Hindu-Muslim Tension in India: An Interface between Census and Politics during Colonial India

Ram B. Bhagat PhD
Reader
International Institute for Population Sciences
Mumbai-400088, INDIA

E-mail: rbbhagat@vsnl.net

Introduction:

The religious conflict in human history is not new, however it took new turns in the stages of colonialism, nationalism and globalization. The demographic force to religious conflict is a new phenomenon started with mutually exclusive categorization of population by religious denominations, counting of their relative size and growth and the estimation of fetility and migration. The purpose is not the overt motive of sharpening the religious conflict, but is motivated by scientific considerations of being objective and value free. However, this is not always true. The present paper examines how the political process exploited demography in polarising religious tension and making nation building difficult with the introduction of census on religions in India.

In several countries of Europe census started during the eighteenth century.[1] The reason that motivated to introduce some type of census of population was the concern over the extent of poverty and resultant poor relief necessitated by it. This had led to the increasing debate on the impact of population growth on poverty. In Great Britain, this debate led Mr. Potter, a member of parliament from Cornwall to introduce the first bill in 1753 for a national census. The bill suggested to collect information on the size of population, vital statistics, total number of poor receiving alms from parishes. The bill was however defeated because it was perceived as being potentially repressive measure (Jones 1981). The debate on population and poverty however got fresh momentum with the publication of '*An Essay on Population'* in 1798 by Thomas Malthus. The House of Common finally passed an 'Act for Taking Account of the Population of Great Britain and the Increase or Decrease thereof' on December 3, 1800. As a result, the first British census was taken on March 10 1801 and every ten years thereafter (Jones 1981). Thus, economic issues were predominant in the start of census in Great Britain. On the other hand, census taking in British India had different purpose altogether. The desire of the British government to learn about Indian people and land under its control was the reason behind the census taking in India. Just few years before the first census in colonial India in 1872, the work on Gazetteers had started by W. W. Hunter, on the direction of Lord Mayo, which culminated years later in several volumes of Imperial Gazetteers of India. Both Gazetteers and census reports covered large number of subjects dealing with land and people of India. As Gazetteers and census were initiated under a non-representative government, there was neither public opinion nor the institutions existed to limit the subjects investigated, either in Gazetteers or in the census reports (Jones 1981). On the other hand, the census was largely a secular institution in the collection and presentation of data in Great Britain. It exhibited either disinterest in religion or extreme reluctance to explore this field. In several

British censuses, there was no question on religion and wherever any question on religion was included, it was done with great care and restraint. Not only this, results were published separately from the census reports (Jones 1981).

British census introduced the question on ethnicity for the first time in 1991 and there was pressure to include religion preceding 2001 census. (Peach 1999). As a result the question on religion (question no 10) was included in 2001 census of Great Britain. (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pdfs/H1.pdf). American census also specifically prevents collection of data on religion (Peach 2000). On the other hand, the question on religion, caste and race was introduced in India since the beginning of census in 1872. This paper examinees the implication of the inclusion of the question on religion and publication of the respective data on Hindu-Muslim relation in India.

Census under British Regime:

A census is not a passive account of statistical tables, but engaged in reshaping the world through categories and their definitions. Categories necessitate definition and definitions impose order. Once categories are chosen and definition fixed, only then counting can begin. The definition adopted by census gives numerical weight, so that defining is not merely a matter of providing labels but also adding statistical content to a category. The degree of impact of census will be determined by the uses to which it is put both by the government who created it and by their subject who reached to it (Jones 1981). The categories and their definition used in Indian census were rooted in British perception of Indian society. Indian society was looked upon as pre-capitalist entities largely constituting primordial communities. This had also happened elsewhere. For example, in colonial Southern Rhodesia, African community was defined in precisely the same way- as the opposite of capitalist social relations. African community was not examined as it actually was but defined negatively by a set of assumed contrasts with capitalism (Ranger 1993).

Colonialism constructed the difference and categories and ordered them into hierarchies according to their view of the world. As such 'the study of India was thus made part of a larger scholarly enterprise in which the Victorians, as children of the enlightenment, sought rational principles that would provide a comprehensive and comprehensible way of fitting every thing they saw in the world around them into ordered hierarchies. The existence of empire by imparting a sense of urgency to the process spurred on this creation of knowledge and at the same time the unequal power relationship of imperialism helped shape the categories within which that knowledge was constructed' (Metcalf 1998). Thus, the construction of homogeneous communities was the natural out come of colonial expansion and was also attempted in home countries during the phase of expanding nationalism. It is observed that during the early eighteenth century united into a single state, the people of Great Britain began to construct a view of them as an integral nation, joining English, Scots, and Welsh into one community set apart, as British, from others (Metcalf 1998).

While numerous communities existed in India, these communities consisting of numerous castes, religions, and other social groups have existed as 'fuzzy' communities from the time immemorial, but their congealing into distinct, discrete and mutually antagonistic communities was certainly aided to a great extent by the counting of heads (Das 1994). The 'fuzzy' communities were indistinct groups with neither internal cohesion nor well-known externalities and as such, the presence of communities without overt communication. The 'fuzzy' community did not know how far it extended and what was its strength in numbers, therefore, have less accurate and less aggressive self-awareness (Das 1994). The 'fuzzy' communities also did not require any developed theory of 'otherness'(Kaviraj 1993). Similar situations were also found in other colonial countries. In Malaysia, the Malays did not form a homogeneous ethnic group. In spite of their common orientation to Islam, there were clear differences between the Malays in Kelantan and Kedah in northeast (who were closely linked to Aceh and Pattani), the Buginese in Perak, the Minangkabau in Negri Sembilan, and the Malays in Johor or Riau (Korff 2001:274). Similarly, the Baba and Nonya Chinese who lived in Melaka for centuries, or the Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkeien or Teochew Chinese in Malaysia did not see themselves as one ethnic group or as belonging together (Shamsul 1998:391). The colonial perception that they belonged to either one or other ethnic group was applied through administrative practices. Administrative differentiations, resulting from the perception of the colonialists that the ethnic groups followed different cultures, were applied in colonial practices in the form of special rights and obligations. With the integration of these practices into everyday life, the colonial perception of ethnic differences in the form of mutually exclusive groups became a reality and through census categories, the British designated ethnic groups as Chinese, Indian and Malay, which were homogeneous and mutually exclusive. Such a differentiation was quite removed from reality (Korff 2001:274). Therefore, Malaysia presents another example of the transformation of 'fuzzy' community into conscious political ethnic communities wherein the boundary of otherness has been redrawn through census categorization and enumeration.

In India, the colonialism has changed this blissful state of social ignorance through census. The censuses however, not only counted people but also pigeonholed them and made it possible for them to seek self-definition in terms that were set for them by external enumerations (Das 1994). Enumeration and categorisation for reasons of state had a deep social impact. The very syndrome of majority and minority in religious terms was not known, but was made through the consciousness of population numeracy, in the event of census exercises that began in late 19th century (Das 1994). Numbers became a political tool as Hindus were told that they constituted a majority and an effort was made to homogenise them to act as uniform community regardless of sect, caste or class affiliation. Before head counts of people were announced, it was neither possible nor necessary for communities across the land to identify themselves with any degree of preciseness and to seek similarities or differences with others out side

their immediate kin. There was, thus no general 'Hindu' community and people defined themselves with reference to their specific modes of worship such as Shaivites (worshippers of Shiva) or Shakts (worshippers of the Mother Goddess) or Vaishnavas (worshippers of various incarnations – Ram, Krishna etc. of Vishnu) and so on. In fact, the essentials of Hindu belief and practices are found in a large number of philosophical or sacredotal texts. The range of Hindu beliefs practices are so far and wide that it defies categorisation by any scholar (Kumar 1983:22). On the other hand, it is believed that the followers of Islam in contrast to the followers of Hinduism constitute an *Ummah* (global community) held together in close bonds of allegiance to the doctrine set out in the *Koran*. However, the actual structure of Muslim society in India displays a fairly complex hierarchy which can best be understood through a historical survey of the spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent (Kumar 1983:26). In the pre-modern periods, however it is doubtful if even the Muslim *Ummah* had any more than a symbolic meaning, if even that (Das 1994).

There is a little historical evidence of sustained communal hatred operating at the popular level prior to colonial rule (Das 1994). The 'fuzzy' communities had been turned into enumerated communities and further into political communities through the initiation of democratic process during the colonial as well as in independent in India.

The census figures further provided the geographical distribution of religious communities. Both size of religious communities and their distribution had been used intentionally or unintentionally to widen the rift between religious communities particularly between Hindus and Muslims. Numerous such examples are found with respect to perpetuate divisions in Indian society along caste, religion and linguistic lines (Sarkar 1973). The division of Bengal based on religion in 1905 was the most glaring example of fomenting communalism based on demographic facts. A new province of East Bengal and Assam was created with predominance of Muslims in East Bengal in 1905 (see fig 1). The then Viceroy, Lord Curzon, said in February 1904 in Dacca of offering the East Bengal Muslims the prospect of unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musalman Viceroys and Kings (Sarkar 1983). Thus, the census count on religion was employed to instill a geographical and demographic consciousness among the religious communities - an awareness of their geographical concentration as well as their demographic strength. This new communal consciousness was further perpetuated through the political instrument of separate electorate wherein religious minorities were given separate seats in the legislative bodies according to the proportion of their population in the provinces. It is believed that the roots of communal competition can be traced to the Morley-Minto Reforms, which extended communal electorate to the local bodies. Besides seats of legislative bodies, even the seats in Govt. medical college Lahore were distributed in the ratio of 40: 40: 20 amongst Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in Punjab (Hasan 1980). As a result communal antagonism in the country had been sharpened. It exacerbated Hindu-Muslim divisions and fostered the

spirit of political exclusiveness. The impact was particularly marked on Muslims who saw the advantage of pressing for special safeguards and concessions in accordance with numerical strength, social status, local influence and social requirement of their community (Hasan 1980). Looked from this perspective, the Hindu and Muslim communalism are in fact essentially a modern phenomena (Engineer, 2002)

The communal riots do seem to have been significantly rare down to the 1880s (Sarkar 1983). There were sporadic religious disturbances and clashes before 1872 but recurrent communal riots far and wide in the country were only seen during the twentieth century (see Table 1).

The scholars of medieval Indian history believe that during the period 1605 to 1748 AD the relations between the Hindus and Muslims were cordial, and characterized by goodwill, mutual love and toleration (Kulkarni 1981: 304).

The census officials during colonial period being aware of the resistance put up by Indian people defended the inclusion of question of religion in successive censuses. The census commissioner of 1931 census wrote the following:

"India is the most religious country in the world, and must be regarded as the justification for the importance attached to religion in census of India as compared for example with that of U. S. of Americas where culture is comparatively independent of religion "(Census of India 1931). This statement was made contrary to the fact that the religion is even a too controversial subject to be incorporated in the census of the western world marked by a history of religious conflicts. The census commissioner of 1931 census was also aware about the role of census statistics on religion flaring up communal divisions in the country. This was evident when he wrote,

 'it has been argued that the census statistics of religion tend to perpetuate communal divisions: the census can not, however, hide its head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich but must record as accurately as possible facts as they exist and there is no question of the existence of communal differences which are reflected at present in political constituencies' (Census of India 1931).

The above said justification for census on religion in the aftermath of communal tension did not conform to the social reality of India existed during colonial period. The comments of the census commissioner of 1911 census are very pertinent when he wrote,

'in India the line of cleavage is social rather than religious, and tendency of the people themselves is to classify their neighbours, not according to their beliefs, but according to their social status and manner of living. No one is interested in what his neighbour believes, but he is very much interested in knowing whether he can eat with or take water from his hands' (Census of India 1911a).

The overlapping of religious faith even continues among sizable communities of India, which can not be neatly classified in one or other categories. In a recent survey of communities by *Anthropological Survey of India* during the early 1990s revealed that 15 per cent of the all Indian communities had more than one religious faith. This means that each individual in these communities can be classified under more than one religious faith. Thirty-seven communities had three faiths (Singh 1994 quoted in Nandy 2002:16). These findings could surprise a Western readership and even modern Indians but this is true even for the entire region of East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. Contrary to the common practice, in the Japanese census, the huge majority are reported both Shinto and Buddhist. As a result when the percentages of different religions are added, it usually comes close to 200 per cent (Nandy 2002:16).

Furthermore, in colonial thinking race and religion were closely associated. This was also accepted in an influential work of German scholar, Duren J.H. Ward, on *the Classification of Religion (1909)* who accepted this premise and devised a comprehensive ethnographic-historical classification of human races to facilitate the study of religion (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.1983). As such, a connection was visible in Indian censuses since the very first census in 1872. Race was used as first order classification of Indian population followed by religion and caste/sects. The following is the scheme of classification adopted in Indian censuses during the colonial rule.

I. **Indo-Aryan**
   A. *Hindu*
   a) Hindu Brahmanic
   b) Hindu (Arya- Vedic Theists)
   c) Hindu (Brahmo- Eclectic Theists)
   B. *Sikh*
   C. *Jain*
   D. *Buddhist*
II. **Iranian**
   A. *Zorosastrian (Parsi)*
III. **Semitic**
   A. *Musalman*
   B. *Christians*
   C. *Jews*
IV. **Primitive**
   A. *Animistic*
V. **Miscellaneous**

In spite of several difficulties, census officials took great pain in classifying the Indian population into homogeneous and mutually exclusive religious communities. In each of the classification mentioned above, census officials even

encountered enormous difficulties. The census reports of each of the provinces as well as all India report mentioned plethora of such instances where the scheme of census classification could not be applied due to interwoven nature of social structure.

Efforts had been made to define Hindus as, "a native of India who is not of European, Armenian, Moghul, Persian or other foreign descent, who is a member of a recognised caste, who acknowledges the spiritual authority of *Brahmans* (priestly caste), who venerates or at least refuses to kill or harm kine, and does not profess any creed or religion which the Brahman forbids him to profess "(Census of India 1911d). Also, Hindus had been defined in relation to Muslims. The census superintendent of the United Province of Agra and Oudh, quoting George Grierson, mentions that 'Hindi means any native of India, whilst Hindu means a non-Musalman native of India (Census of India 1911d). The census had further tried to define 'genuine Hindus'. In the census of 1911, the provincial superintendents were asked to enumerate the caste and tribe returned or classed as Hindu separately who did not conform to the following criteria.

i. Deny the supremacy of the *Brahmans*
ii. Do not receive the *mantra (*sacred words and phrases having mystical effects) from a *Brahmans* or other recognised Hindu *Guru* (religious teacher)
iii. Deny the authority of the *Vedas (*ancient Hindu religious texts*)*
iv. Do not worship the great Hindu Gods
v. Are not served by good Brahmans as family priests
vi. Have no Brahman priests at all
vii. Are denied access to the interior of ordinary Hindu temples.
viii. Cause pollution a) by touch, b) within certain distance
ix. Bury their dead
x. Eat beef and do not revere the cow

The extent to which these tests were satisfied varied in different parts of India. In the Central Provinces and Berar, a quarter of the persons classed as Hindus denied the supremacy of the Brahmans and the authority of the Vedas; more than half did not receive the *mantras* from a recognised Hindu Guru, a quarter did not worship the great Hindu Gods, and were not served by good *Brahmans* priests; a third were denied access to temple; a quarter caused pollution by touch, a seventh always buried their dead, while a half did not regard cremation as obligatory and two fifths ate beef (Census of India 1911c). In Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, there are 59 castes including seven with a strength of a million and upwards who did not conform to some of the ten tests and there were fourteen beef eating castes all of whom were denied access to temple (Census of India 1911a). These groups were called not a genuine Hindus or partly assimilated Hindus. However, this shows that the so-called Hindus were not homogeneous as variety of practices existed among them. The census superintendent of Madras census in1881, on the other, hand objected to the use of word Hindus as a religious category for the population of southern India (Census of India 1911a).

In India the social and cultural practices of Hindus and Muslims has been inseparable. This had been noted in census reports. For example, it was reported in 1911 census that

'there are many so called Hindus whose religion has a strong Muhammadan flavour. Notable amongst these are the followers of strange *panchpiriya* cult, who worship five Mohammadan saints of uncertain name and identity and sacrifice cocks to them employing for the purpose as their priest- a Muhammadan *dafali fakir'* (Census of India 1911a).

In Gujarat there are several similar communities such as *Matia Kunbis* who call in Brahmans for their chief ceremonies, but are followers of the Pirana saint Imam Shah and his successors, and bury their dead as do the Muhammadans, the *Sheikhadas*, who at their wedding employ both a Hindu and a Muhammadan priest, and the *Momnas* who practice circumcision, bury their dead and read Gujarati Koran, but in other respects follow Hindu customs and ceremonial. The boundary line between Hindus on the one hand and Sikhs and Jains on the other is even more indeterminate. Even the Census commissioner had reiterated 'religions of India as we have already seen are by no means mutually exclusive (Census of India 1911a). However, the practical difficulty in classifying the Indian population in terms of religious categories was solved by the census officials in their own way. The enumerators were asked to record all persons who said they were Hindus, Musalman or Christians etc and those who did not profess to belong to any recognised religion were entered under the name of their caste or tribe. In the course of tabulation all such persons were treated as Hindu if they belonged to a recognised Hindu caste however low it might be (Census of India 1911b).

It is therefore clear that census made directed efforts to reconstruct religious categories according to the colonial notion of race and religion. The construction of homogeneous and mutually exclusive communities was necessary as it served the policy of divide and rule for the sustenance of colonialism in India.

Demographic Basis of Hindu-Muslim Tension:

The census data on religion not only brought to fore the issue of majority-minority, but also sparked off communal debate on the size and growth of population belonging to different religious communities. Table 2 presents the decadal growth rates among Hindus and Muslims for the period 1881 to 1941. The Hindu population had substantially declined during 1891-1901. This particular decline had significantly aided in communalizing the relationship between the Hindus and Muslims. In 1909, U. N. Mukherji of Calcutta published a series of articles in the *Bengalee*, which was later published in a pamphlet entitled, '*Hindus: A Dying Race'.*

On the basis of census figures of 1901 census, Mukherji drew attention towards the declining proportion of Hindus in the total population (Mukherji 1909). He later in 1912 also raised the phobia of Hindus being swallowed up in next 420 years in a personal meeting with Swami Shradhanand, a prominent Hindu leader, who was later convinced to do the work of reconversion of Hindus from Mohammedan and Christianity. Swami Shradhanand being alarmed by the growth of Muslim population wrote an influential book entitled, Hindu *Sangsthan: Saviour of Dying Race* in 1926 (Shradhranand 1926). Thus, the idea of demographic decline acquired a core feature of Hindu communalism in later years.

This was further entrenched by bogey of fear raised by the colonial rulers. H. H. Risley, one of the powerful British official who also proposed the partition of Bengal declared," can the figures of the last census (1901*)* be regarded in any sense the forerunner of an Islamic or Christian revival which will threaten the citadel of Hinduism or will Hinduism hold its own in the future as it has done through the long ages of the past "(Datta 1993). These assertions were made knowing the fact that these could arouse tremendous communal antagonisms. This raises the question of colonial responsibility of census in India (Datta 1993).

The demographic communalism aided by the instruments of census and perpetuated through the policy of divide and rule was virtually not stalled in Independent India. Census rather published only demographic data by religion and withheld the publication of educational and employment data in independent India. (see Table 3). The lack of census data on education and employment has helped in perpetuating the stereotype explanation on Hindu-Muslim population growth and fertility differentials in the country.

The demographic anxiety of Hindus being outnumbered continued in Independent India (Prakash 1979). Such anxiety is being expressed more in view of the nature of electoral politics in the country (Panandiker and Umashankere 1994). For a layman this could be a serious concern, whereas some rational men could think about role of educational and socio-economic deprivations affecting population growth and fertility differentials among Hindus and Muslims (Mahmood 1998). Then, the question arises i) why the census in Independent India continued the inclusion of question on religion in the census and, ii) published only demographic data of size and growth of religious communities?

There are justifications for the first question, whereas there is hardly any justification for the second one. The Independent India has adopted a constitution based on the principles of secularism and democracy. Considering

the spirit of constitution, the Govt. of India in view of the first census after independence in 1951 decided as a matter of policy census should not record any person's caste or race except to the extent necessary for providing information relating to certain disadvantaged groups referred to in the constitution such as the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes (Mahatme 1985). As the constitution enjoins that no persons professing a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism shall deemed to be a member of scheduled caste, it was imperative on the part of the census to ask a question on religion in order to determine the scheduled caste status of a person. Therefore, the census has the pretext for including a question on religion in the name of social justice. The independent India is making very persistent efforts to realize the goals of social justice. The availability of socio-economic information is therefore very vital for this purpose. There is also no alternative to census as it covers the complete enumeration of population unlike sample surveys.

Since 1971 census the scope of demographic data was further expanded by including a question on fertility by religion. A number of fertility tables are published since then. On the other hand, the publication of data on smaller religious groups like Parsis, Jews and other Tribal religions were discontinued since 1961 census (Kanitkar 1998). India is now being projected through census a country of six major religious groups viz. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists ignoring the fact that diversity of faiths and practices exist within each of the religious groups in India.[2]

In the wake of communal polarisation, the scientific explanations of higher population growth among Muslims could find little space and even goes unheeded. Census report mentioned several reasons of higher population growth among Muslims. These include nourishing dietary practices, fewer marriage restriction, widow remarriage and uncommon early marriages among them. Muslims had also lower literacy level compared to Hindus. Table 4 shows that Muslims had about 4 per cent literacy level in the ages 10+ compared with nearly 7 per cent among Hindus at the beginning of twentieth century. In recent times also Muslims have much lower level of literacy compared with Hindus. A sample study conducted in parts of the country clearly vindicates about the lagging position of Muslims in literacy compared with Hindus (see Table 5).

The role of literacy and education in India's fertility decline is well accepted in recent studies (Zachariah 1984; Dreze and Murthi 2001). This is true irrespective of religion. It is also not true that Muslim women have less autonomy than Hindu women (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). And the popular perception of ability of Muslim to have four wives leading to high fertility is demographically not correct. In fact, polygyny (more than one wife) leads to lower fertility (Bongaarts, Frank and Lesthaeghe, 1984). Moreover, it is also not true that in actual practice Muslims have more number of wives than Hindus. It was reported in 1911 census that a Mohammedan may have four wives but in practice he was generally monogamous (Census of India 1911, Vol.I). A more recent study also

shows that percentage incidence of polygynous marriages was 5.80 per cent among Hindus compared to 5.73 per cent among Muslims.

On the other hand, the incidence of polygynous marriages was highest among the tribes (15.25 per cent) followed by Buddhists (7.97) and Jain (6.72 per cent) (Census of India 1971). In addition, polygyny is found to have been practised among wealthier sections of Indian society irrespective of religious affiliations (Jeffery and Jeffery 1997). Similarly, there is a little truth in the assertion that Islam forbids the acceptance of family planning. It is mentioned that Koran does not forbid family planning, what Islam forbids is abortion and even this is permitted on health grounds.[3] In a situation of communal antagonism these facts are being glossed over. As a result, the popular communal perceptions about high fertility among Muslims are sustained and used to politically antagonize the communities.

Concluding Remark:

The boundary line between different communities in colonial India was obscure and communal consciousness was lacking. Communities existed in India, historically, could be broadly characterized as 'fuzzy' communities. The 'fuzzy' communities were turned into enumerated communities through census and later into political communities through the democratic process. The Hindu-Muslim population growth differentials during colonial period created a sense of fear among Hindus being numbered. This has brought the demographic divide to the centre stage of communal politics during colonial period.

The independent India has inherited this legacy and to a large extent continued the agenda of the consolidation of religious communities by demographic argument. The higher population growth and higher fertility among Muslims has been formed the part of political ideology evading the issues like poverty and education in demographic interpretation of high fertility among Muslims in India. The issues like poverty and education are not being brought to the centre stage because the force of demographic argument will not only dwindle but will call for policy of increased resources into socio-economic development of the Muslim minority. (Basu1997). The census of independent India on other hand did not publish the socio-economic data by religion making it difficult to examine the predicament of the religious minorities at national and regional levels. Therefore, the publication of socio-economic data could be the first step towards weakening the demographic argument of communal politics.

Notes
1. In Europe, modern census was taken in Iceland in 1703, followed by Sweden in 1750, Great Britain in 1801, Austria in 1818, Greece in 1826, and Italy in 1861. In Norway, the first modern census was taken in 1801,but was also a census in 1769 which not so good (personal communication from Helge Brunborg, Statistics Norway). The census in United States was however held earlier in 1790. See **Encyclopedia Americana**, American corporation, New York, 1829.

2. The largest religious group after Hindus, the Muslims are divided into *Asrafs* and *Ajlafs. Asrafs are* the noble sections that trace their origin from foreign immigrants consist of Sayyad, Shaik, Moghul and Pathan. The *Ajlaf* groups are mainly the converts constitute several occupation groups and untouchables- like Julaha (weaver), Darzi (tailor) Quassab (butcher), Nai or Hajjam (barber) Mirasi (musician) and Bhangi (sweeper) etc. see Ansari (1959), Ahmad (1978), and Ahmad (1999).

3. see Khan (1978). Further some past and recent jurists (*Faqihs*) have mentioned some of the reasons that permit married couples to plan their families. These include keeping away from illegal income, protecting the health of wife and to provide children all material and spiritual needs. There is a Hadith that says that it is better to leave your children rich than leave them poor like beggars, see Tantawai (1988).

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Table 1: **Number of Hindu-Muslim Riots in India since 1713**

States	Pre independence	Post independence	Total
Uttar Pradesh	13	14	27
West Bengal	7	4	11
Gujarat	7	8	15
Maharashtra	15	13	28
Punjab	2	0	2
Bihar	4	8	12
Orissa	0	2	2
Madhya Pradesh	1	6	7
Kerala	0	1	1
Kashmir	1	1	2
Assam	0	3	3
Delhi	4	3	7
Andhra Pradesh	1	4	5
Rajasthan	1	0	1
Karnataka	1	1	2
Tamilnadu	0	2	2
Manipur	0	1	1

Source: Compiled from Ghurye (1968) and Parsuraman, S. and Unikrishnan, P.V. (2000)

Table 2: Total Population of Hindus and Muslims and their Growth Rates in British India

Census Year	Total (in million)	Hindus (in million)	Muslim (in million)	Decadal growth rate % Hindus	Decadal growth rate % Muslim	Hindu-Muslim growth differentials
1881	250.2	187.8	49.9			
1891	279.6	207.5	57.1	10.5	14.2	3.70
1901	283.9	208.8	62.1	0.62	8.90	8.28
1911	303.0	217.2	67.8	4.00	9.20	5.20
1921	305.7	216.2	71.0	-0.46	4.70	5.16
1931	337.8	238.6	79.3	10.40	11.60	1.20
1941	388.9	270.2	94.4	13.20	19.00	5.80

Source: Davis (1951)

Table 3: **Summary of Availability of Data on Religion from Different Censuses in India**

| | Demographic Data | | Socio-economic data | |
Census Year	*Size and growth*	*Fertility*	*Education*	*Occupation*
2001**	Size by sex, rural -Urban, marital status and five -year age group	No. of births during last one year to currently married women and children ever born and surviving related to ever Married women	Level of education	Workers/Non-workers
1991	Size by sex and Rural/urban	No. of births during last one year to currently married women and Children ever born and surviving related to ever married women	--	---
1981	Size by sex and Rural/urban	No. of births during last one year to currently married women and children ever born and surviving related to ever married women	---	---
1971	Size by sex and Rural/urban	No. of births during last one year to currently married women	---	---
1961	Size by sex and Rural/urban	---	---	---
1951	Size by sex	---	---	---
1941*	---	---	---	---
1931	Size by sex, age, Civil condition and population Of Towns by religion	Average size of family	Literacy by age and religion	Occupation of selected castes tribes and races
1921	Size by sex, age, Civil condition and population Of Towns by religion	---	Literacy by age and religion	Occupation of selected castes tribes and races
1911	Size by sex, age, Civil condition and population Of Towns by religion	---	Education by selected castes tribes or race	Occupation by tribes and religion
1901	Size by age, sex, And civil condition	---	Education by selected castes , tribes Or races	Castes, tribes and race by tradition and actual Occupation

Table 4**: Per cent of Population Aged 10+ Literates among Hindus and Muslims, 1891-31**

Year	Muslim	Hindus
1891	4.2	6.3
1901	4.4	6.5
1911	5.2	7.3
1921	6.2	8.6
1931	7.2	9.3

Source: Davis (1951)

Table 5: **Female literacy among Hindus and Muslims in Selected Areas, 1993-94**

Study Area	Population Covered	Muslim Female Literacy	Hindu Female Literacy
Murshidabad (West Bengal)	27822	45.57	55.92
Kishanganj (Bihar)	58445	22.20	45.41
Sambhal (U.P.)	135000	22.91	35.79
Deedwana (Rajashtan)	31944	12.18	37.78
Sahore (M.P.)	61858	54.51	60.63
Firozpur Jhirka (Haryana)	307762	01.49	22.02

Fig 1

THE BENGAL PARTITION, 1905

After 1905 Partition
EAST BENGAL AND ASSAM

Prior to 1905 Partition

BENGAL

BOUNDARY SYMBOLS

National, demarcated
National, undemarcated
Provincial, post-1905
Provincial, pre-1905

Muslim majority districts

SOURCE: A Historical Atlas of South Asia by J. E. Schwartzberg, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 19