

# Hindus' Share In India's Population Shrunk 8% | PM's Economic Council Report

## Why In News

- A study by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** has revealed that the population share of the majority religion in India (Hindus) declined sharply by **7.8% between 1950 and 2015**, while a number of neighbouring countries saw a jump in the population of their majority community.



- While the **Hindu population shrunk in India**, the share of minorities, including Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Sikhs, went up. However, the number of Jains and Parsis in the population mix decreased. This **trend of decline in the majority** population has also been seen in Nepal and Myanmar. However, 38 Islamic countries have seen an increase in the population of Muslims.



## ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE PRIME MINISTER (EAC-PM)

- According to the study, **except for Parsis and Jains, the proportion** of all other religious minorities, including Christians, Buddhists, and Sikhs, in India experienced an increase in their population share, reaching up to 6.58 per cent during this period.

### Decline In Hindu Population In India

- The **share of Hindus in India's population** saw a decrease from 84.68 per cent in 1950 to 78.06 per cent in 2015, while that of Muslims witnessed an increase from 9.84 per cent to 14.09 per cent in the same period, according to the EAC-PM study.



- “In India, the share of the **majority Hindu population decreased** by 7.82 per cent between 1950 and 2015 (from 84.68 per cent to 78.06 per cent). The share of the Muslim population in 1950 was 9.84 per cent and increased to 14.09 per cent in 2015 — a 43.15 per cent increase in their share,” says the working paper, **Share of Religious Minorities: A Cross-Country Analysis (1950-2015)**, authored by Shamika Ravi, Apurv Kumar Mishra and Abraham Jose.

## Minorities Grew In India

- **While the Hindu population shrunk** in India, the share of minorities went up between 1950 and 2015. The share of the Christian population rose from 2.24 per cent in **1950 to 2.36 per cent in 2015** (an increase of 5.38 per cent), the share of the population went up from 1.24 per cent to 1.85 per cent (a 6.58 percent point rise) for the Sikhs.

### Religious Demographic Changes 1950 to 2015

Country	Rate of change in share
Myanmar	-9.84
India	-7.82
Nepal	-3.61
Maldives	-1.47
Afghanistan	0.29
Pakistan	3.75
Sri Lanka	5.25
Bhutan	17.67
Bangladesh	18.55



- **Even the share of the Buddhist** population witnessed a noticeable increase from 0.05 per cent in 1950 to 0.81 per cent.
- On the other hand, the **share of Jains in the population** of India decreased from 0.45 per cent in 1950 to 0.36 per cent in 2015.
- The **share of the Parsi population in India** witnessed a stark 85 per cent decline, reducing from 0.03 per cent share in 1950 to 0.004 per cent in 2015.
- **"Contrary to the noise in several quarters,** careful analysis of the data shows that minorities are not just protected, but indeed thriving in India. This is particularly remarkable given the wider context **within the South Asian neighbourhood** where the share of the majority religious denomination has increased and minority populations have shrunk alarmingly across countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan," the authors say.

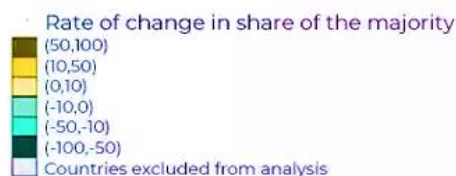
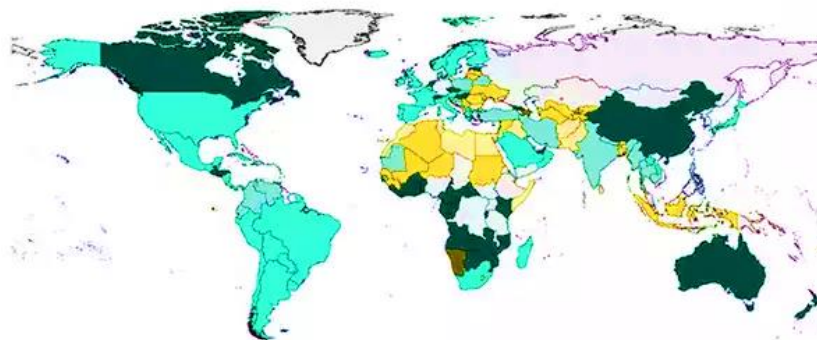


## Muslim Majority Increases In Pakistan, Bangladesh

- The paper also throws light on the global trend in the share of religious minorities and majorities in **167 countries** over a period of 65 years.
- This trend of change in population is slightly different in a **Muslim-majority country**. According to the report released, the share of Muslims has increased in 38 Muslim-majority countries.



### Religious Demographic Changes TOI 1950 to 2015



- "On the Indian subcontinent, all the Muslim majority countries witnessed an increase in the share of the majority religious denomination except Maldives where the share of the majority group (Shafi'i Sunnis) declined by 1.47 per cent," it said.



- In **Bangladesh**, there was an **18 per cent increase** in the share of the majority religious group which is the largest such increase in the Indian subcontinent. Pakistan witnessed an **increase of 3.75 per cent** in the share of the majority religious denomination (Hanafi Muslim) and a 10 per cent increase in the share of the total Muslim population despite the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.
- **In 1950, Muslims accounted for 77.45 per cent** of the population in Pakistan. Presently, Muslims in the neighboring country constitute 80.36 per cent. "Pakistan witnessed an increase of 3.75 per cent in the share of the majority religious denomination (Hanafi Muslim) and a 10 per cent increase in the share of the total Muslim population despite the creation of Bangladesh in 1971," it said.

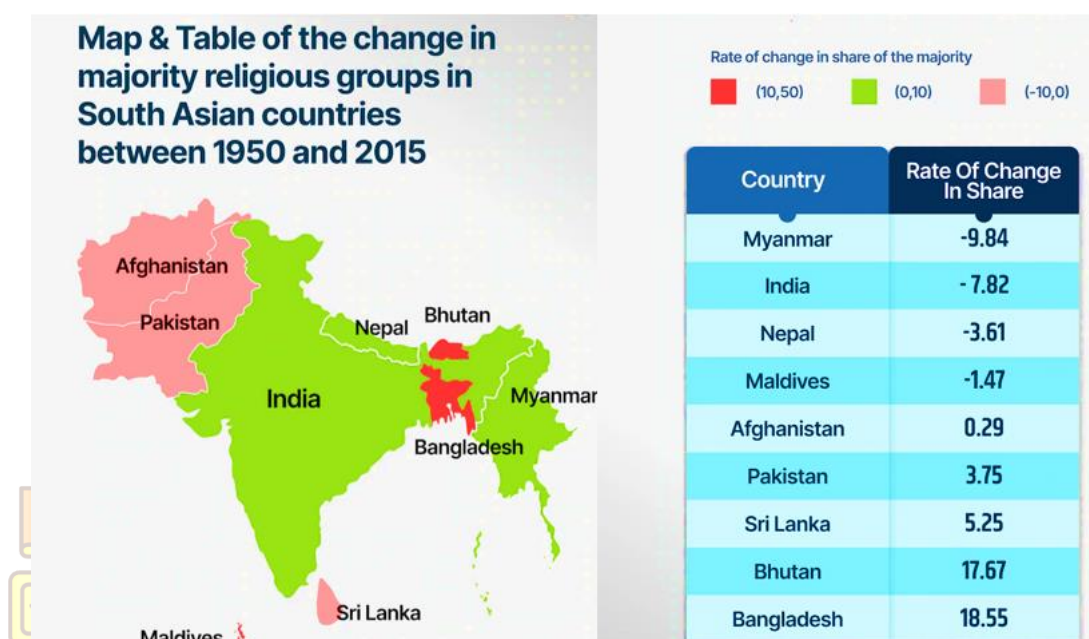
## IN PERSPECTIVE (In %)

Countries	Chg of majority population
Myanmar	-9.84
<b>India</b>	<b>-7.82</b>
Nepal	-3.61
Maldives	-1.47
Afghanistan	0.29
Pakistan	3.75
Sri Lanka	5.25
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Source: PM -EAC report

- Over the same period, Muslims in **Bangladesh have increased from 74.24 per cent to 88.02 per cent of the population**. Similarly, the Muslim population in Afghanistan has risen from 88.75 per cent to 89.01 per cent. However, in the Maldives, there has been a slight decline in the Muslim population, from 99.83 per cent to 98.36 per cent.

- As per the report, the population of Buddhists in Myanmar has decreased from 78.53 per cent to 70.80 per cent, the population of Buddhists in Sri Lanka has increased from 64.28 per cent to 67.65 per cent and the population of Buddhists in Bhutan has increased from 71.44 per cent to 84.07 per cent. However, on the other hand, in Nepal, the population of Hindus has decreased from 84.30 per cent to 81.26 per cent.



## Conclusion

- The Referring to the global trends on increase and decrease in the share of the majority religious population, the authors said, “Our hypothesis is that the change in the proportion of the minority population as a share of total population is a **good proxy for the status of minorities** in a country over time. A society which provides a congenial environment for the flourishing of minorities is more likely to witness an increase or stabilization in their numbers over a period of three generations.”

