

Arunachal Pradesh joins the Christian northeast

We are deviating from our planned course to describe the religious demography of Arunachal Pradesh, in view of the sad developments there. The Governor of that strategically crucial State has been constrained to send a report to the President alleging, among other things, communal motivation to the actions of the Chief Minister and the elected Government.

Arunachal Pradesh constitutes one of the main stories of the Religion Data of Census 2011; in the course of the last decade of 2001-11, the proportion of Christians in the population of the State has risen from less than 19 to more than 30 percent, and they now form a majority or near majority of the population in several districts. The share of Christians in the Scheduled Tribes population of the State and the districts is even higher.

Arunachal Pradesh, unlike other hill States of the northeast, had escaped widespread Christianisation until 1981 and, to a large extent, even until 1991. Christian presence in the State began to acquire serious proportions in 2001; the Religion Data of Census 2011 indicates that the State is now well on its way towards nearly complete Christianisation of the Schedule Tribes population as it happened within the first decade or two of Independence in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur and, to a significant extent, in Meghalaya.

The communal motivations that the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh has hinted at are related to this organised, systematic, and perhaps not entirely voluntary, upsurge of Christianity in that State. This upsurge has finally defeated the efforts initiated by both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi to keep Arunachal Pradesh away from the evangelical tide that had submerged the other hill States of the northeast in their time. In the following, we try to draw a comprehensive picture of this phenomenon on the basis of the Religion Data of the Censuses since 1971.

Religious Demography of Arunachal Pradesh, 1971-2011

Arunachal Pradesh comprises the former Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA); it was constituted as the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1972 and became a State in 1987. The first Census in Arunachal Pradesh was held only in 1971. In the Table below, we have compiled the religious profile of the population as recorded in that and the subsequent four decennial censuses. The last column of this Table gives the factor by which the population of different communities has multiplied between 1971 and 2011.

‘Others’ in the Table below, include Sikhs, Jains and those counted under the category of Religion Not Stated (RNS). Of 10,706 ‘Others’ in 2011, 3,827 are Sikhs, 771 are Jains and the remaining 6,648 are RNS.

Almost the entire population of Arunachal Pradesh is divided among Other Religions and Persuasions (ORPs), Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. Besides these, there are also 27,045 Muslims in 2011 compared to only 842 in 1971. But, the most remarkable change in these four decades has occurred in the number and proportion of Christians.

Populaiton of different religious communities in Arunachal Pradesh, 1971-2011

	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	MF
Total	4,67,511	6,31,839	8,64,558	10,97,968	13,83,727	2.96
ORP	2,96,674	3,26,000	3,13,118	3,37,399	3,62,553	1.22
Hindu	1,02,832	1,84,732	3,20,212	3,79,935	4,01,876	3.91
Buddhist	61,400	86,483	1,11,372	1,43,028	1,62,815	2.65
Christian	3,684	27,306	89,013	2,05,548	4,18,732	113.66
Muslim	842	5,073	11,922	20,675	27,045	32.12
Others	2,079	2,245	18,921	11,383	10,706	5.15

Growth of Christianity since 1971

In 1971, only 3,864 Christians were counted in Arunachal Pradesh in the total population of 4.67 lakhs. Of the few Christians counted then, only 1,091 were from the Scheduled Tribes, and of these 520 belonged to the Padam tribe. The number of Christians grew substantially in 1981 and 1991, but it still remained low compared to the total population. During the last two decades, their numbers have risen rapidly and now, in 2011, Christians constitute the largest religious community of the State. The figures below graphically show the rapid growth of Christians relative to the other religious communities. Until 1991, they were fewer than even the Buddhists, who are limited to only a few districts of the State; in 2001, they overtook the Buddhists and in 2011, their numbers have surpassed both the Hindus and the ORPs.



Changing share of different communities

Another way to appreciate the drastic change that has occurred in the religious profile of Arunachal Pradesh is to look at the share of different religious communities in the total population. As seen in the Table here, Christians had a share of less than one percent of the population in 1971; it has risen to more

Share of different communities, 1971-2011

	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
ORP	63.46	51.60	36.22	30.73	26.20
Hindu	22.00	29.24	37.04	34.60	29.04
Buddhist	13.13	13.69	12.88	13.03	11.77
Christian	0.79	4.32	10.30	18.72	30.26
Muslim	0.18	0.80	1.38	1.88	1.95
Others	0.44	0.36	2.19	1.04	0.77

than 30 percent now and much of this change has happened in the last two decades. The share of ORPs, under which more than 63 percent of the population was classified in 1971, has correspondingly declined to just 26 percent. The share of Buddhists had remained nearly unchanged at around 13 percent up to 2001; in 2011, it has declined to less than 12 percent. The share of Hindus had risen from 22 percent to 37 percent between 1971 and 1991; in the last two decades, they have lost as many as 8 percentage points off this peak value. The share of Muslims in these four decades has increased from 0.18 percent to nearly 2 percent.

Share of Christianity in the Scheduled Tribes Population

Christians have a much higher share in the ST population

Since Christian evangelical activity is aimed at mainly the Scheduled Tribes (ST), the Christian share among them, rather than in the total population, is a more accurate measure of the spread of Christianity in the State. Unfortunately, separate religious demographic data for the Scheduled Tribes has not been released yet for the Census of 2011. In the Table here, we have compiled the religious profile of the Scheduled Tribes as counted in 2001.

Religious Profile of STs, 2001

Religion	Number	%Share
Total	7,05,158	100.00
ORP	3,33,102	47.24
Christian	1,86,617	26.46
Hindu	92,577	13.13
Buddhist	82,634	11.72
Muslim	995	0.14
Others	9,233	1.31

Of the total population of 10.98 lakhs in 2001, 7.05 lakhs belonged to the Scheduled Tribes. Among these, 1.87 lakhs, forming 26.5 percent of the ST population were Christians; this proportion was considerably higher than the share of 18.7 percent that they had in the total population. There were less than 19 thousand Christians in the non-ST population of 3.93 lakhs; their share in this population was only 4.8 percent.

We do have the total number of Scheduled Tribes counted in 2011, though their religious profile is not yet available. In 2011, of the total population of 13.84 lakhs, 9.52 lakhs are from the ST communities. If we conservatively assume that the ST and non-ST Christians have grown at the same rate during 2001-11, then of the 4.19 lakh Christians counted in 2011, at least 3.80 lakhs should be from the ST communities, forming about 40 percent of the ST population. Thus Christianity seems to have spread much deeper among the Scheduled Tribes populations than what is suggested by their share of 30 percent in the total population of the State.

Share of Christians in major Scheduled Tribe communities

The share of Christians in some of the major Scheduled Tribe communities of the State may be much higher than even 40 percent that we have estimated for the total ST population. We do not yet have the data for individual ST communities, but an analysis of the data of the previous Census indicates that many of the major communities may have been fully converted to Christianity now.

Census 2001 counts as many as a 100 tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh. Many of these represent very small groups. As many as 13 of these have less than 10 members, and 3 among them have only one member each. Only 47 of the 100 communities have more than a thousand members; these 47 communities exhaust all but 11 thousand of the total ST population of the State. Dividing the Scheduled Tribe populations into a great multiplicity of micro units is a peculiar feature of the Census in Arunachal Pradesh.

There are only 18 larger tribal communities with a population of more than ten thousand each. These eighteen account for 5.91 lakh of the total 7.05 lakh ST population in 2001. Among these, there are 12 in which the share of Christians had reached above 15 percent in 2001. In the Table below, we have compiled the total and Christian population of these 12 communities. Of 1.87 lakh ST Christians counted in 2001, 1.60 lakh were from these communities. Below, we discuss the geographical spread and level of Christianisation of these communities in some detail.

Christianity in major ST communities, 2001

	Total	Christians	%Christian
Total ST	7,05,158	1,86,617	26.46
Wancho	47,788	35,057	73.36
Nyishi*	45,276	24,063	53.15
Nocte	33,680	14,630	43.44
Tangsa	20,962	8,917	42.54
Nissi	87,656	32,259	36.80
Nishang	21,907	7,934	36.22
Adi Padam	11,625	3,002	25.82
Abor	19,927	4,912	24.65
Adi	32,582	7,949	24.40
Adi Gallong	48,126	10,526	21.87
Galong	27,239	5,126	18.82
Adi Minyong	33,984	5,378	15.83

* Census 2001 lists this community as Dafla; that name has been officially changed to Nyishi by a constitutional amendment of March 2008.

Wancho and Nocte of Tirap

Wancho and Nocte are the two main tribal communities of the eastern district of Tirap. In 2001, there were a total of 47,788 Wancho and 33,680 Nocte in the State; of these 47,086 Wancho and 31,559 Nocte were counted in Tirap alone.

Wancho and Nocte comprised almost the entire ST population of Tirap. Besides them on Tutcha Nocte and Naga Tribes had any significant number. As seen in the Table below, 73.5 percent of the Wancho and 42 percent of Nocte of Tirap had been converted to Christianity in 2001. As a consequence of such large-scale conversion of these two communities, Christians had acquired a share of nearly 59 percent in the Scheduled Tribes and 50 percent in the total population of Tirap.

In 2011, the share of Christians in Tirap has risen to 74.5 percent. We do not have separate religion data for the Scheduled Tribes yet, but it can be presumed that, as in 2001, 98 percent of the 83.4 thousand Christians counted in the district in 2011, or about 82 thousand of them are from the Scheduled Tribes and they are largely either Wancho or Nocte. The ST population of the district in 2011 is 98.4 thousand. This implies that about 83 percent of the tribal population of the district has now been Christianised. This makes the district similar to the neighbouring districts of Nagaland as far as the spread of Christianity among the tribal communities is concerned. It is widely believed that the conversion of the Wancho and the Nocte has been largely effected by the Church-influenced militant organisations of Nagaland. Much of this has happened over the last two decades. In 1981, there were only 6,962 Christians counted in Tirap (which then included Changlang also) and even in 1991 there were only 15.4 thousand Christians there. The number suddenly rose to 50 thousand in 2001 and 83.4 thousand in 2011.

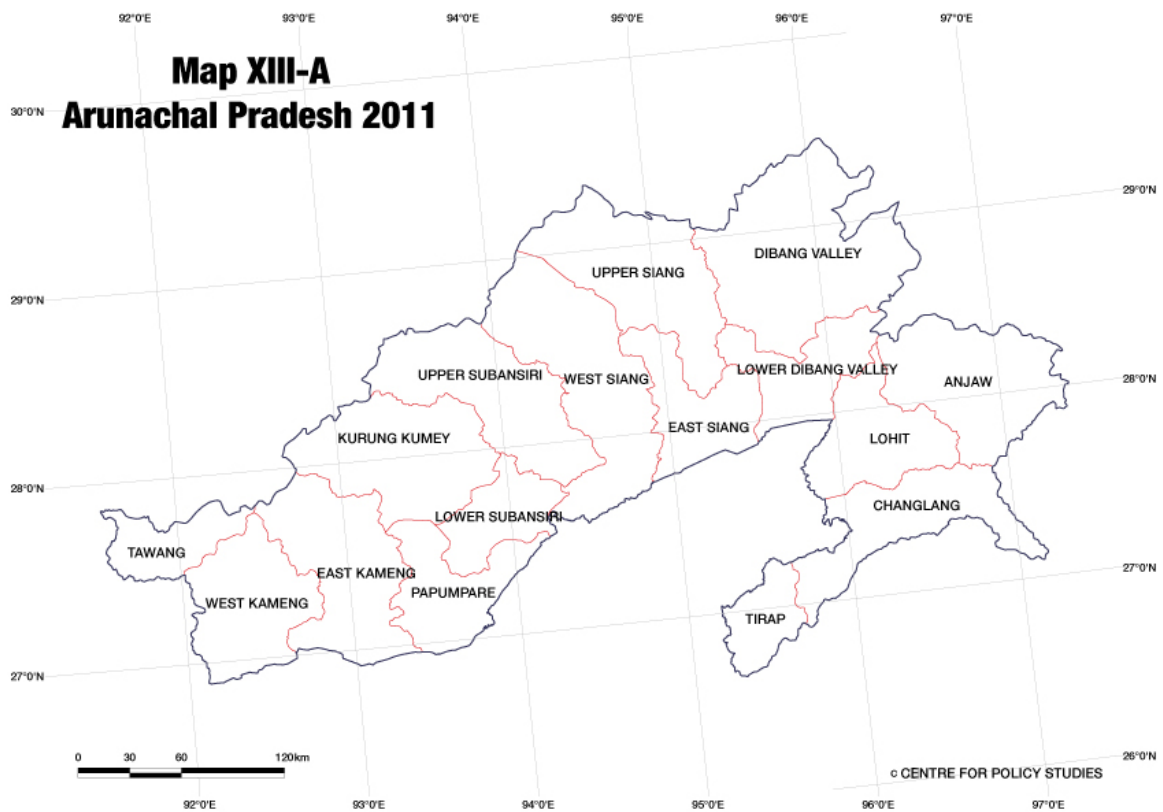
Tirap, 2001				
	Total	Christian	%C	
Wancho	47,086	34,625	73.54	
Nocte	31,559	13,366	42.35	
All ST	83,940	49,195	58.61	
Total 2001	1,00,326	50,199	50.04	
All ST 2011	98,372	na	na	
Total 2011	1,11,975	83,361	74.45	

Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang

After Wancho and Nocte, Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang, who are a related group of tribes, had the highest proportion of Christians amongst them in 2001. Nissi is the largest tribal community of the State; Nyishi is the fourth largest after Nissi, Adi Gallong and Wancho.

		Nyishi	Nissi	Nishang	All ST
Nissi, Nyishi and Nishang are mainly domiciled in East Kameng, Papum Pare and Lower Subansiri; the last has now been divided into Lower Subansiri and Kurung	Arunachal P	45,276	87,656	21,907	7,05,158
	East Kameng	16,644	15,186	3,664	49,585
	Papum Pare	18,192	25,175	5,310	69,007
	L. Subansiri	10,230	42,282	11,989	88,512

Kumey. These four districts lie to the east of the extreme western districts of Tawang and West Kameng (Map XIII-A). Of the total 45.3 thousand Nyishi in the State, 45.1 thousand were in these three districts; of 87.7 thousands Nissi, 82.6 thousand were in these three districts, there were another 3.9 thousand Nissi in the adjoining Upper Subansiri; and, of 21.9 thousands from the Nishang community, 21 thousand were in these three. Unlike in Tirap, where Wancho and Nocte exhaust nearly the whole population, these three communities are not the only tribal communities in these districts; there are several other relatively smaller tribes that we shall mention while discussing the individual districts of this region.



East Kameng

In East Kameng, 35 percent of Nyishi, 39 percent of Nishang and 22.5 percent of Nissi were converted in 2001. Besides these three, there were 7.3 thousand Bangni, of whom 28 percent were Christian. Several communities, with relatively smaller population, also had high share of Christians among them. For example, of 1,126 Miji, 52 percent, and of 7,299 Bangni, 28 percent were Christian. Miji and Bangni are part of the Adi group of tribes. There were also significant numbers of Aka and Sulung in East Kameng; level of conversion among them was relatively low.

East Kameng, 2001

	Total	Christian	%C
Nyishi	16,644	5,815	34.94
Nissi	15,186	3,422	22.53
Nishang	3,664	1,435	39.16
Miji	1,126	586	52.04
Bangni	7,299	2,046	28.03

Of the total 14,550 Christians in the district, 14,301 were from the Scheduled Tribes; they formed 28.8 percent of the ST and 25.5 percent of the total population. In 2011, the number of

	Total	Christian	%C
ST 2001	49,585	14,301	28.84
Total 2001	57,179	14,550	25.45
ST 2011	72,400	na	na
Total 2011	78,690	37,136	47.19

Christians in the district has risen by 2.55 times to 37,136, and their share in the population has reached 47 percent. If, as in 2001, nearly all of the Christians in the district are from the ST communities, then their proportion in the total ST population of 72.4 thousand would now be above 51 percent; their share among individual tribal communities like Nyishi, Nissi, Nishang, Bangani and Miji is likely to be much higher than 50 percent.

Papum Pare

Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang accounted for nearly 49 thousand of the 69 thousand Scheduled Tribes in Papum Pare in 2001. And, more than 75 percent of Nyishi, 55 percent of Nissi and 62 percent of Nishang were already converted then. There were many other similar communities with fairly high share of Christians among them. Thus nearly half of Adi, Adi Gallong, Galong and Tagin were Christians in 2001. Apatani was the only significant community then with a relatively low share of Christians at 12 percent.

Papum Pare, 2001

	Total	Christian	%Share
Nyishi	18,192	13,762	75.65
Nissi	25,175	13,895	55.19
Nishang	5,310	3,303	62.20
Adi	2,062	1,028	49.85
Adi Gallong	1,790	873	48.77
Galong	2,151	988	45.93
Tagin	1,188	600	50.51
Apatani	6,318	762	12.06

Papum Pare hosts the capital city of Itanagar; perhaps because of this, the proportion of non-ST persons in the population is fairly high. In the total population of 1.22 lakh in 2001, only 69 thousand were from ST communities. But of 36.6 thousand Christians in the district, 34.2 thousand were from the ST. The share of Christians among them was already near 50 percent though it was only about 30 percent for the total population. Now in 2011, the share of Christians in the population of the district has risen to about 48 percent. Since more than 90 percent of the 84.4 thousand Christians in 2011 are likely to be from the ST communities, as in 2001, the share of Christians in the ST now should be around 67 percent. Individual tribal communities like the Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang, etc., which had fairly high share of Christians in 2001, may have been now nearly fully converted.

	Total	Christian	%C
ST 2001	69,007	34,157	49.50
Total 2001	1,22,003	36,574	29.98
ST 2011	1,17,216	-	-
Total 2011	1,76,573	84,397	47.80

Lower Subansiri and Kurung Kumey

In 2001, Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang accounted for 64.5 thousand of 88.5 thousand Scheduled Tribes in Lower Subansiri, which then included the newly carved district of Karung Kumey. They also accounted for 21.8 thousand of the 23.4 thousand ST Christians in the district.

Lower Subansiri (including Karung Kumey)

	Total	Christian	%Share
Nyishi	10,230	4,423	43.24
Nissi	42,282	14,373	33.99
Nishang	11,989	2,986	24.91
Apatani	18,233	1,222	6.70

Besides these three, Apatani had a considerable population of 18.2 thousand, but the share of Christians among them was rather low. Hill Miri formed another 2,893 of the ST population; there were only 66 Christians among them. Christian influence was thus largely limited to Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang.

In 2001, there were a total of 24,078 Christians in the district, of whom 23,392 were from the Scheduled Tribes, and of these 21,782 were from the Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang communities.

	Total	Christian	%Share
ST 2001	88,512	23,392	26.43
Total 2001	98,244	24,078	24.51
ST 2011	1,63,675	na	na
Total 2011	1,75,106	85,591	48.88

In 2011, the total population of Lower Subansiri and Karung Kumey together is 1.75

lakhs; of this, 1.64 lakhs is from the Scheduled Tribes. There are a total of 85.6 thousand Christians, who are likely to be largely from the STs, as in 2001. The share of Christians in the population has now risen to 49 percent; it would be above 50 percent among the Scheduled Tribes.

In case, the greatly enhanced number of Christians in 2011 is mainly from the Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang, as in 2001, then it would imply that these three communities have now been largely converted. Alternately, it would mean that the Apatani, who had largely escaped conversion until 2001, and other smaller groups, might have also succumbed now. In either case, Christianity seems to have entered much deeper into the Scheduled Tribe communities of Lower Subansiri (including Karung Kumey) in 2011.

Upper Subansiri

Upper Subansiri had largely escaped large-scale conversion to Christianity in 2001. The major tribal community of the district was Tagin; 36.5 thousand of 49.5 thousand STs were from the Tagin community. The share of Christians in the Tagin was less than 5 percent. Galong and Nissi were the other major communities. The latter two communities had a high share of Christians elsewhere in the State, but in this district, only 4.7 percent of the Nissi and 9.4 percent of the Galong population was Christians.

Upper Subansiri

	Total	Christian	%Share
Tagin	36,549	1,774	4.85
Galong	6,490	609	9.38
Nissi	3,889	184	4.73
ST 2001	49,552	2,793	5.64
Total 2001	55,346	3,240	5.85
ST 2011	78,323	na	na
Total 2011	83,448	8,779	10.52

The share of Christians in the total population of the district was 5.85 percent; in the ST population, their share was somewhat lower at 5.64 percent. In 2011, the proportion of Christians in the total population has nearly doubled to 10.5 percent. We shall know the extent of the spread of Christianity among different tribal communities only when such data becomes available.

Adi Gallong, Adi, Adi Padam, Abor of Siang and Debang region

As seen in the Table of the share of Christian in major tribal communities above, Adi Gallong, Adi, Adi Padam, Abor, etc., are the other communities in which the share of Christians has reached above 15 percent. These communities belong to the Adi group of tribes and are particularly concentrated in West Siang, East Siang, Upper Siang and Dibang Valley, including lower Dibang Valley, districts lying in the central part of the State (Map XIII-A). Almost all of Abor, Adi Minyong and Adi Padam are in these four districts; significant numbers of Adi Gallong, Adi and Galong are domiciled in other districts also; as we have seen above, Upper Subansiri accommodates 6.5 thousand of the Galong community.

	Adi				Adi	
	Gallong	Adi	Abor	Galong	Minyong	Padam
Arunachal P	48,126	32,582	19,927	27,239	33,984	11,625
West Siang	39,758	8,613	3,535	14,379	8,247	59
East Siang	4,277	6,579	11,238	2,957	21,544	4,204
Upper Siang	79	9,707	716	160	2,404	1,859
Dibang Valley	471	1,720	3,237	342	804	4,752

In 2001, the share of Christians in all these communities was lower than in Nyishi, Nissi, Nishang and in Wancho and Nocte communities that we have discussed earlier. Consequently, the share of Christians in the population of these districts was considerably lower than in Kameng, Papum Pare and Subansiri region in the west and in Tirap in the east. Within these four districts, the share of Christians became lower as we moved towards the west. Thus there were 19.4 percent Christians in West Siang, 15.3 percent in East Siang, 12.9 percent in Upper Siang and 10.6 percent in Dibang Valley. In 2011, the share of Christians in all these districts has increased and is now 26.7, 18.4, 16.0 and 15.2 percent respectively. During 2001-11, Dibang Valley has been divided into Dibang Valley and Lower Dibang Valley districts; the share of Christians in the two combined is 15.2 percent; their share is much lower at 2.8 percent in the current Dibang Valley district, but the total population of this district is only 8,004. In Lower Dibang Valley, Christians form 17 percent of the total population of 54.1 thousand. Below, we discuss the tribal and religious profile of these districts in greater detail.

West Siang

In 2001, Adi Gallong, Adi, Galong, Abor, Bokar, Bori and Adi Minyong were the major tribal communities of this district. These accounted for 78.3 thousand of the total 84.9 thousand ST population of the district. The share of Christians was high in the Adi and Abor and much higher in the smaller communities of Bokar and Bori. These 7 communities together accounted for 17.8 thousand of the 19.1 thousand ST Christians in the district.

There were a total of 20.1 thousand Christians in the district in 2001; of these, 19.1 thousand were from the STs, they formed 22.5 percent of the ST population compared to their share of 19.4 percent in the total population. In 2011, Christians have a share of 26.7 percent in the total population. In case, nearly all of the 30 thousand Christians in the district are from the ST communities, as in 2001, then their share in the STs would be much above 30 percent.

East Siang

Adi Minyong, Abor and Adi were the major tribal communities of East Siang in 2001. There were also smaller numbers of Adi Gallong, Galong, Adi Padam and Adi Pasi. The share of Christians was very high in the Adi Gallong and Galong and relatively high in the Adi. These seven formed 54.6 thousand

East Siang, 2001

	Total	Christian	%Share
Adi Minyong	21,544	3,771	17.50
Abor	11,238	1,985	17.66
Adi	6,579	1,527	23.21
Adi Gallong	4,277	2,039	47.67
Galong	2,957	1,234	41.73
Adi Padam	4,204	590	14.03
Adi Pasi	1,480	239	16.15

of the total ST population of 60.4 thousand; 11.5 thousand of the 12.5 thousand ST Christians were from these communities.

In 2001, there were a total of 13.4 thousand Christians in the district; of these 12.5 thousand were from the STs.

Christians formed 15.3 percent of the total and 20.7 percent of the ST population of the district. In 2011, proportion of Christians in the total population has risen to 18.4 percent. If most of the 18.2 thousand Christians counted in 2011 are from the ST communities, as in 2001, then they would form more than a quarter of about 70 thousand STs now.

	Total	Christian	%Share
ST 2001	60,420	12,507	20.70
Total 2001	87,397	13,406	15.34
ST 2011	69,979	na	na
Total 2011	99,214	18,254	18.40

Upper Siang

Adis were the major tribal community of Upper Siang in 2001; the share of Christians among them was relatively low at below 12 percent. Share of Christians was low also in the Adi Minyong, Adi Padam and Adi Pasi. There were 3,506 of Pangsi in the district; share

Upper Siang, 2001

	Total	Christian	%Share
Adi	9,707	1,138	11.72
Adi Minyong	2,404	234	9.73
Adi Padam	1,859	191	10.27
Adi Pasi	1,306	146	11.18
Pangsi	3,506	1,103	31.46
Galong	160	46	28.75

of Christians among them was much higher at 31.5 percent. Incidentally, there were only 4,385 Pangsi in the State, and of them 31.7 percent were Christian. There were a few Galong; share of Christians among them was very high. These 6 communities accounted for 18.9 thousand of 26.1 thousand STs in the district and 2,858 of 3,573 ST Christians in the district.

There were only 4,291 Christians in the district in 2001; they formed 12.9 percent of the population. Of these, 3,573 were from the ST communities; their share in the ST population was 13.7

	Total	Christian	%Share
ST 2001	26,094	3,573	13.69
Total 2001	33,363	4,291	12.86
ST 2011	28,468	na	na
Total 2011	35,320	5,643	15.98

percent. In 2011, the share of Christians in the total population of the district has gone up to 16 percent. Their share in the ST population would be somewhat higher, as in 2001.

Dibang Valley (including Lower Dibang Valley)

Idu/Chulikata Mishmi is the largest tribal community of Dibang Valley. There are almost no Christians among them. Share of Christians is low in Mishing/Miri and Mishmi also; these communities have a considerable share of Hindus. The share of Christians is high in Adi Padam, Abor, Adi Minyong, Adi, Adi Gallong and Galong communities of Dibang Valley. The communities we have listed account for 25.5 thousand of the ST population of 26.8 thousand and 4,916 of 5,266 ST Christians in the district in 2001.

Dibang Valley (including Lower Dibang), 2001

	Total	Christian	%Share
Abor	3,237	1,290	39.85
Adi	1,720	663	38.55
Adi Gallong	471	181	38.43
Galong	342	166	48.54
Adi Minyong	804	291	36.19
Adi Padam	4,752	2,006	42.21
Idu/C. Mishmi	9,076	90	0.99
Mishing/Miri	3,233	162	5.01
Mishmi	1,903	67	3.52

There were 6,134 Christians in the district in 2001; they formed 10.6 percent of the population. Of these, 5,266 were from the ST communities; their share in the ST population was 19.6

	Total	Christian	%Share
ST 2001	26,832	5,266	19.63
Total 2001	57,720	6,134	10.63
ST 2011	31,675	na	na
Total 2011	62,084	9,436	15.20

percent. Dibang Valley has considerable non-ST population; in the total population of 57.7 thousand there were only 26.8 thousand STs; in 2011 also, of the total population of 62.1 thousand just about half are STs. In 2011, proportion of Christians in the total population has gone up to 15.20 percent; their share in the ST population is likely to have gone up to above 30 percent. This would mean that Christianisation has reached much deeper into several ST communities of Dibang Valley that already had about or more than 40 percent of Christians in 2001.

Tangsa and others of Changlang

In the Table of major tribal communities with high share of Christians, we are now left with only the Tangsa. This community is domiciled almost entirely in Changlang. Of 20,962 Tangsa in Arunachal Pradesh 20,431 are in this eastern district. The district has several other Tangsa communities also, including Mossang Tangsa, Rongrang Tangsa, Haisa Tangsa, Hotan Tangsa, etc. Most of these, except the first two, have only a few members; but all of the Tangsa communities have a high presence of Christians.

In the Table here, we have listed only those of the ST communities of Changlang that have a significant share of Christians. Hindus and Buddhists have a considerable presence in the STs of this district. We shall discuss them separately. The six communities listed here account for 15,267 of 18,077 ST Christians in 2001; and, for 31 thousand of 45 thousand Scheduled Tribes of the district. The remaining Christians are spread in small numbers over several

Changlang, 2001

	Total	Christian	%Share
Tangsa	20,431	8,750	42.83
Mossang Tangsa	2,702	1,977	73.17
Rongrang Tangsa	754	695	92.18
Yobin	2,100	2,086	99.33
Nocte	1,348	949	70.40
Naga	3,940	810	20.56

communities. It is remarkable that the share of Christians is very high, already in 2001, in five of these six communities.

	Total	Christian	%Share
Changlang is one of the districts with a high share of non-ST population, among whom there are considerable numbers of Hindus and Buddhists. But Christians are largely from the Scheduled Tribes; of a total of 21.9 thousand Christians in 2001, 18.1 thousand were from the STs. Proportion of Christians in the total population was 17.5 percent; in the ST population, it was much higher at about 40 percent. In 2011, the proportion of Christians in the total population has increased to 24.3 percent. If, as in 2001, about 80 percent of 36 thousand Christians counted in 2011 are from the STs, then their share in the ST population of 2011 works out to be around 55 percent. This means that many of the communities that had a very high presence of Christians already in 2001 may have become entirely Christian now.	45,351	18,077	39.86
ST 2001	1,25,422	21,931	17.49
Total 2001	53,878	na	na
ST 2011	1,48,226	35,969	24.27
Total 2011			

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Non-Christian Districts of Tawang and Lohit

Tawang in the west is predominantly Buddhist; it also has a considerable presence of Hindus. There are only a few Christians in that district. In 2011, Christians there have grown faster than others, yet only 776 Christians have been counted in a population of nearly 50 thousand.

Lohit, including Anjaw that has been carved out of it during 2001-11, lies on the north of Changlang. This district is largely Hindu and Buddhist; and, its population is predominantly from non-Scheduled Tribe communities. There are 10,955 Christian counted there in 2011, forming 6.6 percent of the population. In 2001, there were 8,253 Christians, of whom 2,616 were from the Scheduled Tribes, and about half of them from the Adi group of communities, which have some presence in Lohit. The Christians then had a share of 5.8 percent in the total and 4.8 percent in the ST population of the district.

Summing up

Share of Christians in the total population has reached 30.26 percent and it may have reached 40 percent among the Scheduled Tribes.

- a) Share of Christians in the population of Arunachal Pradesh has increased substantially from 18.72 percent in 2001 to 30.26 in 2011.
- b) Detailed data for the religious profile of the Scheduled Tribes in the State is not yet available. In 2001, 90.79 percent of 2.06 lakh Christians in the State were from the Scheduled Tribes; and, share of Christians in the ST population was 26.47 percent.
- c) If we assume that the same about 91 percent of the 4.19 lakh Christians counted in the State in 2011 are from the Scheduled Tribes, than the share of Christians in the Scheduled Tribes now turns out to be around 40 percent.
- d) Share of Christians in many of the individual tribes is much higher and is reaching the level of nearly complete Christianisation.

Wancho and Nocte of Tirap are likely to have been almost entirely Christianised.

- a) Share of Christians in Wancho and Nocte of Tirap district had reached 73.54 and 42.35 percent, respectively, in 2001, when Christian share in the total population was 50 percent.
- b) In 2011, share of Christians in the district has increased to 74.45 percent and their share in the ST population is likely to have reached 83 percent.

Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang of East Kameng, Papum Pare and Lower Subansiri also seem to be reaching the level of almost full Christianisation.

- a) After Tirap, the highest presence of Christians in the western districts of East Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri and Karung Kumey. In 2011, they have a share of 47.19, 47.18, 41.43 and 55.59 percent, respectively. In 2001, the Christian share was 25.45 and 29.98 percent in East Kameng and Papum Pare, respectively, and it was only 24.51 percent in Lower Subansiri, which then included Karung Kumey.
- b) Share of Christians in the ST population of these districts in 2001 was somewhat higher at 28.84 and 26.43 percent, respectively, in East Kameng and undivided Lower Subansiri; and, it was much higher at 49.50 percent in Papum Pare.
- c) The substantial increase in the proportion of Christians in the total population since 2001 indicates that their share in the ST population is likely to have increased to above 50 percent in in East Kameng and Lower Subansiri and to around 67 percent in Papum Pare.
- d) The main Scheduled Tribes communities in these districts are from the Nissi group, and are listed under the heads of Nyishi, Nissi and Nishang in the Census of 2001. Our analysis indicates that these communities may have now been fully Christianised, at least in these three districts.

Many of the tribes of the Adi group in West Siang, East Siang and Dibang Valley are likely to have been fully Christianised.

- a) In the central districts of West Siang, East Siang and Dibang Valley (including Lower Dibang Valley), the presence of Christians in 2011 is relatively low at 26.69, 18.40 and 15.20 percent, respectively. But, in 2001, they had a much smaller share of 19.36, 15.34 and 10.63 percent, respectively.
- b) In the ST population of these districts, the share of Christians in 2011 is likely to be even higher at around 35, 20 and 25 percent, respectively.
- c) The main Scheduled Tribes communities of these central districts are from the Adi group. In 2001, the proportion of Christians in some of these communities, especially among Adi, Abor, Bokar and Bori in West Siang; among Adi Gallong and Galong in East Siang; and, among, Adi, Abor, Adi Gallong, Galong, Adi Minyong and Adi Padam in Dibang Valley was much higher than the average of all STs. In many of these communities, the share of Christians in 2001 was already above 40 percent and in some it was even above 70 percent. With the considerably increased share of Christians in these districts, many of these communities are likely to have been fully Christianised by 2011.

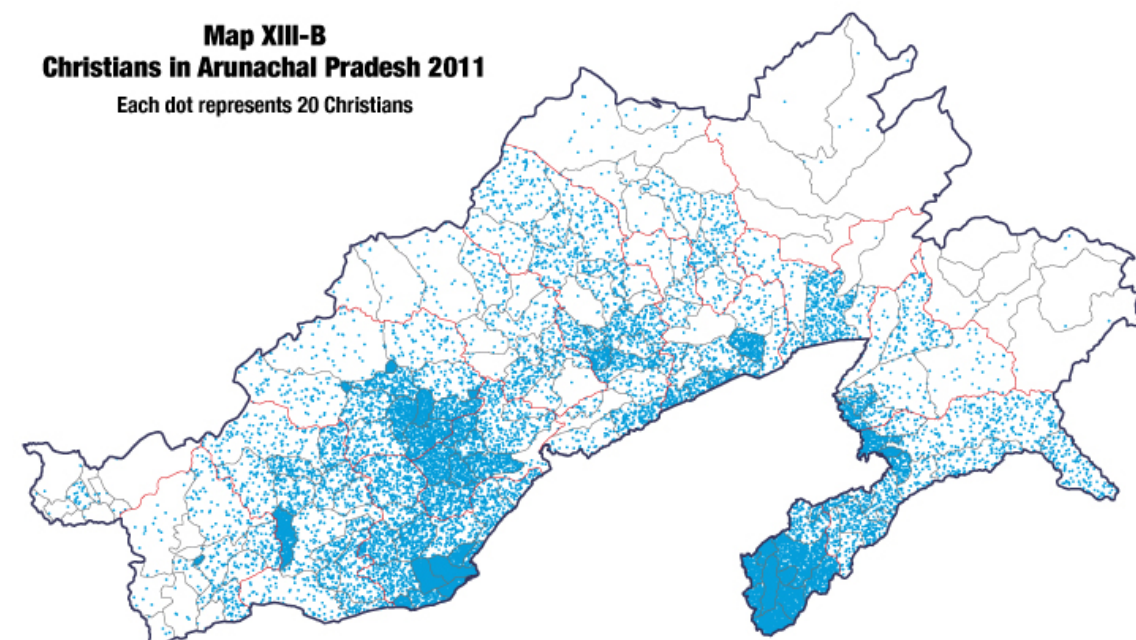
Many of the smaller tribes of the Tangsa group in Changlang have been fully Christianised and Christians may have reached overwhelming majority in the main Tangsa community.

- a) Share of Christians in the population of Changlang in 2001 was 17.49 percent; it has risen to 24.27 percent.
- b) The share of Christians among the Scheduled Tribes of Changlang was much higher at 39.86 percent; it is likely to have increased to around 55 percent in 2011.
- c) The share of Christians in the main Tangsa community of Changlang was already 42.83 percent and it was much higher at above 77 percent in the relatively smaller communities of Mossang Tangsa and Nocte, above 90 percent in Rongrang Tangsa and nearly 100 percent in the Yobin. With the considerably increased presence of Christians in the population of the district in 2011, many of these communities of Changlang are likely to have been fully Christianised and, in the main Tangsa community, they are likely to have acquired an overwhelming majority.

Tawang and West Kameng in the west and Lohit in the east seem to have largely escaped Christianisation.

- a) West Tawang and West Kameng districts in the west and Lohit lying to the west of Tirap and Changlang in the east continue to have a considerable presence of Hindus and Buddhists. We shall describe the demographic spread and growth of Hindus and Buddhist in Arunachal Pradesh in a separate post.
- b) Other Religions and Persuasions are a significant part of the religious demography of this State; we shall discuss their composition, distribution and growth also in the following post.

The map below gives a graphic representation of the intensity and distribution of Christianity in different districts and sub-districts of Arunachal Pradesh.



Conclusion

In conclusion, Christianity seems to have made deep inroads in the eastern Tirap district and in the western and central Kameng, Siang and Dibang regions, especially in the former two. Many of the major tribal communities inhabiting these regions namely, Nocte, Wancho, Nyishi, Nissi, Adi, Tangsa, etc.—had acquired a considerable share of Christians already in 2001. During 2001-11, the proportion of Christians in the total population of Arunachal Pradesh has risen considerably from 18.7 to 30.3 percent. The increase is much more marked in the regions of Christian dominance that we have mentioned. Though religion data for the individual tribal communities has not been published till now, yet it seems that many of the communities that had been substantially Christianised in 2001, may have become entirely or predominantly Christian now.

Some of the tribal communities and regions of Arunachal Pradesh are pre-dominantly Hindu or Buddhist. The religious profile of these regions and communities is unlikely to change in a hurry. The remaining communities and regions of Arunachal Pradesh seem to have now succumbed to Christian evangelisation as comprehensively as in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya.

Religion data of Census 2011 seems to mark a historical milestone in the religious demography of Arunachal Pradesh, and of the Northeast in general. From the time of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the Indian State and Society had made a conscious attempt to keep Arunachal Pradesh away from the evangelical tide that had swept the hill States of the Northeast. That effort, it seems, has failed and Arunachal Pradesh has now been submerged.

To understand the story of Christianisation of Arunachal Pradesh, it is also important to look at the place of Hindus, Buddhists and ORPs, especially the last, in the religious demography of the States. We shall take this up in our next post.

Postscript

A prominent journalist, commenting on the recent events in Arunachal Pradesh and especially on the issue of communalism raised by the Governor, has said that the disposed Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, “Mr (Nabam) Tuki, though a Nyishi, is that *rare* Arunachali convert to Christianity”. The data seems to suggest that it may be the non-Christian who has become a *rare* phenomenon in many of the major tribal communities, especially among the Nyishi, of Arunachal Pradesh.