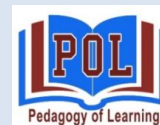


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Mapping Educational Landscape of Schools Managed by Socio-Religious Organizations in Jammu and Kashmir: A Survey Study

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Abstract: India's rich cultural diversity has given rise to numerous socio-religious organizations formed around shared beliefs to preserve traditions and support communities through education, health, and social services (Bajpai, 2015; Iyer, 2011). Although Article 30 of the Indian Constitution provided the right to all communities to establish their own educational institutions; however, limited information exists on the number of schools managed by such organizations, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir (Khan, 2015; Tanwir, 2021). Therefore, the primary aim of the present study was to know the status of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations (Sanatan, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Christian, and Sikh) in Jammu and Kashmir. Unlike sampling studies, the census method was used to collect data from every educational institution. Findings of the study indicated that Islamic organizations dominate in both numbers and demographics, whilst Christian organizations, despite their small population lead tremendous number of schools. Whereas, Hindu is the second largest population of J&K but the school based on Sanatan philosophy were very less. However, disparities in board affiliations, particularly within Islamic schools, indicate the necessity for improved integration between religious and formal education systems to enhance academic recognition and quality assurance. The substantial enrolment of students in Christian Schools demonstrates the cross-religious appeal of these schools and their contribution to social integration through education. Hence, the present study provided a full and factual picture of the current status of schools mentioned above. This survey will be useful for policy makers and educational administrative bodies.

Keywords: Educational Landscape of Schools, Socio-Religious Organizations, Jammu and Kashmir, faith-based schools

INTRODUCTION

Education is the cornerstone of a developing society. It helps to preserve cultural values while promoting social improvement. Beyond simply passing on knowledge, it serves as a powerful force for

change, influencing and transforming the structures and systems of society (Bhatia & Narang, 1981). The historical evolution of education clearly depicts that how the education system changes according to the needs of the society (Altekar, 2009). Society plays a vital role in shaping, supporting, and sustaining education, and the relationship between the two is deeply interdependent. Education draws its purpose, values, and direction from society, while society benefits from the knowledge, skills, and values nurtured through education (Rao, 2025). In this way, society acts both as a contributor and a beneficiary of educational institutions. In India, the responsibility of education is shared by the government and society. Society plays a key role in promoting education since ancient times through encouraging knowledge sharing, cultural values, and active engagement in educational progress (Pathak, 2012). The government ensures the provision of quality education, focusing on accessibility, equality, and inclusion so that every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to learn and grow (Yasmin, 2022).

India is a land of rich diversity, home to multiple cultures, traditions, and communities. These multicultural societies vary greatly in their religious practices, cultural customs, and value systems, creating a vibrant social fabric (Bajpai, 2015). Based on shared religious and cultural beliefs, various groups and communities come together to form organizations which are known as *socio-religious organizations*. The primary aim of these organizations is to preserve their respective cultures and to support the people of their respective community as well as other members of the society through initiatives like education, health services, food services, disaster relief services, and livelihood opportunities (Iyer, 2011). Education is the medium through which these organizations try to uplift their respective community.

In the Constitution of India, there is a provision under article 30 that states that all communities can establish and run their own schools or institutions to preserve their language, culture, and religion. Therefore, all the major socio-religious organizations have established their educational institutions, such as Gurukulas by Hindus; Makhtabs, Madrasas or other Islamic education institutions by Muslims; Monasteries or Buddhist Schools by Buddhists; and Jain Schools, Christian Missionary Schools and Sikh Missionary Schools by their respective Jain, Christian and Sikh organisations.

From the available related literature, it has been found that there is inadequate information available about the existing number of schools managed various socio-religious organizations in India, especially Jammu and Kashmir (Khan, 2015; Tanwir, 2021). Hence, the primary aim of the present study was to know the status of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations (Sanatan, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Christian, and Sikh) in Jammu and Kashmir with regards to their number, year of establishment, affiliation, nature of management, categories of schools, total enrolment of students.

METHODOLOGY

The current study uses a census approach; each unit of the population is enumerated completely. Unlike sampling studies, the census method collects data from every educational institution managed by six socio-religious organizations mentioned above included in the study. This was done to obtain detailed, reliable information without sampling bias. The target population was defined according to specific criteria relevant to the study objectives. The data was collected through a structured schedule which comprised of key parameters like number, year of establishment, affiliation, nature of management, categories of schools, total enrolment of students. Data for the present research was collected by the investigator through personal visits. The purpose of the census was explained to respondents and consent and cooperation were obtained before recording information. Descriptive statistical means including frequencies, percentages, and graphical representations were employed to analyse and communicate results. The census methodology thus provided a full and factual picture of the population which was useful for interpretation and policy recommendations.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Status of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations with respect to their number

As per the findings of the present study, the overall number of schools that were managed by six social-religious organizations in Jammu and Kashmir was 147. Among these, there were 8 schools that

followed Sanatan (Hindu) philosophy, while there was only one school in the entire Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) that adhered to Jain philosophy and one to Buddhist philosophy. There were ninety-two schools based on Islamic philosophy, eight schools on Sikh philosophy, and thirty-seven schools on Christian philosophy (as shown in Figure 1).

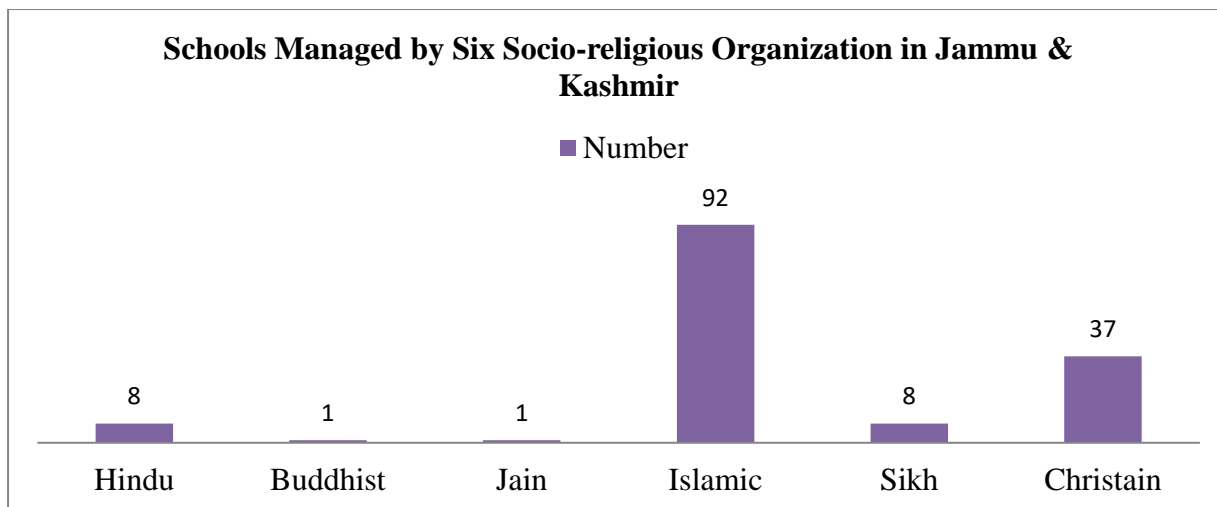
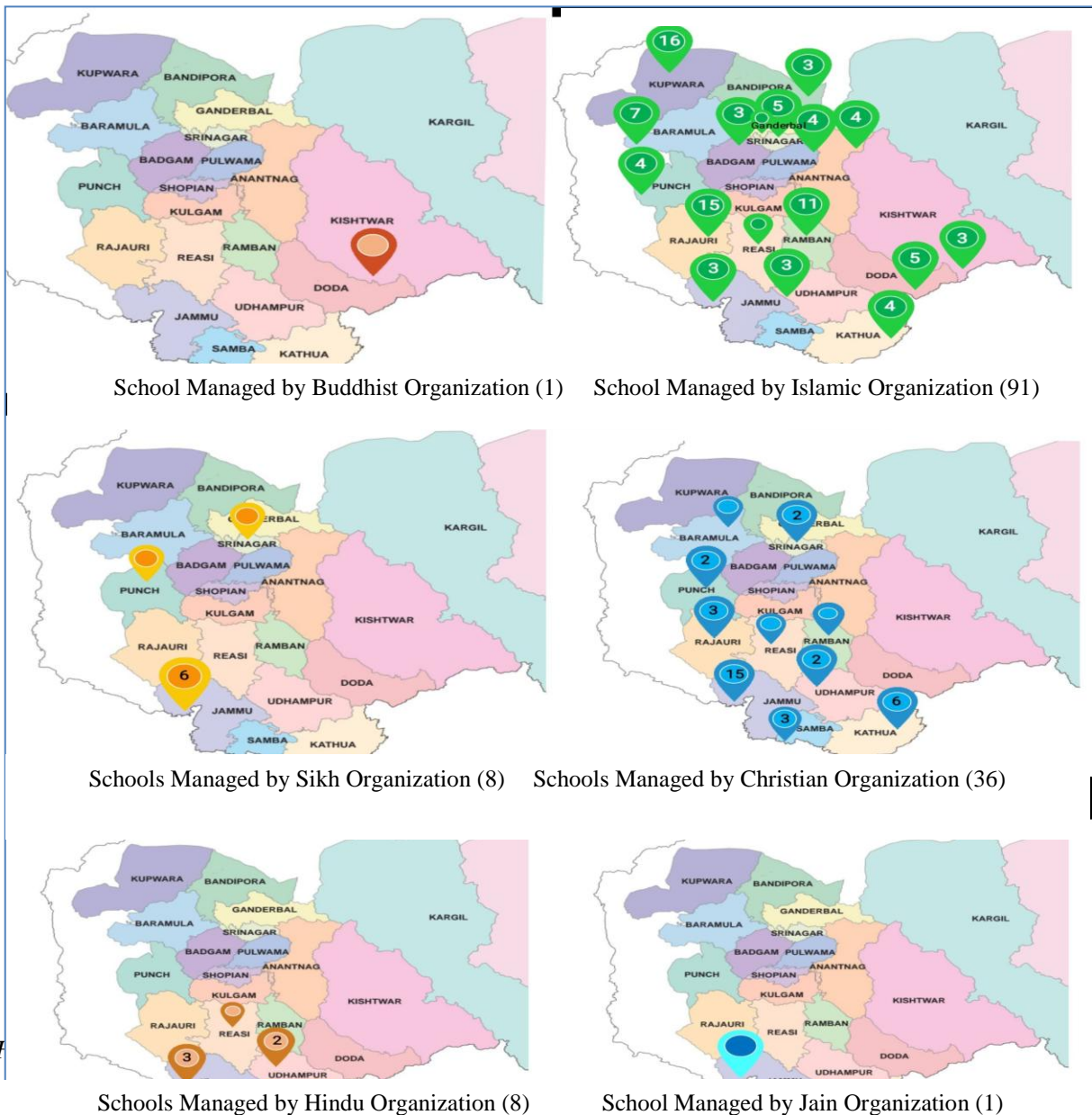


Figure 1: Number of Schools Managed by Six Socio-religious Organization in Jammu & Kashmir

According to the 2011 census of J&K, 68.32% of the population was Muslim, 28.44% was Hindu, 1.87% was Sikh, 0.90% was Buddhist, 0.28% was Christian, and 0.01% population belonged to other religions. The finding of the present study aligned with census data; it indicated that there were largest numbers of schools managed by the Islamic organizations because of their highest population in J&K. However, Hindu population is second largest but there were only 8 schools belonged to this organization while the Christian community had the least population in the region but they were regulating a tremendous number of schools i.e. 37.

In the present study, a distinct distribution of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations in J&K was found. The highest numbers of schools were managed by Islamic organizations, with 92 schools, which showed high concentration in Kupwara (16), Rajouri (15), and Ramban (11). There were 37 schools run by Christian organizations, mostly in Jammu (15) and Kathua (6). The Hindu and Sikh organizations had 8 schools of their own, which were focused on Jammu with Hindu schools (3) and Udhampur (2); the Sikh schools were mainly located in Jammu (6). Each of the Buddhist and Jain organizations ran one school, located in Kishtwar and Jammu, respectively (as shown in Figure 2). The distribution of schools district wise indicated that the vital contribution of social-religious organizations in education sector of Jammu and Kashmir.



Status of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations that were functioning more than a decade in J&K

It was found that half of the Gurukulas in J&K has been established for over a decade, with Shri Raghunath Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya (1986) being the oldest. However, a school named Tyndale Biscoe School was established by Christian missionary in 1880 was the pioneer of formal education in J&K. Similarly, schools based on Jain and Buddhist philosophy also showed long-standing existence, included the Himalayan Cultural School managed by Buddhist organization was established in 1996, and Jain Higher Secondary School in 1950.

Majority of the schools managed by Islamic (83.69%) and Sikh (87.5%) organizations has been operational for more than ten years, with the oldest being Hanfiya Nabiya Waqf Middle School (1966) and Alamdar Waqf Secondary School (1966). These findings reflect that there is a strong historical continuity of educational institutions across six socio-religious groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

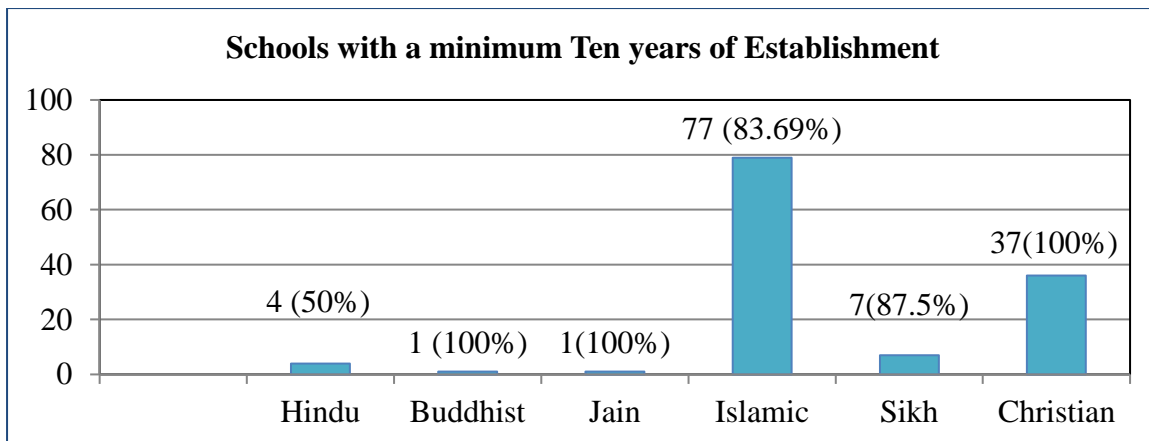


Figure 3: Schools with a Minimum Ten Years of Establishment

Status of schools with regards to its affiliation under formal educational board

The present study revealed that all the schools managed by Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, and Christian organizations were affiliated under a formal education board. However, only seventeen out of the identified ninety-two schools under Islamic organizations were affiliated with a formal educational board (JKBOSE), whereas twenty-three schools were affiliated with non-formal education boards such as Darul Uloom Deodand, U.P., and NIOS. Further, thirty educational institutions were registered under various other agencies like J&K Registrar Societies, Rabita Madris, Deoband Shaf, Court, SDM office, Waqf Board, Madrasa Jamia Islamia Kanzool Imaan, etc. But there were twenty-one such institutions that were neither affiliated with any formal/non-formal education board nor registered under any agency; they were unrecognized institutions (see in Figure 3).

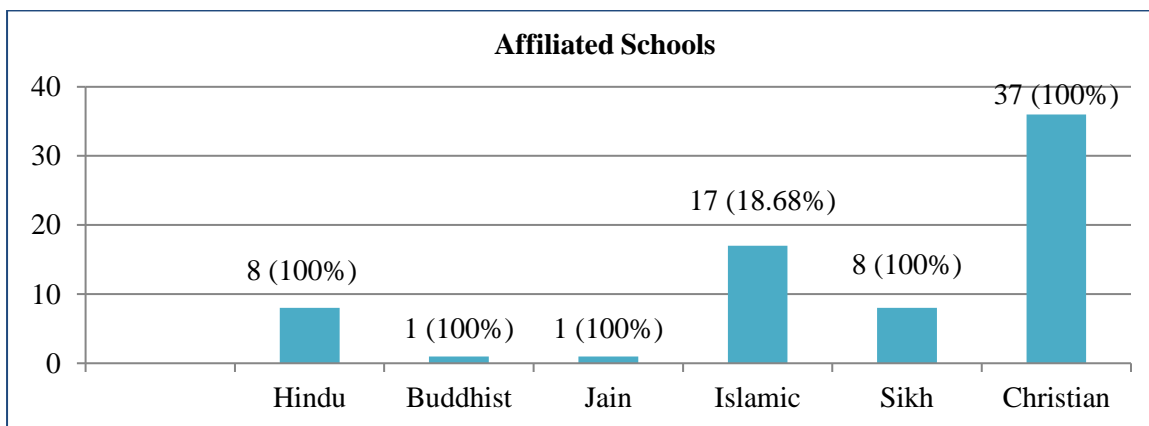


Figure 3: Status of schools with regards to its affiliation

Nature of the Management of Schools

The present study explored that all schools managed by distinct socio-religious organizations were managed by either a trust or privately. Schools such as Jain, Buddhist, and Christian were managed by the trust. However, there was only one Gurukula, which was managed privately. Out of ninety-two, only seventeen schools were managed under Islamic trusts, while others were managed privately. Similarly, five Sikh schools were managed by trusts and three by private groups (see in Figure 4). These findings indicate that all the schools were managed by non-governmental organizations.

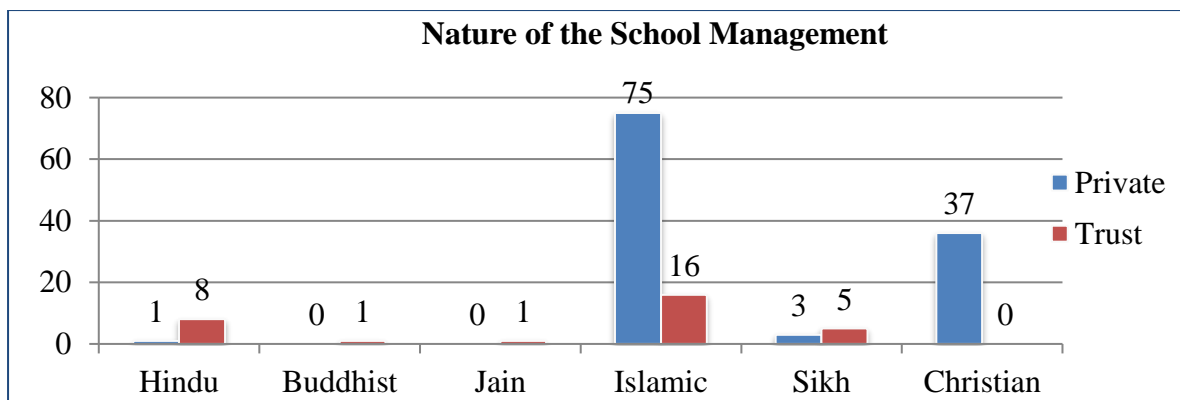


Figure 4: Nature of the Management of School

Categories of Schools

It was found that there were seven higher secondary schools and one middle school managed by Hindu organizations. Schools managed by Buddhist organizations and Jain organizations were a secondary school and a higher secondary school, respectively. Categories of schools managed by Islamic organizations included one primary school, five middle schools, one secondary school, and ten higher secondary schools. Similarly, schools under the management of Sikh organizations included one middle school, six secondary schools, and a higher secondary school. Categories of Christian schools comprised of two primary schools, one middle school, twenty-three secondary schools, and ten higher secondary schools (see Figure 5). This classification of schools indicates that the majority of the schools provided secondary and higher secondary levels of education.

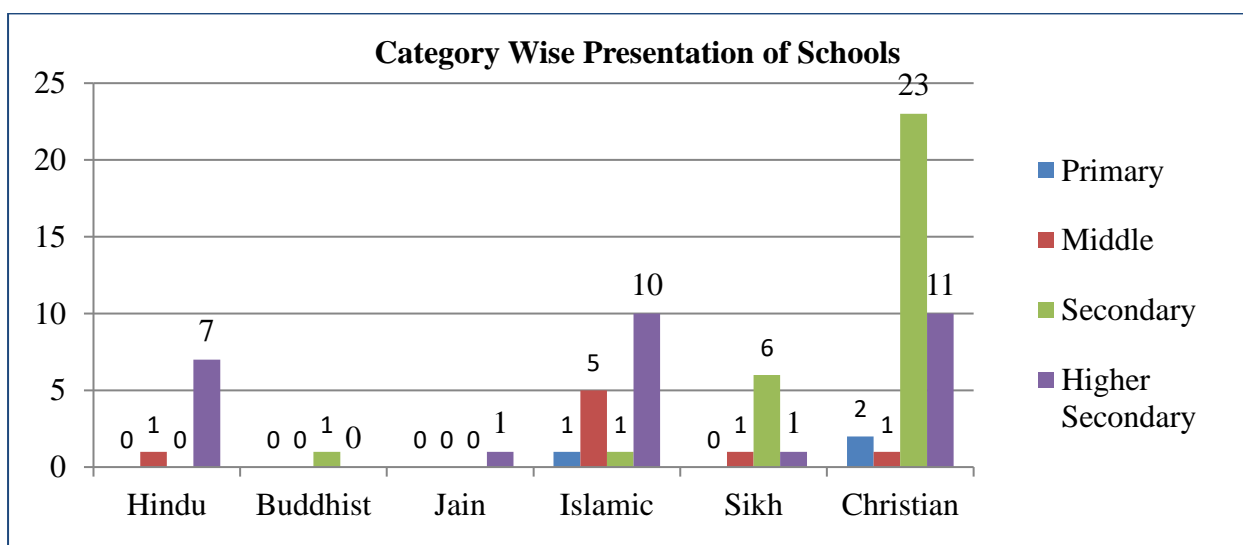


Figure 5: Categorization of Schools Managed by Six Socio-Religious Organization

Major findings on the status of schools managed by various socio-religious organizations with respects to enrolment of students

The findings of the present study revealed that there were 444 students in the Gurukula managed by Hindu socio-religious organizations, while enrolment of students in the Buddhist and Jain schools was 186 and 997, respectively (as shown in Figure 6). Similarly, students studying in the schools managed by Islamic, Christian, and Sikh socio-religious organizations were 14,124, 47,995, and 2,088, respectively (as shown in Figure 6). These findings reported that the highest enrolments of students were in the schools managed by Christian organizations, i.e., 47,995 in J&K (as shown in Figure 6). However, the population of the Christian community as per the 2011 census was the least, i.e., 0.01%; it indicates that students belonging to other religions were also studying in these schools.

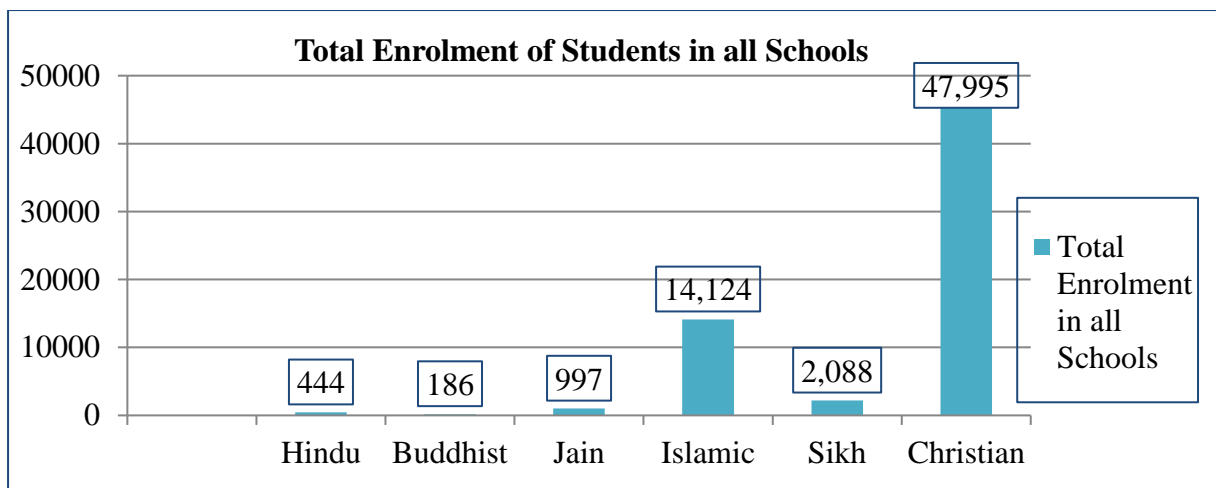


Figure 6: Total Enrolment of Students in all Schools

DISCUSSION

These census-based findings describe the status and characteristics of schools managed by six socio-religious organizations in Jammu and Kashmir. Data reveals considerable variation in student distribution, affiliation, management pattern, and enrolment across these educational establishments. There are 147 schools in the region managed by socio-religious organizations, of which Islamic organizations have 92 schools. This predominance is in line with the 2011 Census demographics of Jammu and Kashmir, where Muslims constituting about 68% of the population are found. The Christian organizations showed a different trend. They managed 37 schools, but they were a small minority of the population. The Hindu and Sikh organizations each operated eight schools, whereas the Jain and Buddhist organizations each operated one school, indicating a limited but consistent educational presence.

Distribution by district also showed regional concentration, with Islamic schools concentrated in Kupwara, Rajouri, and Ramban, and Christian schools in Jammu and Kathua. Such geographic trends imply that socio-religious organizations establish educational institutions in areas with high community presence or high educational demand. Their long life with most schools functioning for more than a decade attests to their historical continuity and their ongoing contribution to the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Particular schools like Tyndale Biscoe School (1880), Jain Higher Secondary School (1950), and Hanfiya Nabiya Waqf Middle School (1966) reflect this long tradition of education in communities.

Affiliation analysis showed sharp differences between formal and informal educational systems. No school was affiliated with any formal organization like the JKBOSE, CBSE, or other recognized agencies. Rather large numbers of Islamic schools (around 78%) were either members of non-formal boards like Darul Uloom Deoband and NIOS or were not recognized. Such an affiliation may limit student mobility, recognition and access to higher education an important area for policy attention.

These institutions' management structure demonstrated that they were all governed by non-governmental bodies -trusts or private managements which suggested a high degree of community initiative and autonomy in educational governance. Categorized analysis of schools revealed that most were secondary or higher secondary schools, which collectively focused on providing education at advanced levels rather than elementary levels. This suggests that socio-religious organisations contribute to secondary education but may need to reach out to primary education in order to promote holistic education access.

Enrolment further strengthened these findings with the highest student population in Christian managed schools (47,995) followed by Islamic-managed schools (14,124). Interestingly, although the Christian community constituted only a numerical minority in J&K, but their schools attracted large numbers of students from other religions, perhaps reflecting their more inclusive admission policies and perhaps

the perceived quality of education. Fewer enrolments in Hindu (444), Buddhist (186), and Jain (997) schools suggest low scale and outreach but are relevant to their communities. Overall, the findings indicate that socio-religious organizations serve to supplement the educational system historically and functionally in Jammu and Kashmir, though there are gaps in terms of scale, recognition, and inclusion.

CONCLUSION

The present census-based study concludes that socio-religious organizations form a core part of the educational framework in Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting both cultural diversity and community-driven educational initiatives. Islamic organizations lead numerically and demographically, while Christian organizations make a significant but disproportionate contribution to education despite their small size, their longevity and international reach confirm their commitment to education development. Yet board affiliation disparities, especially among Islamic institutions, suggest that religious and formal education systems should be better integrated to promote academic recognition and quality assurance. The mostly private-run management patterns reiterate the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting education in the region. The highest numbers of students enrolled in Christian institutions indicate the cross-religious appeal of these schools and their contribution to social integration through education.

It essentially argues that educational institutions managed by socio-religious organizations in Jammu and Kashmir are not only faith-based entities but also contribute to the larger cause of literacy, inclusion and educational development. Formal affiliations, quality standards, and educational services in underserved areas can further contribute to an equitable and pluralistic educational environment in the region.

Limitation of the Study

The present survey is not comprehensive, since within a short time span, all schools managed by different socio-religious organizations in Jammu and Kashmir could not be identified. So data collection was restricted to those institutions which could be reached and verified during research period. Consequently, the findings may not represent the whole range of schools functioning under different socio-religious managements in the region.

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