It is an amalgamation of the Aryans and the Dravidians. This group is found in parts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Their elements are present in both the lower and the upper castes of Brahmins and the Scheduled Castes. Their complexion varies from light brown to black and they have long head, short stature, and medium to broad nose.

#### **5. The Mongolo-Dravidians**

They are an intermixture of the Mongoloids and the Dravidians. They are mostly found in West Bengal and Odisha (Brahmins and Kayastha). Their characteristics include broad head, dark complexion, flat nose, short to medium stature, and plentiful hair on face.

#### **6. The Scytho-Dravidians**

They are an admixture of the Scythians and the Dravidians. Some of the anthropologists hold that the Sakas belong to the Scythian race which came to India from Central Asia. They settled in the

Sind Province of Pakistan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The Scythian features are pronounced in higher castes, while the Dravidian features are associated with the lower strata of society. The Marathas are considered to be the representatives of the Scythian-Dravidian race. Their main features are low stature, long head, moderate nose, light brown to fair complexion, and scanty body hair.

### **7. The Turko-Iranian**

They are found in Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Their representatives are the Pathans who are found in some parts of north-west India as a minority group. They are well built, tall statured, with fair complexion, long head, and moderate to narrow nose.

Risley's classification of Indian races is largely based on languages rather than on physical traits. It does not recognise the Negrito element in Indian population which has been duly recognised by J.H. Hutton, A.C. Haddon and B.S. Guha.

### **Hutton's Classification**

J.H. Hutton has also based his racial classification of India on the Census findings. However, he does not recognise India as the cradle land of humanity and holds that all the races of India are constituted by foreign immigrants. On the basis of chronological order, he has recognised the following seven races in India:

#### **1. The Negritos**

In the opinion of Hutton, the Negritos were the oldest inhabitants of India, but have left virtually no trace on the main land of the subcontinent. Some of the representatives of the Negritos are found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and among some of the Nagas.

#### **2. The Proto-Australoids**

They came in large numbers and spread in different parts of the country. Their representatives are found in the aboriginal peoples of India.

#### **3. The Early Mediterraneans**

The Early Mediterraneans reached South India where their representatives are still found in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. They are also found in the tribal belt stretching from Gujarat to West Bengal. They have medium stature, brown to black complexion, and slight built.

#### **4. The Advanced Mediterranean**

They are the early Dravidian people who were associated with the Indus Valley Civilisation. They were the Pre-Aryan people who mingled with the Aryans. They were taller and fairer than the Early Mediterraneans. They spread over Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

#### **5. The Alpines or the Pre-Vedic Aryans**

The Pre-Vedic Aryans are found in both Gujarat and West Bengal.

#### **6. The Nordics or the Vedic Aryans**

They came to India during the second millennium BC. Their elements are found in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and western Uttar Pradesh among the higher castes. Their main physical traits are fair complexion, tall stature, and sharp nose.



### 1. *The Negritoes*

Most probably, the Negritoes were the earliest arrivals in India. These are characterised by short stature (150 cm), frizzy-hair, bulbous forehead, flat nose, slightly protruding jaws, small chin, black skin colour, weak hands, and long arms. Their representatives are the Andamanese, Nicobaris, and the Irulas, Kadars, Kanikkars, Muthaiwans, Paniyans, Puliyaans, Uralis living in the hills of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. The Angami-Nagas have also been considered as having some of the traits of the Negritoes. Their arrival in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Jarawa, Ongs, Sentinelese, Shompen, etc.) is believed to be from the Peninsula of Malaysia. In appearance, culture, and traditions, they are very close to the Semangs and Sakais tribes of Malaysian Peninsula.

### 2. *Proto-Australoids*

After the Negritoes, the Proto-Australoids entered the Subcontinent of India, most probably from Australia. Their representatives are found among the Bhils, Chenchus, Hos, Kurumbas, Mundas, Santhals, and Yeruvas. Their common physical traits are dark brown to black-brown complexion, broad nose, wavy to curly hair, short stature, and thick everted lips.

### 3. *Mongoloids*

The Mongoloids reached India from China, Mongolia, Tibet, Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar in about the first millennium BC. They occupied the Ladakh Division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan belts, and the North Eastern states of India.

Dr. B.S. Guha has recognised two sub-groups of Mongoloids: (a) Palaeo-Mongoloid and (b) Tibeto-Mongoloid. The Palaeo-Mongoloid are the most primitive type which have long heads, medium stature, light brown colour, medium nose, oblique eyes, and scanty hair on body. Their representatives are found in the sub-Himalayan region, particularly Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Indo-Myanmar (Burma) border districts. Their representatives are Daflas, Garos, Kacharis, Khasis, Kuki-Nagas, Lalung, Machi, Miris, and Tipperas.

The Tibeto-Mongoloids are found in Bhutan, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand. Their typical features are long stature, light yellow colour, hairy body, oblique eyes, long nose, and flat face. The Bhutias, the Gorkhas, the Ladakhis, the Kinnauris, the Tharus are the representatives of the Tibeto-Mongoloid racial group.

### 4. *The Mediterraneans*

They came to India in successive waves from the Mediterranean region. Dr. Guha has identified three sub-groups of the Mediterraneans, namely, (i) Palaeo-Mediterranean, (ii) Mediterranean, and (iii) Oriental Type.

**(i) Palaeo-Mediterraneans** The oldest group is the Palaeo-Mediterranean. They are characterized by medium stature, long and narrow head, long face, short and medium nose, and brown complexion. Perhaps they entered the subcontinent during the Neolithic Period and were pushed into the area south of the Vindhyan Mountains in areas of isolation and relative isolation.

**(ii) The Mediterraneans** The Mediterraneans have medium stature, olive brown complexion, long head and long-broad open eyes. They are found in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Kerala.

The distribution of each of the minorities in the country is highly unequal. For example, the Muslims constitute 5 to 25% of the population in most of the states except Arunachal Pradesh (1.9%), Chhattisgarh (2.0%), Himachal Pradesh (2.0%), Mizoram (1.1%) and Nagaland (1.8%). The overall percentage of population of Muslims is 13.4 per cent (2001). The literacy level and per capita income of the Muslims is much below the national average. Most of them are below the poverty line.

Christians constitute about 2.3 per cent of the total population of the country. Their percentage, however, is significantly high in Nagaland (90%), Mizoram (87%), Meghalaya (70%) and Goa (27%). Their density, however, is insignificant in the states of north and west India.

Sikh minority is largely confined to Punjab (60%), Haryana (5.5%), and Uttarakhand (2.5%). Their presence is small in the greater parts of the country. The Sikhs are progressive, hardworking and forward-looking people, who perform superbly in all spheres of life. The proportion of Buddhists in the total population of the country is only 0.8 per cent—Sikkim (28%) and Arunachal Pradesh with a density of 13 per cent have the largest concentration followed by Mizoram (8%) and Maharashtra (6%). The Parsis are confined to the cities of Mumbai, Navsari, Udvada, Surat and Ahmedabad. Essentially Parsis are industrialists and businessmen.

For the development of minorities, Rs. 1000 crore have been earmarked. For the development of education of minorities, three scholarships have been launched, with a total provision of Rs. 305 crore in 2008–09. The issues of education, skill development, employment, sanitation, housing, drinking waters, etc., in the minority concentration districts have been addressed. The corpus of Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) has been enhanced significantly. Several self-employment schemes have been financed. Numerous other economic ventures among backward sections of the minority community have been designed and implemented.

### **SCHEDULED TRIBES**

The tribal people of India, who come under the category of 'Scheduled Tribes' in term of the provisions of the Constitution of India, number 84.3 million, constituting about 8.20 per cent of the population of the country (Census 2001). According to the Census 1961, there were 365 Scheduled Tribes. Their number has however, gone up as some new ethnic groups have also been included in the category of Scheduled Tribes. At present, there are more than 425 Scheduled Tribes in the country. Many more ethnic groups and communities have applied to the government for being included into the list of Scheduled Tribes.

The Scheduled Tribes of India belong to the differential racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. They are mostly occupying the areas of isolation and relative isolation in the hilly and forested areas.

The Scheduled Tribes comprise the indigenous people. They have often been termed as the people of the *'Fourth World'*. The Scheduled Tribes are the people who cherish their own culture. They are the victims of past and present colonialism. They have maintained a close relationship with land. In their societies, there exists a co-operative attitude of give and take, a respect for the earth and life it supports. Their philosophy of life is: *'From everybody according to his capacity, to everyone according to his needs.'*



In terms of percentage and absolute population, the population of Scheduled Tribes is highly unevenly distributed. Their main areas of concentration of tribals are, however, in three regions as given in **Table 13.2**. The main concentration of the tribal population has been shown in **Fig. 13.5**.

**Table 13.2** Main Areas of Concentration of Tribal Population

1. The North Eastern Region (NER)	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.
2. The Central Tribal Belt	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.
3. Other States and Union Territories	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Source: *Census of India, 2001*.

The tribal communities live in about 15 per cent of the country's area in varying ecological and geo-climatic conditions; mountains, hills, forests, plains and inaccessible areas. They have their presence in almost all the states and Union Territories of the country except Chandigarh, Goa, Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab (**Fig. 13.6**).

An interesting feature of the tribal population is that it is growing at a faster pace. The temporal change in the growth of population has been shown in **Table 13.3**.

It may be observed from **Table 13.3** that the total population of the Scheduled Tribes in 1951 was only 225 lakhs accounting for 6.23 per cent of the total population of India. Their growth rate is however, higher than the national average. Consequently, in 2001 the tribal population became 843 lakhs or 8.20 per cent of the total population of the country. The lower standard of living of over 95 per cent of the tribal population may be the main cause of their high birth and high growth rate. The higher growth rate of the tribal population is also because of the inclusion of new tribes in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

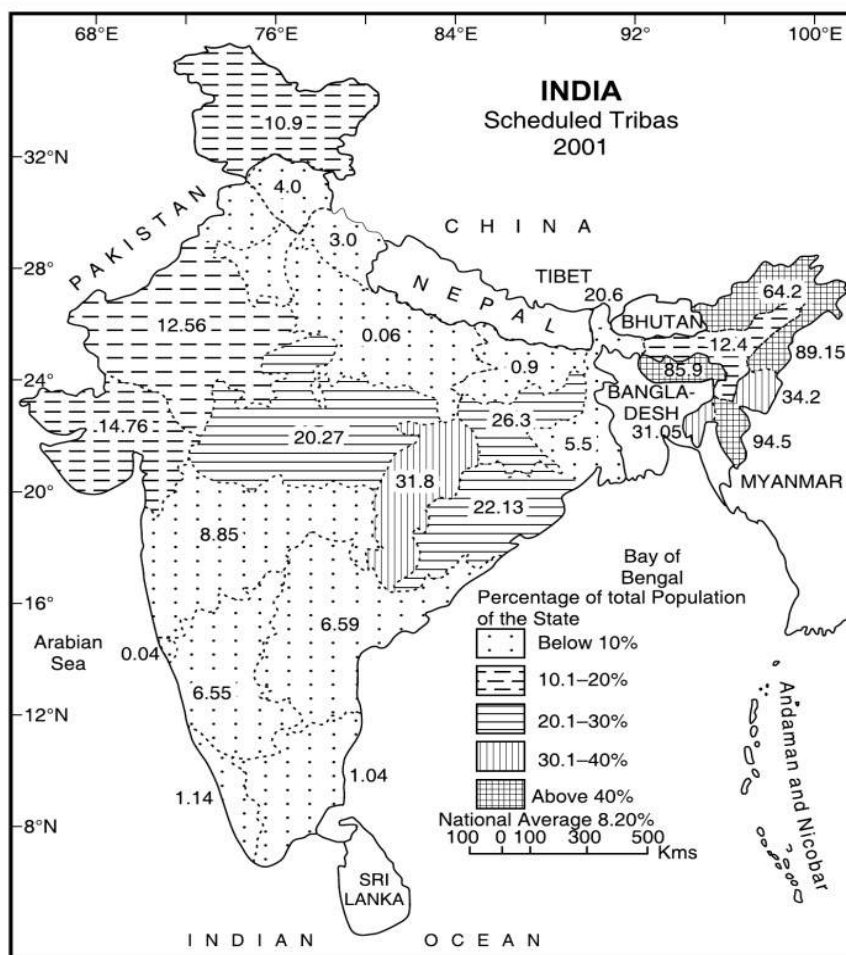
According to the Census of 2001, about 87 per cent of the main workers from these communities were engaged in primary activities. A majority of Scheduled Tribes continue to live below the poverty line. They have poor literacy rates, suffer from malnutrition, undernourishment, water-borne diseases, and are vulnerable to displacement.

The Central and the State Governments have been implementing schemes/programmes, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, etc. However, a lot more is required to be done to achieve the desired developmental goals for Scheduled Tribes.

**Table 13.3** India: Growth of Scheduled Tribe Population, 1951–2001

Year	Total Population of Scheduled Tribes in Lakhs	Percentage of Scheduled Tribes to Total Population
1951	22.5	6.23
1961	302	6.87
1971	380	6.94
1981	538	6.94
1991	678	8.08
2001	843	8.20

Source: *Census of India, 2001*.



**Fig. 13.5** Density of Scheduled Tribes, 2001

### The Main Scheduled Tribes

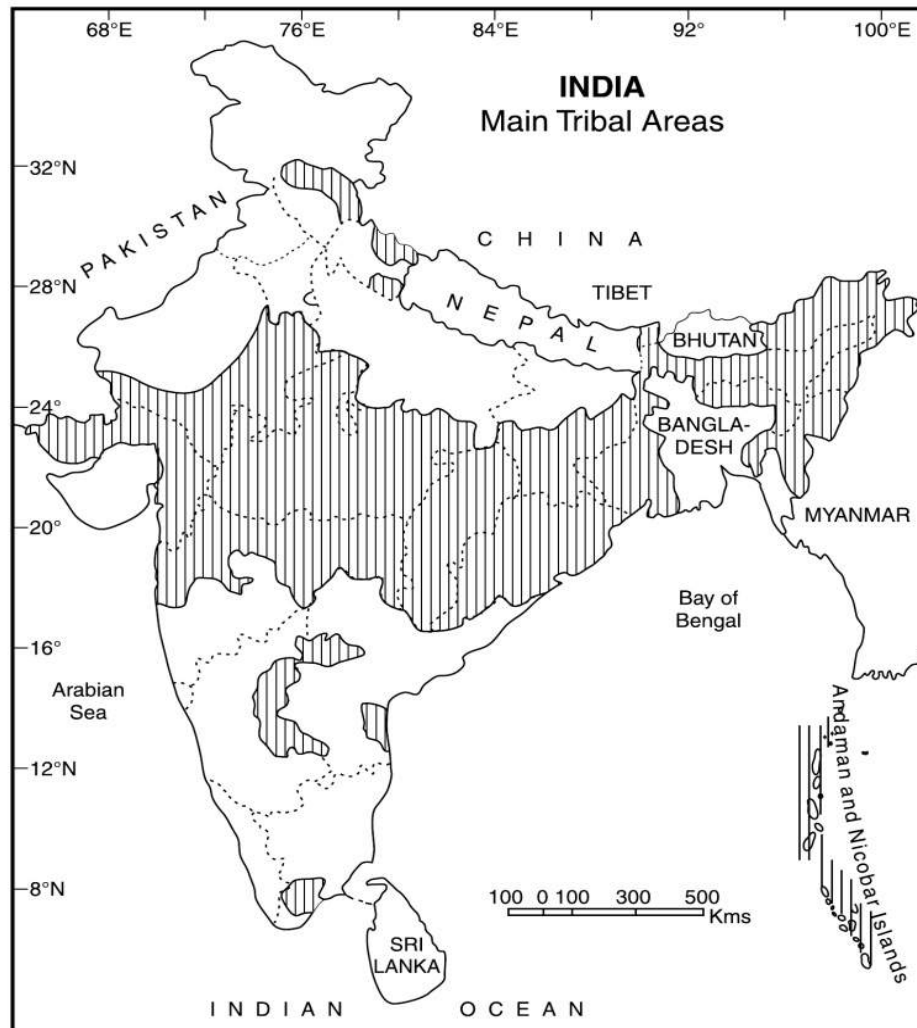
The number of Scheduled Tribes in India is quite large. Some of the main tribes of India are as under:

#### 1. North East India

Bodo, Kachari Miri, Xaxa (Assam), Angami, Ao, Chang, Konyaks, Kuki, Lotha, Mikir, Sema (Nagaland), Apatani, Daffa, Mishmi (Arunachal Pradesh), Garo, Khasi, Jaintia (Meghalaya), Lushai (Mizoram), Bhutia, Lepcha, Serpa (Sikkim), Chakmas and Orang (Tripura).

#### 2. Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal

Asur, Birja, Birhor, Bhuiya, Gond, Ho, Khairia, Maler, Malpaharia, Munda, Oraon, Pakiha Pantaram, and Santhal.



**Fig. 13.6** Scheduled Tribes—Areas of Main Concentration (2001)

### 3. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra

Akha, Bhil, Bhilara, Chenchu, Dabla, Dandami, Gadaba, Godwa, Gond, Kol, Kadar, Ketkari, Kotku, Koya, Korva, Maler, Mariya, Mauriya, Lambadi, Paradh, Paliyan, Pariya, Rajgond, Todia, Turi, Yaruba, and Yendi.

### 4. Odisha and Tamil Nadu

Bagda, Birhor, Khond, Gond, Juang, Kanikkar, Kol, Lambadi, Munda, Santhal, Savara, etc.

**5. Gujarat**

Bhil, Bhila, Dafar, Dhanka, Garsaya, Dubala, Koli, Patelia, Raibari, Todia, Varali, etc.

**6. Rajasthan**

Bherat, Bhil, Bhila, Dhanka, Garasiya, Meena, Mira, Rawat, Saha, Sahariya, etc.

**7. Kerala**

Arandan, Chenchu, Gadaba, Irula, Kadar, Kochu, Malapandaram, Malkurvan, Mallayan, Muthuwan, Paniyan, Paniyan, Sholiga, Sumali, Toda, Yurali, etc.

**8. Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand**

Badkol, Bhotiya, Bhoksa, Bhuiya, Chero, Jaunsaries/Khasa (Chakrata Tehsil, Dehra Dun), Khoja, Manhi, Raji, Tharu, Viyar, etc.

**9. Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir**

Bholia, Bakkarwal, Gujjar, Gaddi, Kinnar, Laholi, Laddakhi, Pangwal, etc.

**10. Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

Andamani, Aong, Jarawa, Nicobarese, Onges Sentinelese, Shompen, etc.

**Economy**

The Scheduled Tribes are essentially dependent on hunting, food-gathering, fishing, shifting cultivation, lumbering, sedentary agriculture, and animal husbandry.

**1. Hunting, Fishing, and Food Gathering**

The main tribes which are dependent on these economic activities are Chenchu and Yanadi in Andhra Pradesh; Hill-Maria in Chhattisgarh; Bhil, Garasia in Gujarat and Maharashtra; Bhil, Garasia, and Sahariya in Rajasthan; Birgias, Birhor, Kharia, Korwa, Pariha in Jharkhand; Ao, Angami, Changs, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Mikir, Sema in Nagaland; Juang in Odisha; Kadar, Koya, Paliyan, Reddi in Tamil Nadu and Raji in Uttar Pradesh.

**2. Shifting Cultivation**

Bagola, Khond, Kurumba, Saora in Andhra Pradesh; Bhil and Garasia in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh; Asur, Korwa in Jharkhand; Kathodia in Rajasthan; Baiga, Dhora and Gond in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh; Chakmas (Tripura), Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Lushai, Nagas in North Eastern Hill States; Gond, Khond, Kurumba, and Muduwan in Tamil Nadu; Bhutias, Korias, Kharwar and Saharia in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand practice shifting cultivation.

**3. Sedentary Cultivation and Animal Husbandry**

Badaga, Kota, Koya, Irula in Andhra Pradesh; Baija, Bhatra, Gond, and Parja in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh; Bhil, Barali, Dubla, Koli, Raiwari in Gujarat and Maharashtra; Bhila, Ho, Korwa, Munda, Oraon, Tamarua and Santhali in Jharkhand; Bhil, Garasiya and Meena in Rajasthan; Badaga, Irula, Malydi and Praga in Tamil Nadu; Bhoksa, Bhotias, Khasa, Kol, and Tharus in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand; Bhumji, Polia and Santhali in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal are engaged in sedentary cultivation and animal husbandry.

**Polygamous Tribes**—Baiga, Gond (Chhattisgarh, M.P.), Lushai (Mizoram), Mon (Nagaland), Toda (Kerala, Tamil-Nadu).

**Polyandrous Tribes**—Kota, Khasa, Jaunsari (U.P., Uttarakhand), Ladakhi, Bote (Ladakh), Nayar and Todas (Kerala, Tamil-Nadu).

### **Tribal Development**

The human development of the Scheduled Tribes of India is quite low. Most of them are living below the poverty line. The Central and the state governments have taken a number of measures over the years to improve the condition of Scheduled Tribes and for their development.

#### ***The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)***

The innovative strategy of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) for Scheduled Tribes was launched during 1974. This special strategy was expected to ensure that all the general development sectors earmark funds for Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population so that adequate benefits from all the concerned sectors flow to this disadvantaged group. The Tribal Sub-Plan strategy has been extended to the following states and Union Territories:

1. Andhra Pradesh, 2. Assam, 3. Bihar, 4. Chhattisgarh, 5. Gujarat, 6. Himachal Pradesh, 7. Jammu and Kashmir, 8. Jharkhand, 9. Karnataka, 10. Kerala, 11. Madhya Pradesh, 12. Maharashtra, 13. Manipur, 14. Odisha, 15. Rajasthan, 16. Sikkim, 17. Tamil Nadu, 18. Tripura, 19. Uttar Pradesh, 20. Uttarakhand, 21. West Bengal, 22. Andaman and Nicobar, and 23. Daman and Diu.

The ultimate objective of extending the Tribal Sub-Plan is to boost the demand based income generation programmes, and thus raise the economic and social status of tribals in the sectors of agriculture, horticulture, land reforms, watershed development, soil moisture conservation, animal husbandry, ecology and environment, development of forests/forest villages, and development of entrepreneurship.

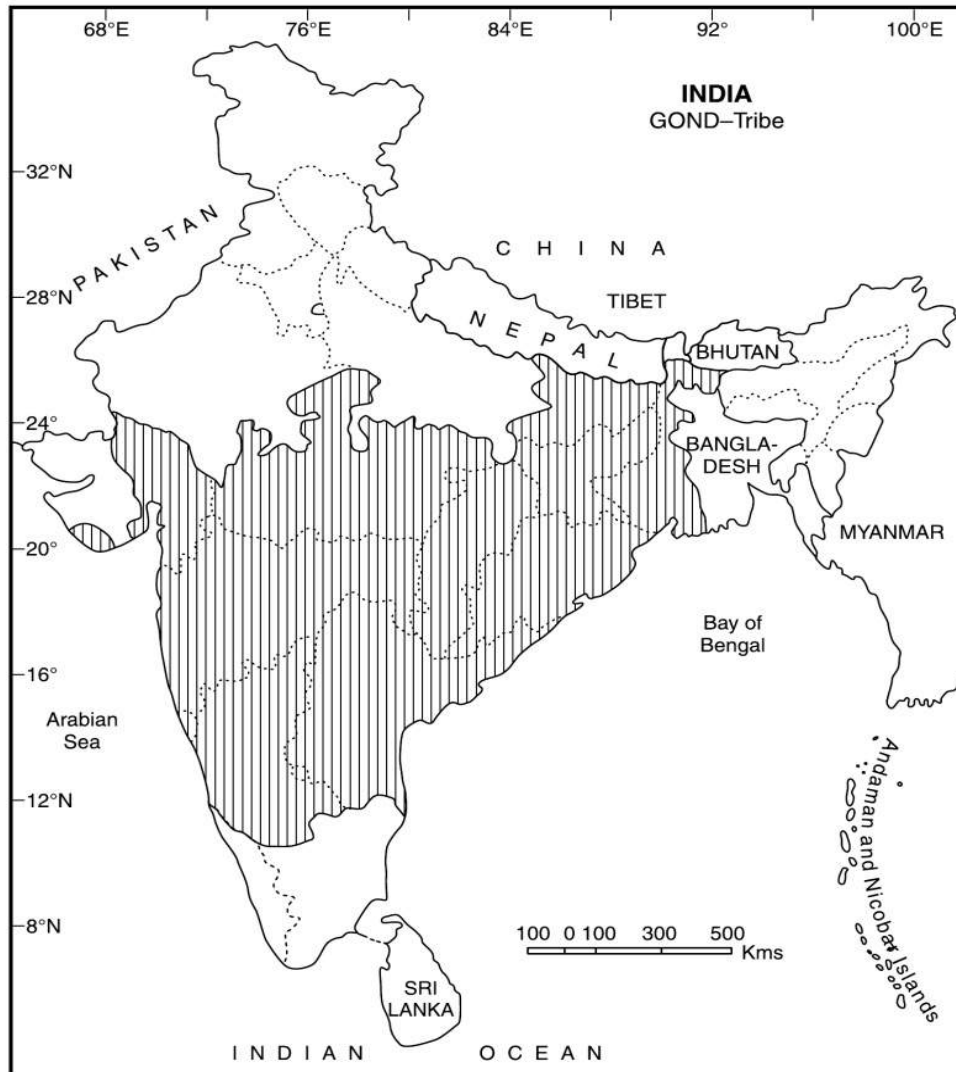
The main focus of the Tribal Sub-Plan is to make an integrated development effort to develop their agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, forestry, education, health, and employment. There is emphasis on preparing a broad policy framework for tribal development and defining a suitable administrative strategy for its implementation.

In addition to these, the Central Ministers/Departments have to take the following steps for the socioeconomic development of the Scheduled Tribes:

- (a) to formulate appropriate need-based programmes for tribal areas;
- (b) suitably adapt the ongoing programmes to the specific requirements of Scheduled Tribes.
- (c) provide sufficient quantity of funds for tribal areas under Central Ministries programmes; and
- (d) earmarking of senior officer dedicated exclusively for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

#### ***The Tribal Research Institutes***

The Tribal Research Institutes are engaged in the work of providing planning inputs to the State Governments, collection of data and conducting research and evaluation studies on problems relating to the tribes living in respective states. The Tribal Research Institutes also conduct training, coaching,



**Fig. 13.7** Distribution of Gonds (2001)

### ***The Bhils***

The total population of Bhils is over six million (2001). They are distributed over a vast territory extending from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka (**Fig. 13.8**).

The habitat of the Bhils is characterised by varied terrain features of plains, hills, plateaus and forested areas. They are generally living in the areas of isolation and relative isolation.



and guidance seminars and workshops for the cause of tribal development. At present, there are 16 Tribal Research Institutes in the country situated in different states.

The respective state governments have constructed Girls Hostels, Boys Hostels, Ashram Schools, Vocational Training in Tribal Areas, Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students, National Overseas Scholarships for Scheduled Tribes Students (Non-Plan). In addition to these, the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, and Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development of India are providing useful service and relief to the Scheduled Tribes.

### ***The National Tribal Policy***

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has formulated the draft of a National Tribal Policy covering various issues such as alienation of tribal land, tribal forest interface; displacement; rehabilitation and resettlement; enhancement of human development index; creating critical infrastructure; violent manifestations; conservation and development of particularly vulnerable tribal groups; adoption of Tribal Sub-Plan strategy; empowerment; gender equality; enlisting support of non-government organisations, tribal culture and traditional knowledge; administration of tribal areas; the Regularity and Protective Regime; scheduling and descheduling of tribes, etc. The Ministry has received an enthusiastic response from the various stakeholders and it is in the process of examining of the same and hopes to finalise the draft National Tribal Policy at the earliest.

### **Some Important Tribes of India**

A brief description of some of the important tribes of India has been given in the following:

#### ***The Gonds***

The Gonds with a population of about 8 million constitute the largest tribal group of India. The spatial distribution of Gonds has been shown in **Fig. 13.7** They are spread over Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal. Their main concentration is in forest and hilly areas between the Vidhyans and Satpura. Their physical traits are dark complexion, flat nose, thick lips, straight hair, and short stature. Their language is Gondi which belongs to the Austric family. They live in small villages of 20–30 families and build their houses along the east west street on both sides. Most of them are agricultural labourers or marginal sedentary farmers. Some of them like Dhimar and Kewats are dependent on fishing, while the Rawats are cattle keepers.

The Gonds maintain Ghotals (youth-house). They practice and participate in music and dance. They also provide security to the village in the night. It is like a club, where both unmarried boys and girls sleep in separate apartments at night and carry on love affairs which culminate in matrimonial relationship. Such affairs are kept secret till their marriage materialises. But it is common knowledge that hardly any girl remains virgin before she is locked in nuptial bond. In fact, the pre-marital sex relations are condoned by the community, but after marriage, sexual fidelity is strictly observed by both husband and wife. They practice endogamous marriage. Polygamy is also in use. Divorce is quite common. They believe in the animistic religion and worship their family deity.

The Gonds are hard working, honest and treat theft as a serious crime. They are, however, superstitious and believe in sorcery and black magic.

Among the Bhils marriage is not only universal, but also compulsory and the unmarried men and women are looked down upon by the society. There is ample freedom for marriage; boys and girls can choose their partners and later on get social approbation by the village community. However, the Thakur Bhils of Nimar do not permit such liberty and prefer prior engagement in matrimonial relations.

Divorce can be sought by either party with the consent of the village Panchayat. Child marriage is conspicuous by its absence.

Bhils are animists by nature as reflected in their folk music and art. They believe in rebirth and migration of soul. They stress on good conduct for their salvation, they also believe in evil spirits, ghosts and black magic. The services of Badva (magician) are sought for riddance from disease. They also believe in superstitions. The ladies do a lot of tatooning. They decorate the walls of houses with folk pictorial designs/sketches. They take great interest in dance and music and arrange *Nautanki* for community celebrations.

The society is basically patriarchal. The families have great reverence for gods and goddesses. They also believe in Hindu gods like Hanuman, Ram, and Shiva besides, 'Baba Deo' and 'Ghata Deo'.

They generally live in small hamlets and construct their houses with bamboos. The Bhils make pretentious houses and take care in their maintenance for nuclear families.

### **The Santhals**

Having a population of over 6 millions, the santhals constitute one of the largest tribal groups in India. The anthropological evidence confirms their Dravidian origin which is corroborated by their Austric language (Santhali language and Col Chika script). The Santhal scholars claim that it was the santhals who had developed the Indus Valley Civilisation. The geographical distribution of the Santhals has been shown in **Fig. 13.9**.

It may be seen from Fig. 13.9 that their present habitat is mainly in the Rajmahal Hills and Chotanagpur Plateau in the state of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal. Tripura also has the Santhal Tribes and they can also be found working in tea gardens of Assam and West Bengal. They are a dominant majority in Santhal Pargana, Giridih, Bankura, Bardhaman, and Birbhum while in more than 16 districts they have a majority. Their demographic growth is about 1.75 per cent per annum.

The Santhals are basically agriculturists (68%). They own landed property and hardly any Santhali is landless. Their subsidiary occupations include hunting, fishing, and collecting forest products. With increasing literacy and cultural contacts, they are also engaged in service, trade and contracting business. Their demand is for a Greater Jharkhand which extends over the Santhal areas in West Bengal and Odisha.

The Santhals have a great cultural heritage and have a well defined social order. Widow remarriage is permissible. The Santhal society is patriarchal. The Santhal woman is deemed a strong labour force and contributes to the family income. She participates in the agricultural operations and decorates her house before the Bandana festival.

The Santhals live in permanent settlements. The village settlement generally has a rectangular plan and houses are arranged along the main street of the village. They have their own Panchayats and a well developed penal system.

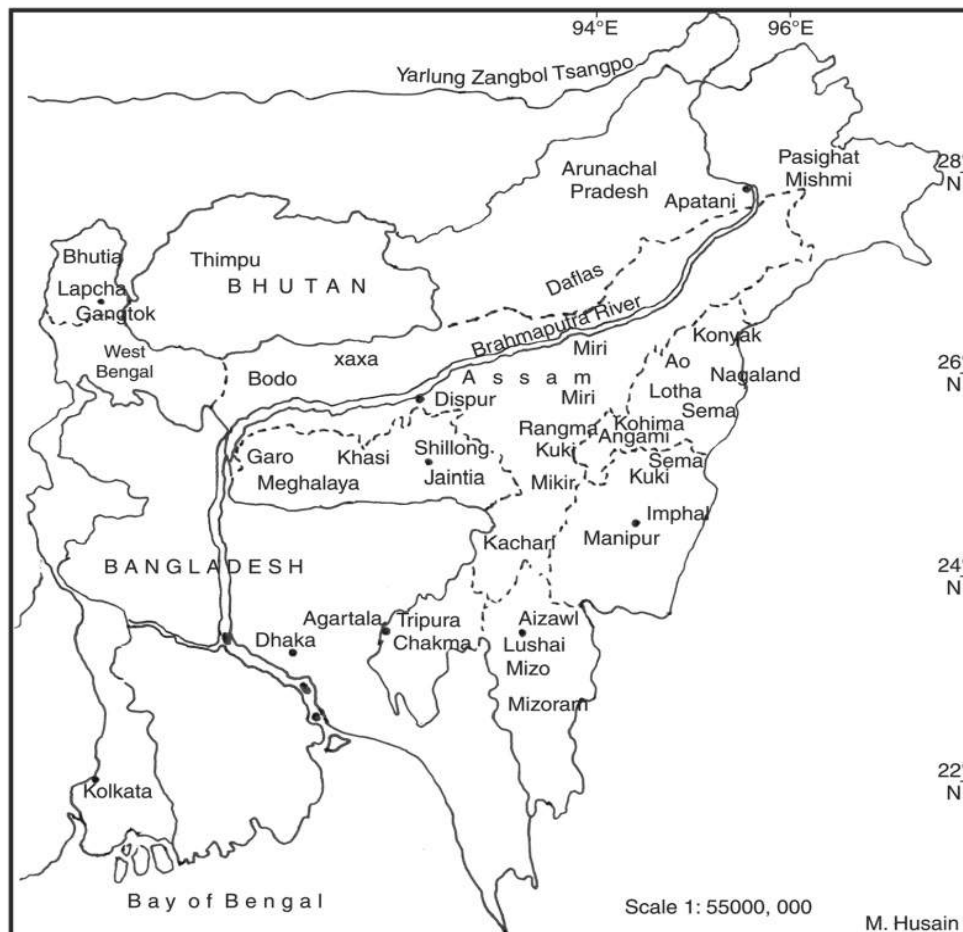
Karma is the only festival of the women in the month of Bhadon. It takes place in Manjhithan girls with music and dance with unmarried girls participating. Their other important festivals are Bandhan or Sohrai (in winter after harvest).

has a cold winter and moderately hot and humid summer. They have adopted English as the official language of Nagaland. It has helped their cultural and political unification.

Their villages are located at the top of ridges for reasons of security. They use hill slopes for terraced cultivation. Where the development of terraces is difficult, they practice shifting cultivation.

The village has a *Morung* (communal dormitory) for the bachelors, where both boys and girls stay at night. It functions as a youth club where the youths are initiated into tribal traditions and art of community living. They also receive sex education and often their pre-marital sex relations consummate in marriage with the consent of the village community.

The Nagas are by and large agriculturists (85%). They practice Jhuming (shifting cultivation). The Angami tribe around Kohima has developed beautiful terraces for paddy cultivation. They grow rice, pulses, coarse cereals, vegetables and cotton. The Nagas are known for their artistic handicrafts, particularly weaving and wood carving.



**Fig. 13.10** North-East India—Major Tribes

doctrine of purity and pollution.

The anthropological evidence suggest their varied origin from an admixture of aboriginal/tribal population with the successive waves of invaders.

According to the Census 2001, the population of Scheduled Castes in India was 66,636 million accounting for 16.20 per cent of the total population, while that of the Scheduled Tribes population was 8.20 per cent. They constitute the socially and economically deprived caste group of the Indian society. They consist mainly of agricultural labourers, marginal cultivators, artisans, landless labourers, and industrial workers. They include the Malls of Andhra Pradesh, the Meghs of Gujarat, the Mahars of Maharashtra, the Adi-Davidas of Tamil Nadu, the Chamars of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and Balais of West Bengal.

### Geographical Distribution

The geographical distribution and density of the Scheduled Castes has been shown in **Fig. 13.11**. The state of Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of Scheduled Castes population, accounting for about 21 per cent of the total Scheduled Caste population of the country, followed by West Bengal (11.1%), Bihar (7.83%), Andhra Pradesh (7.4%), Tamil Nadu (7.12%), Maharashtra (5.93%), Rajasthan (5.8%) and Madhya Pradesh (5.49%). In opposition to this, the state of Nagaland, and the Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep have no Scheduled Caste population (**Fig. 13.11**).

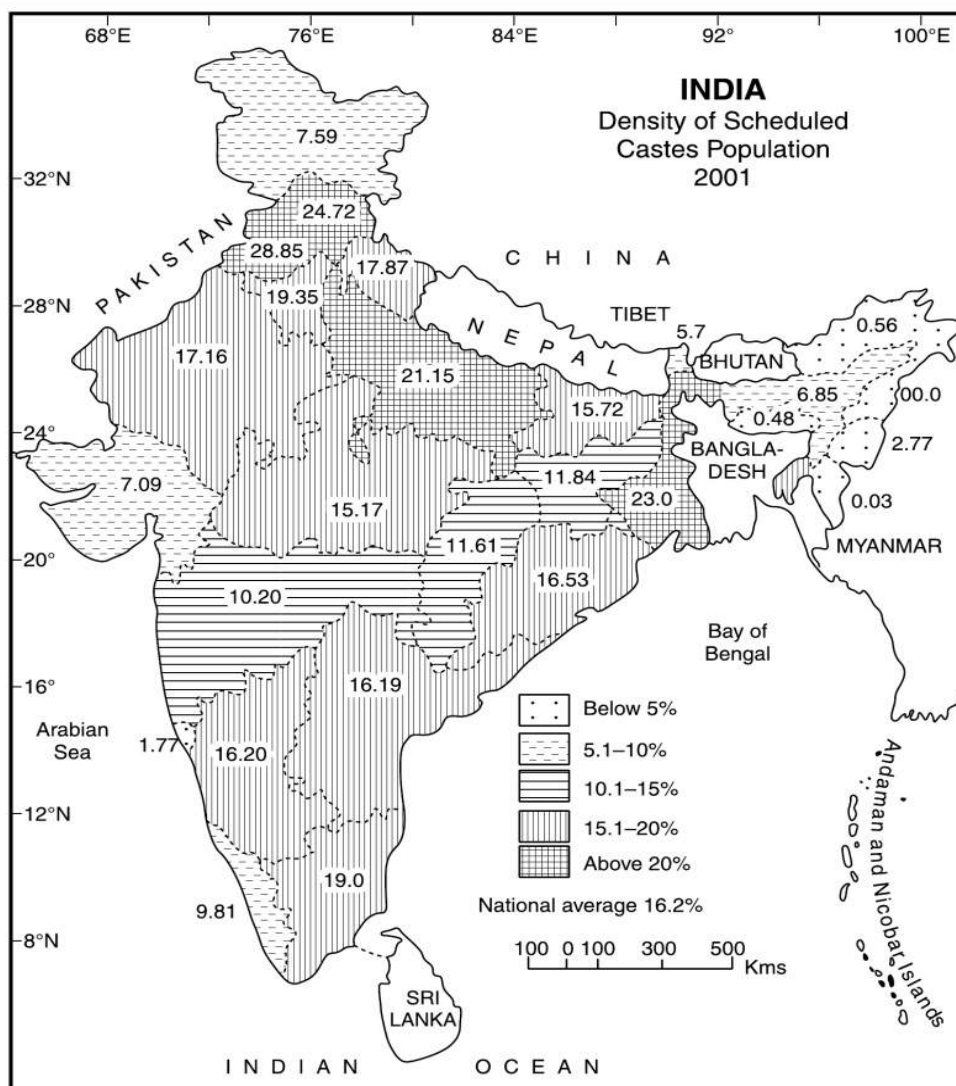
The highest percentage of Scheduled Caste population is found in Punjab (28.85 %), followed by Himachal Pradesh (24.72%), West Bengal (23.02%) and Uttar Pradesh (21.15 %). The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep do not have Scheduled Caste population (**Fig. 3.11**).

The percentage of the Scheduled Castes is low in the areas of Scheduled Tribes, Muslims, and Christians dominate regions/districts. The north-eastern states of India, except Tripura have a very low percentage of the Scheduled Caste population. Similarly, the percentage of Scheduled Caste population is low where the percentage of Muslim and Christian population is high. Another important feature about the spatial distribution of the Scheduled Tribes is that they are mainly concentrated in the rural areas. Despite reservation and special programmes for their upliftment, over 90 per cent of them maintain a very poor standard of living.

**Table 13.4** Scheduled Castes: Geographical Distribution, Census 2001

	State (‘000)	Total Population (‘000)	Scheduled Caste Population Total Population in the State	Percentage of Scheduled Caste to
1.	Andhra Pradesh	76,210	12,339	16.19
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1,098	6	0.56
3.	Assam	26,656	1,826	6.85
4.	Bihar	82,999	13,049	15.72
5.	Chhattisgarh	20,834	2,419	11.61
6.	Goa	1,348	24	1.77
7.	Gujarat	50,671	3,593	7.09
9.	Haryana	21,145	4,091	19.35

(Contd.)



**Fig. 13.11** Density of Scheduled Caste Population, 2001

(Contd.)

10. Himachal Pradesh	6,078	1,502	24.72
11. Jammu & Kashmir	10,144	770	7.59
12. Jharkhand	26,946	3,189	11.84
13. Karnataka	52,851	8,564	16.20

(Contd.)

a common heritage. The sense of cultural identity is most pronounced in a micro-region and becomes diffused in a macro-region.

### Cultural Regions of India

Language, religion, customs, and traditions are some of the important elements of culture. Cultural regions may be delineated on the basis of these cultural traits.

#### *Language as a Determinant of Cultural Region*

India is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious country. According to anthropologists and historians, the Indian population comprises of the people who came here from the Mediterranean region, central Asia, south-west Asia, south-east Asia, Mongolia, Tibet, and China. Each of the racial and ethnic groups has its own language. After coming to India, the cultural mixing led to the mixing of their languages also. These languages have their core and peripheral areas. This broad linguistic regional identity formed the basis for the demarcation of Indian States in 1956. According to the Census of 1961, there were 187 languages spoken by different sections of the Indian society. Of these, 94 were spoken by less than 10,000 people. According to Vadodra-based Bhasa Research and Publication centre, the country had 1100 languages in 1961, but nearly 220 of them disappeared in the past 50 years. The lost languages were spoken mostly by nomads. At present, there are 780 languages in India (Times of India-August 8, 2013). The fifteen main languages, as mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, are spoken by over 92 per cent of the total population of the country. The geographical distribution of the main languages of India has been shown in **Fig. 13.12**.

The Indian languages belong to the following four linguistic groups:

1. The Indo-European family (Arya)
2. The Dravidian family (Dravida)
3. Austric family (Nishada)
4. Sino-Tibetan family (Kirata)

**1. The Indo-Aryan language** This is the most important group of Indian languages spoken by most of the people of northern India. Its core area is known as the *Khari Boli* region, comprising of Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh. Going away from the core, it has different shades and dialects. Prof. A. Ahmad has given a diagrammatic representation of the diffusion of *Khari-Boli* (Hindi) in different directions from the core area. (**Fig. 13.13**). Offshoots include Dardi, Kohistani, Kashmiri, Lahnda, Sindhi, Kachhchi, Gujarati, Marathi, Odiya, Bengali, Assamese, Bihari, Avadhi, Bagheli, Chhattisgarhi, Hindi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Nepali, and Pahari.

Hindi (the National language) is the principal language of the Indo-European Family spoken by over 40 per cent of the total population of the country. It is mainly spoken in Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. Urdu is closely akin to Hindi and is popular in Bihar, Delhi, Hyderabad, J&K, M.P., Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and in most of the places of urban India.

**2. The Dravidian Family** The Dravidian Family of the Indian languages is mainly spoken in Andhra Pradesh (Telgu), Karnataka (Kannada), Kerala (Malayalam), and Tamil Nadu (Tamil). These four languages are spoken by more than 22 per cent of the total population of India.

**3. The Austric Family** The Austric languages are spoken by the tribal groups of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha and West Bengal. These languages belong to

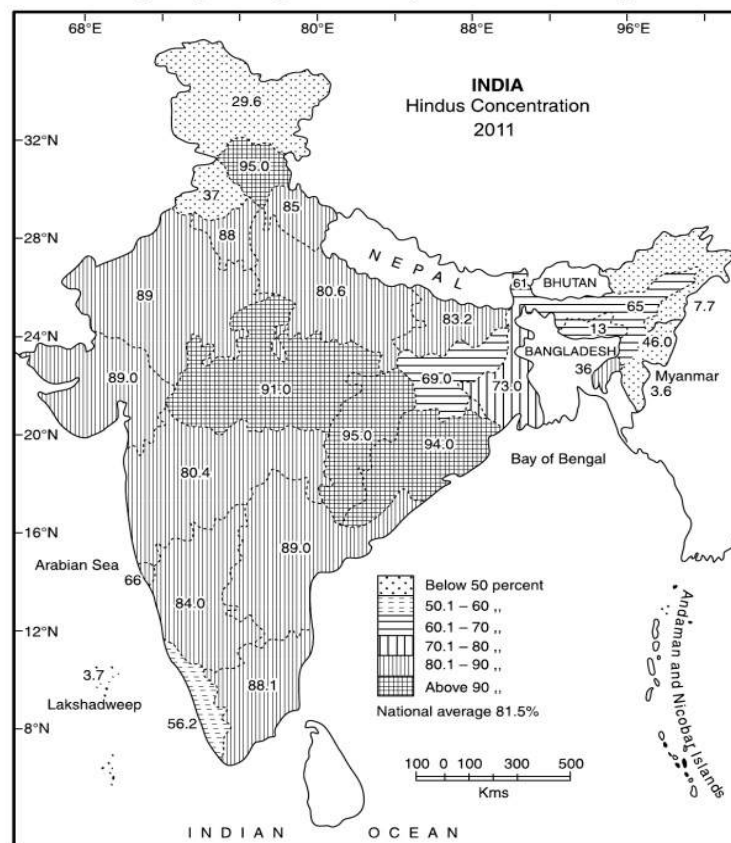


Religion, like language, is a symbol of group identity and a cultural rallying point. All societies have value systems, common beliefs, understandings, and expectations which unite their people. Religion plays a crucial role in the socioeconomic life of the people and even their utilisation of natural resources is closely controlled by the religion of the people. Geographers are concerned with the interaction between religion and landscape (resources). Thus, religion provides a good basis for the demarcation of cultural regions.

India is a multi-religion country. It is the birth place of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Subsequently, the successive waves of people of other religious faiths came to India. They maintained their religious identity. For example, the Syrian Christians appeared on the west coast of India in the first century AD. They are still found in Kerala. The Muslims came to India from South-West Asia and Central Asia and maintained their religious identity.

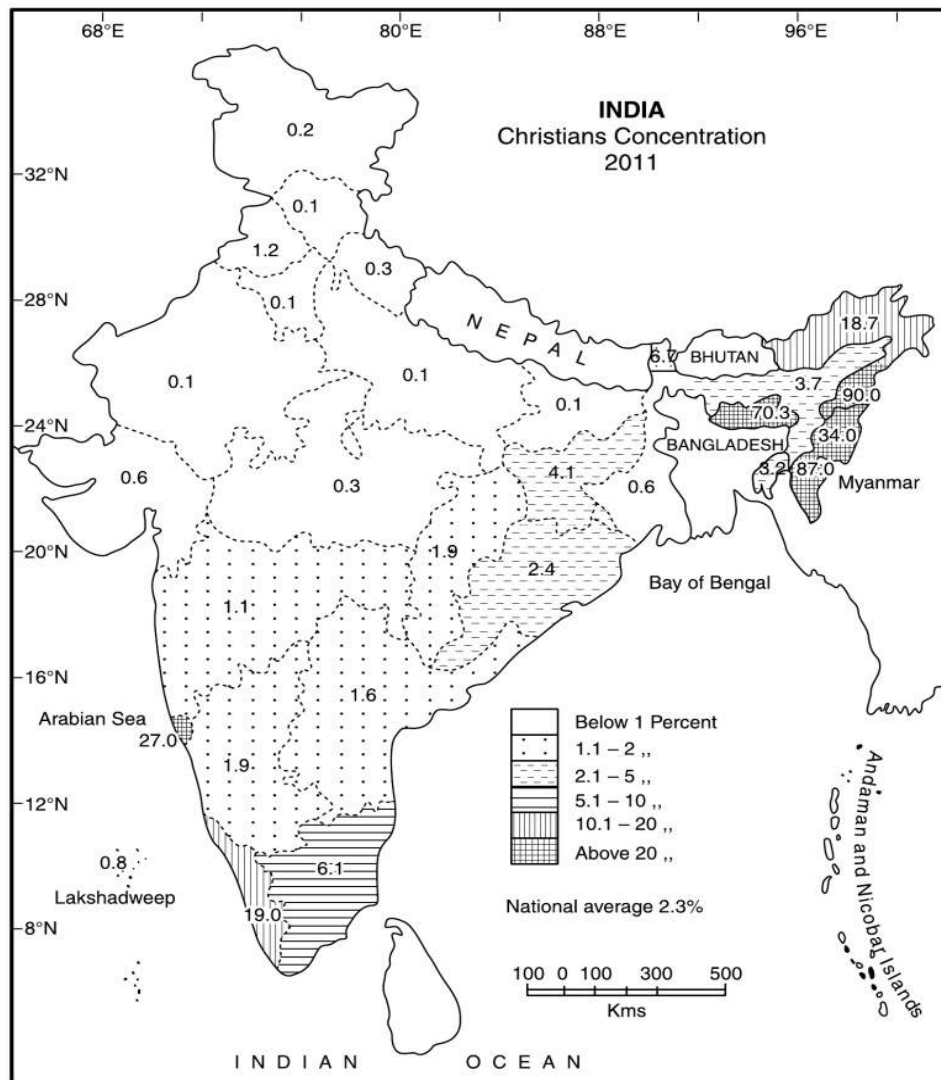
#### Concentration of Religious Groups

**Hindus** According to the Census 2001, about 82 per cent of the total population of India is Hindu by faith. They are predominantly distributed throughout the country, but in a few areas, like the Kashmir Valley, Punjab, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and parts of Kerala, they are in minority (Fig. 13.14).



**Fig. 13.14** Hindu Population (2011)

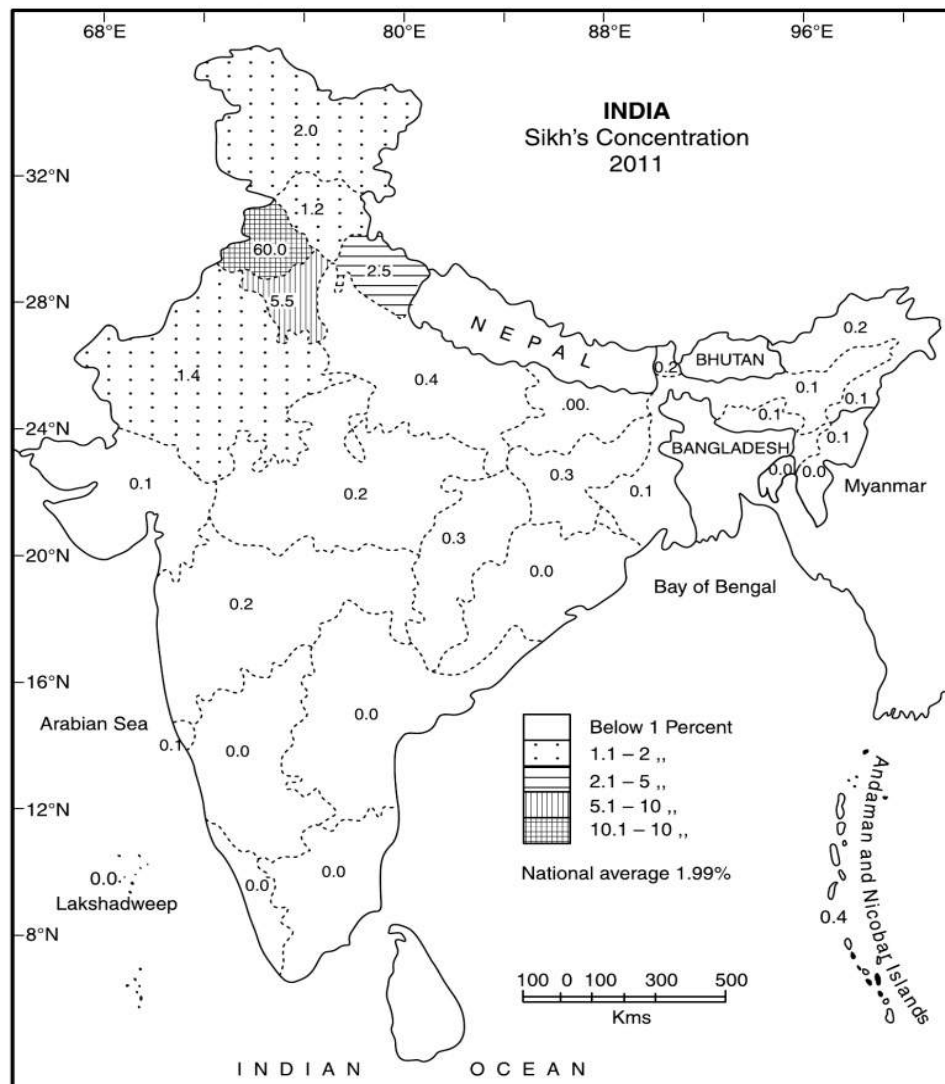
was established in Kerala. The largest number of Christian population is in the state of Kerala—about 29% of the total population. Christians number more than one million in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu. Their proportion is significantly large in the states of Mizoram, and Goa. Nagaland (90%) and Mizoram (87%) have the largest percentage in population. (Fig. 13.16).



**Fig. 13.16** Christian Population (2011)

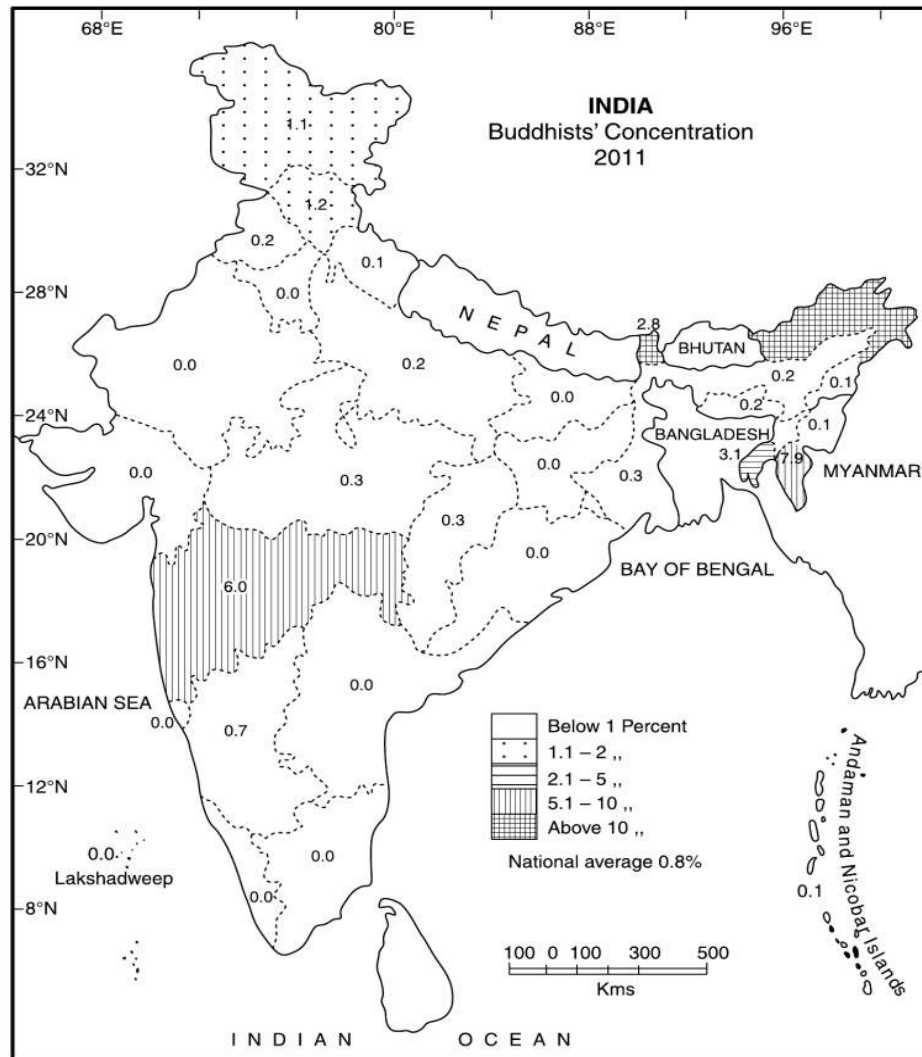
**Sikhs** The religion of Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak Sahib in the fifteenth century. The Sikhs constitute about 2 per cent of the total population of the country (Census, 2001). Sikhism

attempted to create social harmony by removing the Hindu caste system and permitting widow remarriage. But for a long time it remained confined to Punjab and has accepted Gurmukhi as its language. Nearly 79 per cent of the total population of Sikhs is concentrated in the state of Punjab (Fig. 13.17). In addition to Punjab, Sikhs are found in Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan and the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (Udham Singh Nagar). At present, Sikhs have spread in all parts of the country and have acquired international presence in U.K., Canada, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Singapore and Hong Kong.



**Fig. 13.17** Density of Sikh Population (2011)

**Buddhism** Buddhism was founded by Gautam Buddha (563–483 BC) in North India. The Buddhists constitute less than one per cent of the total population of the country. Nearly 80 per cent of the Buddhists live in Maharashtra. The traditional pockets of Buddhism are Ladakh, areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura (**Fig. 13.18**).

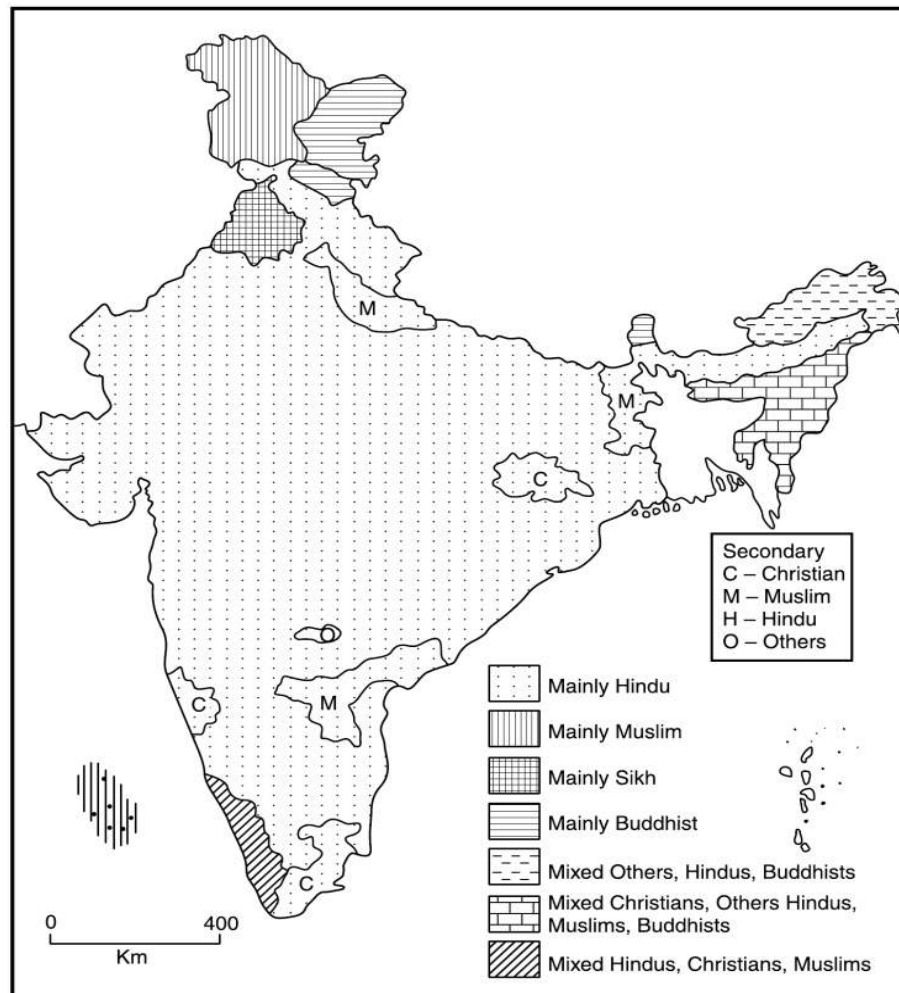


**Fig. 13.18** Density of the Buddhist Population (2011)

**Jainism** India is the homeland of Jainism which is a minority religion (0.4%) and has no perceptible following in other countries. Its followers are found in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Karnataka, particularly in urban areas. The Jains have an important influence in business and politics.

**Zoroastrianism** The Parsis (population about 1.67 lakh) are the followers of Zoroastrianism (2011). It was a dominant religion in the days of the Old Persian Empire. The essence of its ethics is well summed up in three words: *Humata* (good thoughts), *Hukhta* (good words), and *Huvarshata* (good deeds). Their religious book is *Dinkart*. They first reached Diu in 766 A.D. and shifted their colony to Mt. Bharhat (1490). From there they spread to Navsari and ultimately to Udvada. They have been influenced by the Hindu customs, but they do not advocate celibacy, and permit remarriage. About 80 per cent of the Parsi population is concentrated in Greater Mumbai and the rest in Navsari, Udvada, Surat, and Ahmadabad.

**Religious Regions of India** The cultural regions of India based on religion have been plotted in Fig. 13.19.



**Fig. 13.19** Religious Regions 2011

It may be seen from **Fig. 13.19** that the greater part of the country has a dominance of Hindu religion and culture with sprinkled populations of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and tribals. The hill states of north east India are however, characterised by the mixed population of Christians, Tribals, Hindus, and Muslims. The Muslim dominated regions are the Kashmir Division and Kargil District of Jammu and Kashmir state. Muslims are quite significant in northern Kerala and in Agra, Meerut, Lucknow, Rohilkhand, and Saharanpur divisions of Uttar Pradesh. Ahmadabad, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai, Surat. The state of Punjab and the Union Territory of Chandigarh are the Sikh dominated parts of the country (**Fig. 13.19**).

**Customs** Customs are a very important component of cultural geography. A custom is a frequent repetition of the same act to the extent that it becomes characteristic of the group of people performing the act. Habit is a similar word which is adopted by an individual, while custom is the act which has been adopted by most of the people of an ethnic group or society. There is a positive correlation between the customs and utilisation of environment (resources). In fact, the tradition bound society has many oral folk traditions. In the delineation of cultural regions, customs (folk dance, folk lore, folk medicine, etc.) are also important indicators.

**Cultural regions of India based on Language, Religion and Customs** The cultural regions of India based on language, religion, and traditions have been plotted in **Fig. 13.20**.

It may be seen from **Fig. 13.20** that on the basis of language, religion, customs, and traditions, India may be divided into the following ten cultural regions:

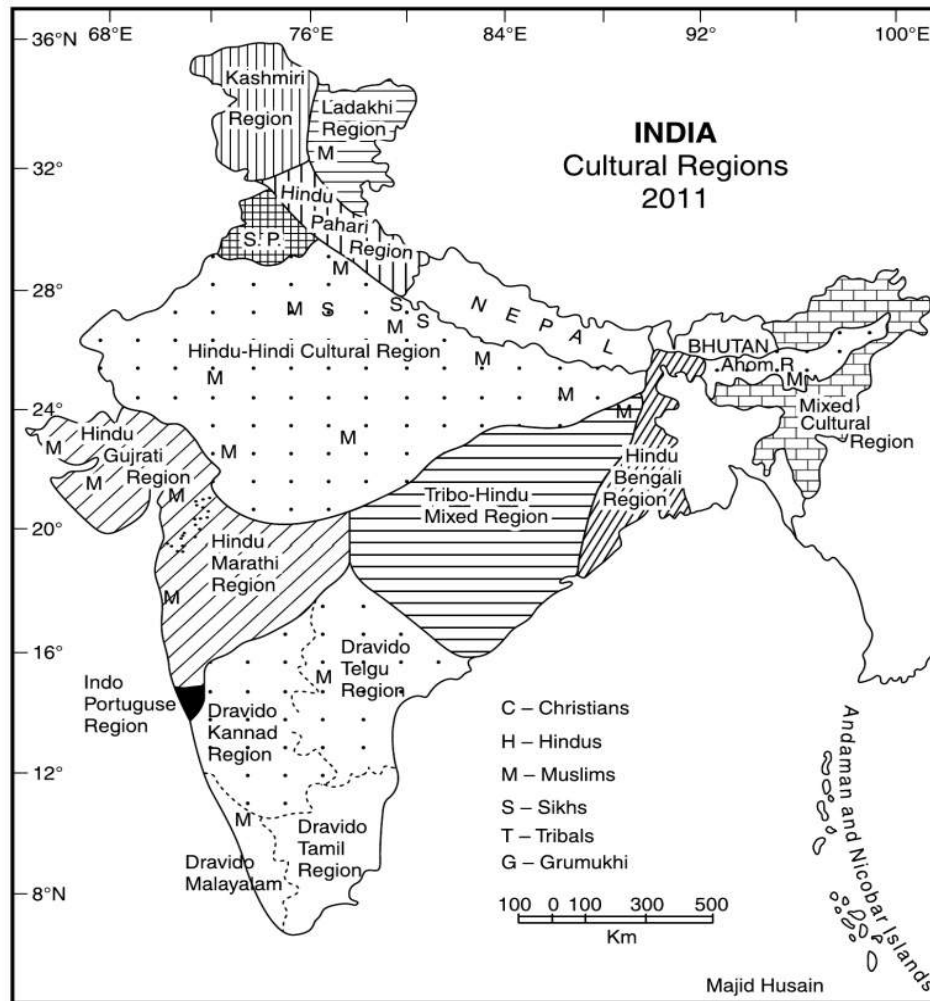
1. The Ladakhi-Buddhist Cultural Region
2. The Kashmiri-Muslim Cultural Region
3. The Sikh-Gurumukhi Cultural Region
4. The Kinnauri-Dev-Bhumi Cultural Region (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand)
5. The Hindu-Hindi Cultural Region
6. The Mixed Cultural Region of north east India
7. The Bengali Cultural Region
8. The Tribo-Hindu Cultural Region of Chotanagpur
9. The Marathi Hindu Cultural Region
10. The Dravido-Cultural Region (comprising of Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Malyalam)

**1. The Ladakh Cultural Region:** It has the dominance of Buddhists and Ladakhi language. There are Gompas and monasteries in this region. Leh and Dhramshala are the important sacred and cultural centres of this region.

**2. The Kashmiri-Muslim Cultural Region:** Stretching over the valley of Kashmir and northern parts of Jammu (Doda district, etc) and southern parts of Ladakh (Kargil) divisions, it is a predominantly Muslim dominated region in which Kashmiri is the main language. Hindus and Sikhs though in minority, speak Kashmiri and follow the Kashmiri cultural traditions.

**3. The Sikh-Gurmukhi Cultural Region:** Stretching over the state of Punjab and the Union Territory of Chandigarh, this region has the majority of Sikhs who speak Punjabi language. The Hindus are in minority. This region is characterised by Gurudwaras in almost all the villages and towns. The Golden Temple situated in the city of Amritsar is a sacred place and an important pilgrimage centre for religious people.





**Fig. 13.20** Cultural Regions based on Religion, Language, and Traditions 2011

**4. The Kinnauri-Dev Bhumi Cultural Region:** This region sprawls over the mountainous parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. It is called the Dev-Bhumi in which there are many religious shrines (Kedarnath, Badrinath, Hardwar, Paonta Saheb, etc.). In the region of Himachal Pradesh, Kinnauri is the dominant language, while in Uttarakhand Hindi is the language of the masses.

**5. The Hindu-Hindi Cultural Region:** This region covers the states of Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, southern parts of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. It is the Hindi Heartland with dominance of Hindu religion. In western Uttar Pradesh and in urban centres, Muslims constitute a significant minority. Sikhs and Christians are also sprinkled, mainly in the urban areas like Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Meerut, Agra, and Allahabad.

**6. The Mixed Cultural Region of North East India:** Stretching across the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura, it is a region of mixed culture in which there are areas of dominance of Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Tribal religion. There is a great diversity in the languages, religion, customs, folk-dances, music, and folk medicine.

**7. The Bengali-Cultural Region:** Spreading over West Bengal and the adjacent regions of Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar, this region has the dominance of Bengali speaking people. The main religion of the people is Hinduism, while Muslims constitute a significant minority in isolated pockets.

**8. The Tribo-Hindu Cultural Region:** This cultural region spreads over Chotanagpur plateau. Most of the people belong to Hindu religion, while Christians are also significant in number. Most of the people speak Hindi language.

**9. The Marathi-Hindu Cultural Region:** Stretching over Maharashtra, parts of Gujarat, Goa and the adjacent regions of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, this region has a dominance of Marathi language and Hindu population. Concentration of Muslims and Buddhists is in isolated pockets.

**10. The Dravido-Cultural Region:** This region sprawls over Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. The people belong to the Paleo-Mediterranean race and speak Dravidian language. The major languages are Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannad (**Fig. 13.20**).

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN POPULATION

The spatial variations in the distribution, density, composition, sex-ratio, literacy rate, migration, and growth of population have a direct bearing on the utilisation of resources and the levels of development of a region/country. It is, therefore, an important concern of geographers. The distribution, density, composition, growth, and migration of population is directly or indirectly controlled by the physical, socio-cultural, economic, and political factors.

India has only about 2.4 per cent of the total area of the world but supports over 17.64 per cent of the total population of the world. Indian population has its own peculiar characteristics which have been precisely presented here.

#### India—Demographic Transition and Population Growth

Demographic transition is the transition from a stable population with high mortality and fertility to stable population with low mortality and fertility. During the transition population growth and changes in the age structure of the population are inevitable.

In India, the demographic transition has been relatively slow but steady. As a result the country was able to avoid adverse effects of too rapid changes in the number and age structure of the population on social and economic development.

Growth of population is the rate in the number of people living in a particular area between two given points of time. The net change between the two points of time is expressed in percentage and is described as the growth rate of population.

The patterns of growth changed between 1901 and 2001 have been plotted in **Fig. 13.21** and the relevant data has been given in **Table 13.6**.

**Table 13.6** India—Growth of Population 1901–2011

<i>Census Year</i> 1	<i>Population</i> 2	<i>Absolute</i> 3	<i>Decadal growth rate</i> 4
1901	23,83,96,327	—	—
1911	25,20,93,390	1,36,97,063	5.75
1921	25,13,21,213	-7,72,177	0.31—Year of Demographic Divide
1931	27,89,77,238	2,76,56,025	
1941	31,86,60,580	3,96,83,324	
1951	36,10,88,090	4,24,27,510	11.00
1961	43,92,34,771	7,81,46,681	14.22
1971	54,81,59,652	10,89,24,881	13.31
1981	68,33,29,097	13,51,69,455	21.64
1991	84,64,21,039	16,30,91,942	24.80
2001	1,02,87,37,436	18,23,16,397	24.66
2011	1,210,195,000	18,14,57,564	23.87
			21.54
			17.64

Source: *Census of India, 2011*.

As stated at the outset, India has the second largest population in the world after China. The population of India, according to the census of 2011 was 1210.19 million. It is growing at a faster pace. On an average, Indian population is being increasing at a growth rate of over 1.76 per cent per annum as against 1.3 per cent for the world as a whole and 0.57 per cent for China (2001–2011).

The population of India as recorded at each decennial census from 1901 has grown steadily except for a decrease during the decade of 1911–21. The year 1921 is known as the year of demographic divide in the demographic history of India when mortality started to decline leading to acceleration in the rate of population growth. The decadal growth of population of India has been given in **Table 13.6**.

It may be observed from **Table 13.6** that the total population of India in 1901 was about 238 million which rose to 361 million in 1951 and became 1210.19 million in 2011.

It may also be seen from **Table 13.6** that there have been significant turning points in the Census Years of 1921, 1951, and 1981. Thus, the temporal changes in the population growth of India during the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be classified under the following four phases (**Fig. 13.21** and **Fig. 13.22**).

1. Period of Stagnant Population—1901–21
2. Period of Steady Growth—1921–51
3. Period of Rapid Growth—1951–81
4. Period of High Growth with Declining Trend—1981–2011

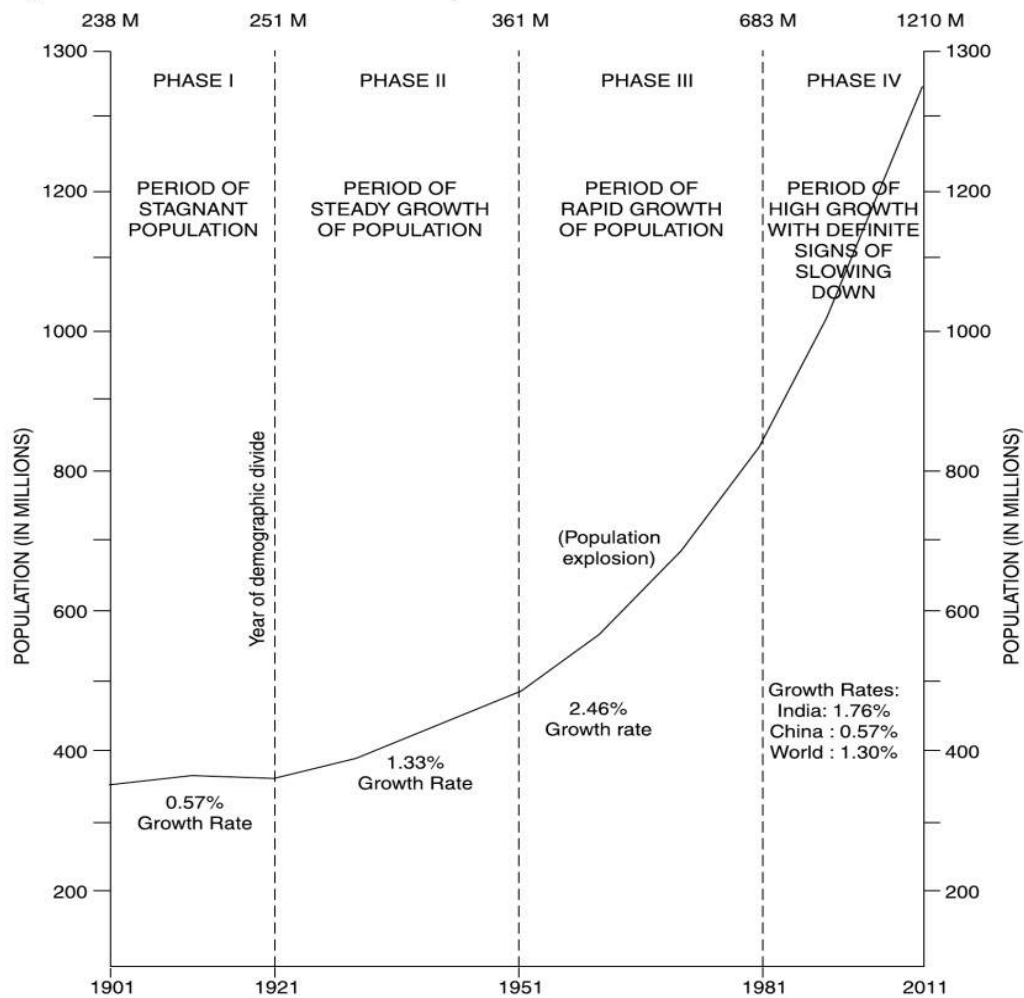
### **1. Period of Stagnant Population**

The first two decades (from 1901 to 1921) was the period of stagnant or stable population. During this period, the birth rate and the death rate were high. Consequently, the population showed a stagnant phase of population growth. It may be termed as the first phase of demographic transition in India. There was high mortality during this period because of epidemics like, cholera, influenza, malaria, plague, small-pox, etc. Food shortage caused severe droughts in the years of 1911, 1913, 1915, 1918 and 1920. Moreover, thousands of Indian soldiers lost their lives during the First World

War (1914–18). Interestingly enough, the population showed a declining trend between 1911 and 1921. The Census year of 1921 is termed as the year of '*demographic divide*' in the demographic history of India.

## 2. Period of Steady Growth of Population (1921–51)

The period between 1921 and 1951 is known as the period of steady growth of population. The birth rate during this period remained high but the death rate started to show the declining trend. Moreover, some of the epidemic diseases like cholera, malaria, plague, small pox were significantly controlled. The problems of scarcity of food were also controlled with the help of the expansion and improvements in the roads and railways networks.



**Fig. 13.21** India: Demographic Transition (1901–2011)

**Table 13.7** India—Birth Rate, Death Rate, and Natural Growth Rate of Population (1911–2011)

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Crude Birth Rate</i>	<i>Crude Death Rate</i>	<i>Natural Growth Persons Per Thousand of Population</i>
1911	49	43	6
1921	48	47	1
1931	46	36	10
1941	45	31	14
1951	40	27	13
1961	42	23	19
1971	37	15	22
1981	34	12	22
1991	31	11	20
2001	26	9	17.7
2011	23	5.4	17.6

Source: *Census of India, 2011*.

It may be seen from **Table 13.7** that the natural growth rate of population was the highest between 1961–71 and 1971–81, being 22 persons per thousand of population. In 2001, the natural growth of population declined to 17 persons per thousand which is an encouraging factor for the demographers and population planners. In fact, 2001–2011 is the first decade (with the exception of 1911–1921) which has actually added lesser population compared to the previous decade. The absolute growth of population is still significantly high being about 20 million per year which is mainly because of the large base (over one billion) of population of India.

At present India is in a state of rapid fertility transition with the pace of decline having accelerated in recent years. India's population is in the late expanding stage in which birth rate is falling, death rate is also falling and population continues to grow. This is because of: (i) family planning, (ii) lower infant mortality, (iii) changing status of women and (iv) increase in standard of living. The pace of decline varies from state to state and experiences of Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Goa, Tamil Nadu, W. Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Odisha, and Kerala indicate that the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) can go much below the replacement level of fertility. The rural urban differential in fertility tend to narrow down as fertility declines. In Nagaland, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Goa, the rural urban birth rates are almost the same. There is greater homogeneity in the Crude Birth Rate in urban areas compared to rural areas. Surprisingly, among the larger high fertility states of north India, Bihar has exhibited a comparatively rapid decline in the Crude Birth Rate during the last ten years, probably as a result of relatively greater acceptance of family planning methods. Interestingly enough, Nagaland recorded the lowest growth rate of 0.47 per cent during the decade of 2001–2011.

### Distribution of Population

The distribution of population in any country/region is closely influenced by the physical (terrain, topography, climate, natural vegetation, minerals, and soils), socioeconomic (religion, customs, education, awareness, per capita income, and standard of living), and political factors (government policy towards population). The parts of the country having good climate, fertile soils, adequate availability of water, minerals, good connectivity by roads and railways have a high concentration of population.