



**Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs**

# **Proportional Analysis of Mosques in Sri Lanka**

**June 2021**

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Sri Lanka Population by Religion .....	3
3. Places of worship in Sri Lanka.....	4
4. Number of worshipers per place of worship.....	6
5. Total number of mosques in Sri Lanka .....	8
6. Number of worshippers compared with mosques.....	9
7. Number of worshippers Per Jummah Mosque - District Representation..	10
8. Conclusion .....	12

## 1. Introduction

Sri Lanka is home to four major religions; Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. This study will look at the places of worship affiliated to these four religions and aims to understand whether the numbers of places of worship are in proportion to the population of each religious group. This data is important to examine the perception that there is a disproportionately larger number of Jummah mosques in Sri Lanka.

## 2. Population by Religion

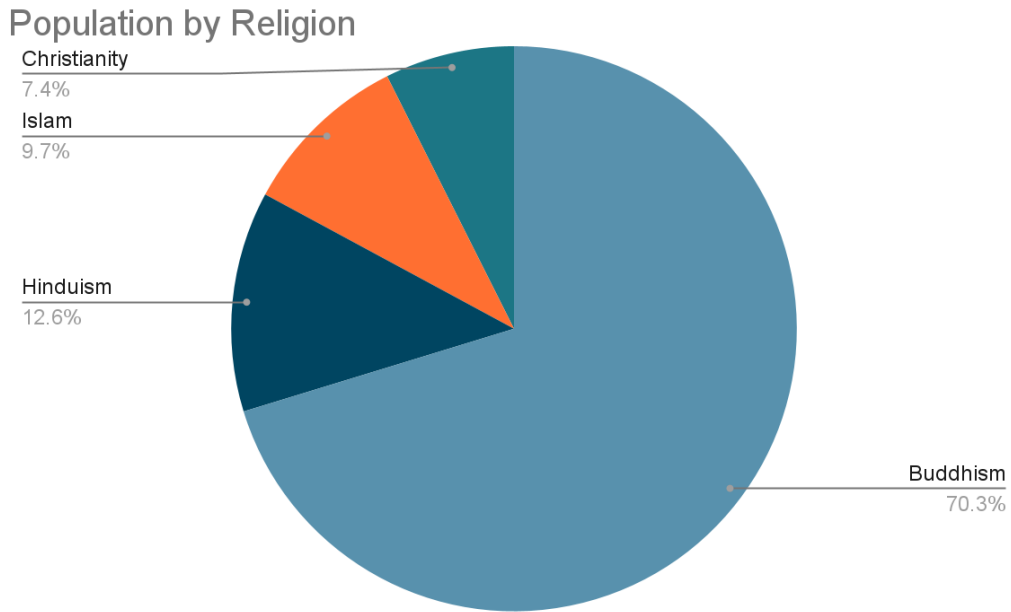
Theravada Buddhism is the majority religion in Sri Lanka, with about 70.20% of the country's population identifying as Buddhists. Hinduism accounts for 12.60%, Islam 9.70% and Christianity 7.40%.

According to the data portal IndexMundi, the estimated population of Sri Lanka was 22.5 million in 2018 and 20.3 million as per 2012 census.

Total Population of Sri Lanka: 22,576,592		
Religion	No of Worshippers	%
Buddhism	15,848,768	70.20%
Hinduism	2,844,651	12.60%
Islam	2,189,929	9.70%
Christianity	1,670,668	7.40%

Table 1

Source: IndexMundi 2018 Estimates



### 3. Places of Worship in Sri Lanka

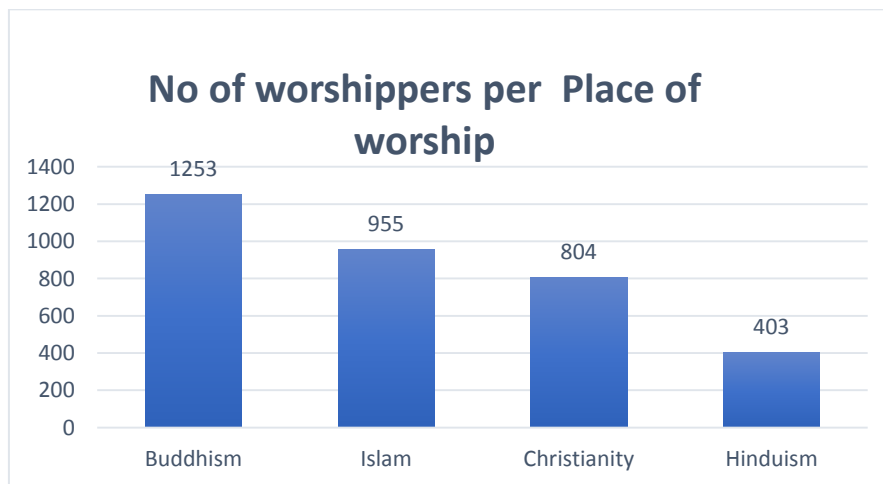
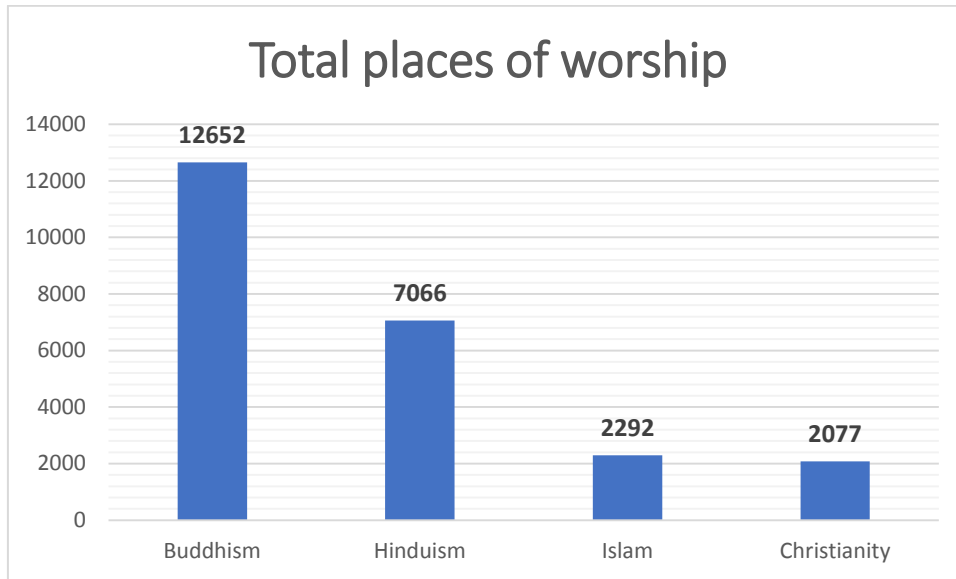
Sri Lanka has a strong tradition of religious worship and is home to a diversity of Buddhist and Hindu temples, mosques, churches and shrines. For the purpose of this study, we will only look at the places of worship of the four largest religions practiced in Sri Lanka.

The table below shows the comparison of the places of worship by religion based on the estimated population in 2018.

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Total places of worship</b>	<b>No of worshippers per place of worship</b>
Buddhism	15,848,768	12652	1253
Hinduism	2,844,651	7066	403
Islam	2,189,929	2292	955
Christianity	1,670,668	2077	804

Table 2

Source: (Relevant religious departments' website)

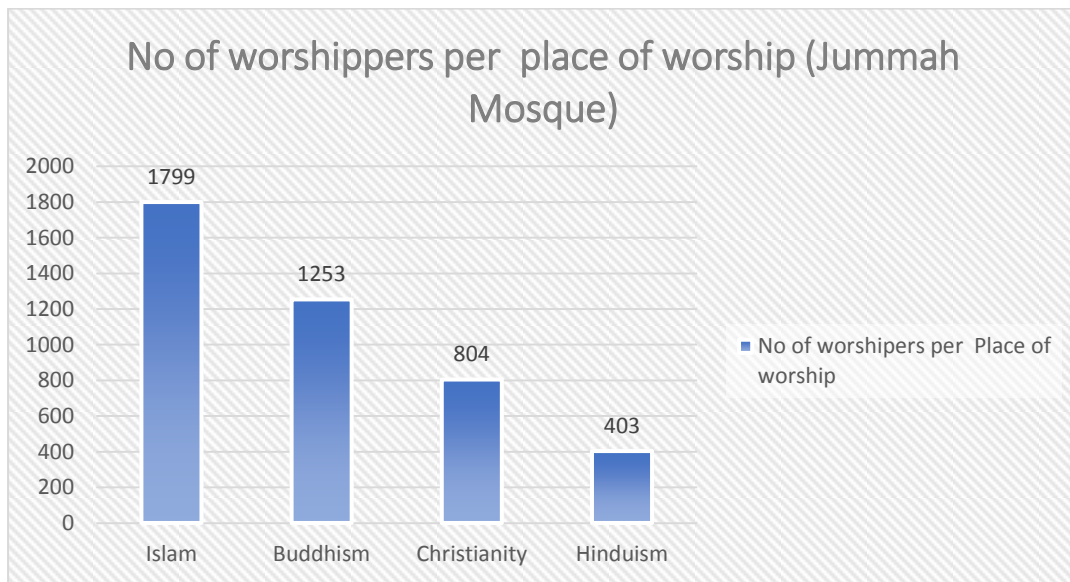


Muslims, who make up 9.7% of the total population, have 2292 mosques across the country for their worship. Number of registered mosques was reported as 2559 immediately after the Easter attacks but it was revealed that number included all registered shrines, charitable trusts; destroyed mosques as well as double entries. Based on the Muslim population of Sri Lanka, an average of 955 Muslims use a mosque. Hindus have 7066 temples with one temple used by 403 Hindus. Christians have 2077 churches with an average of 804 Christians per church.

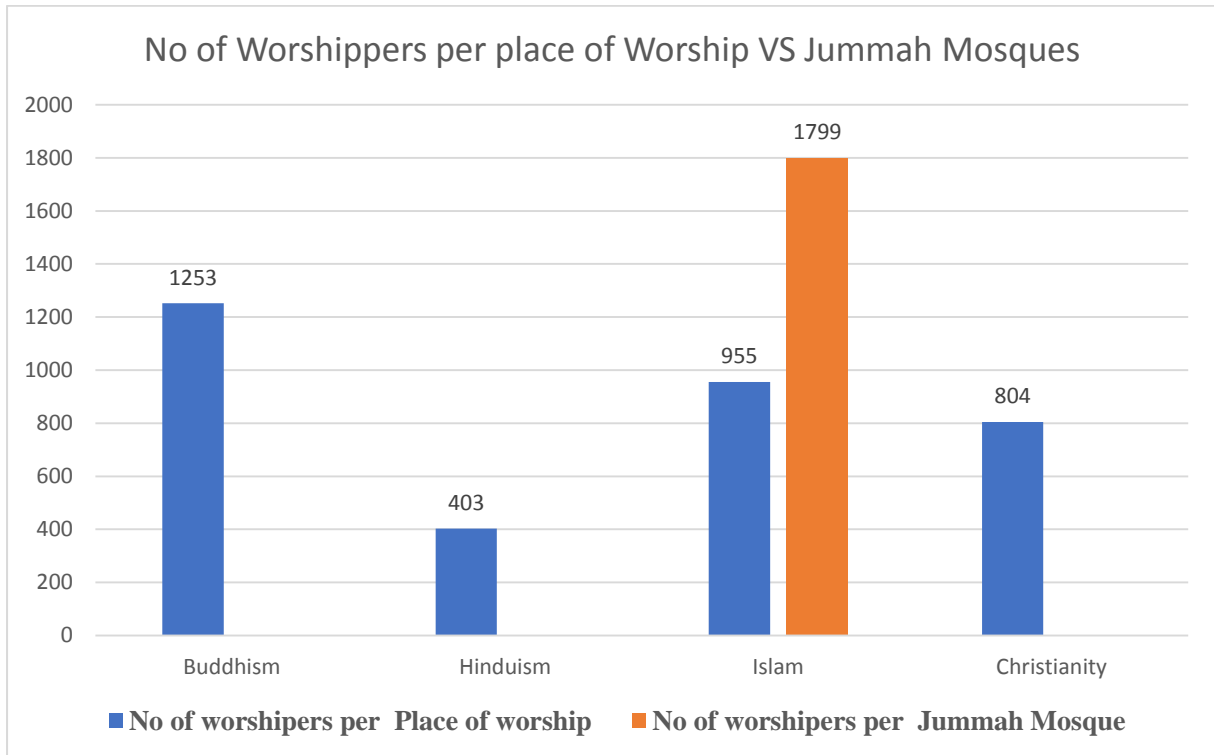
**4. Number of Worshippers per place of worship.**

Religion	Population	Total places of worship	No of worshippers per Place of worship	Total Jummah Mosques	No of worshippers per Jummah Mosque
<b>Buddhism</b>	15,848,768	12652	1253	-	-
<b>Hinduism</b>	2,844,651	7066	403	-	-
<b>Islam</b>	2,189,929	2292	955	1217	1799
<b>Christianity</b>	1,670,668	2077	804	-	-

Table 3



## A Population Survey on Jummah Mosques in Sri Lanka



## 5. Number of Mosques in Sri Lanka

**Total No. of Mosques in Sri Lanka**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mosque without Shrine	2273
Mosque with Shrine	19
<b>Total Mosques (Registered)</b>	<b>2292</b>
Unregistered Mosques	951
<b>(Registered+Unregistered)Mosques</b>	<b>3243</b>

Table 4

**Registered Mosques Vs Total Mosques**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Population 20,122,018</b>	<b>Total places of worship (Total)</b>	<b>Total places of worship (Registered)</b>	<b>No of worshippers per Place of worship (Registered)</b>	<b>No of worshippers per Place of worship (Total)</b>
Buddhism	15,848,768	12652	12652	1253	1253
Hinduism	2,844,651	7066	7066	403	403
Islam	2,189,929	<b>3243</b>	<b>2292</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>675</b>
Christianity	1,670,668	2077	2077	804	804

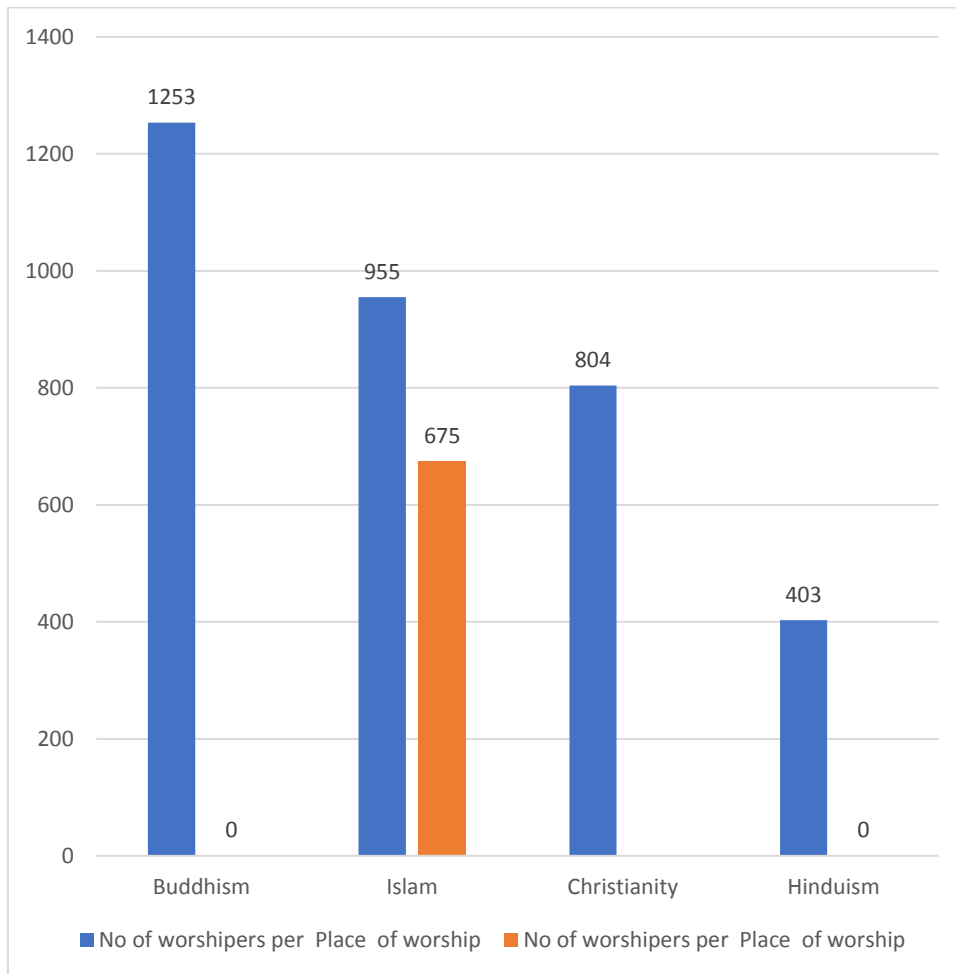
Table 5

There are 3243 mosques in Sri Lanka, with only 2292 mosques registered under the Wakfs Board of Sri Lanka. Based on the Muslim population of Sri Lanka, an average of 955 Muslims use a mosque which come under registered mosques of 2292. If we consider the total number of Mosques (registered and unregistered) in Sri Lanka, one mosque is used by 675 Muslims.



## 6. No of worshippers per place of worship

(Special reference to total registered and unregistered mosques)



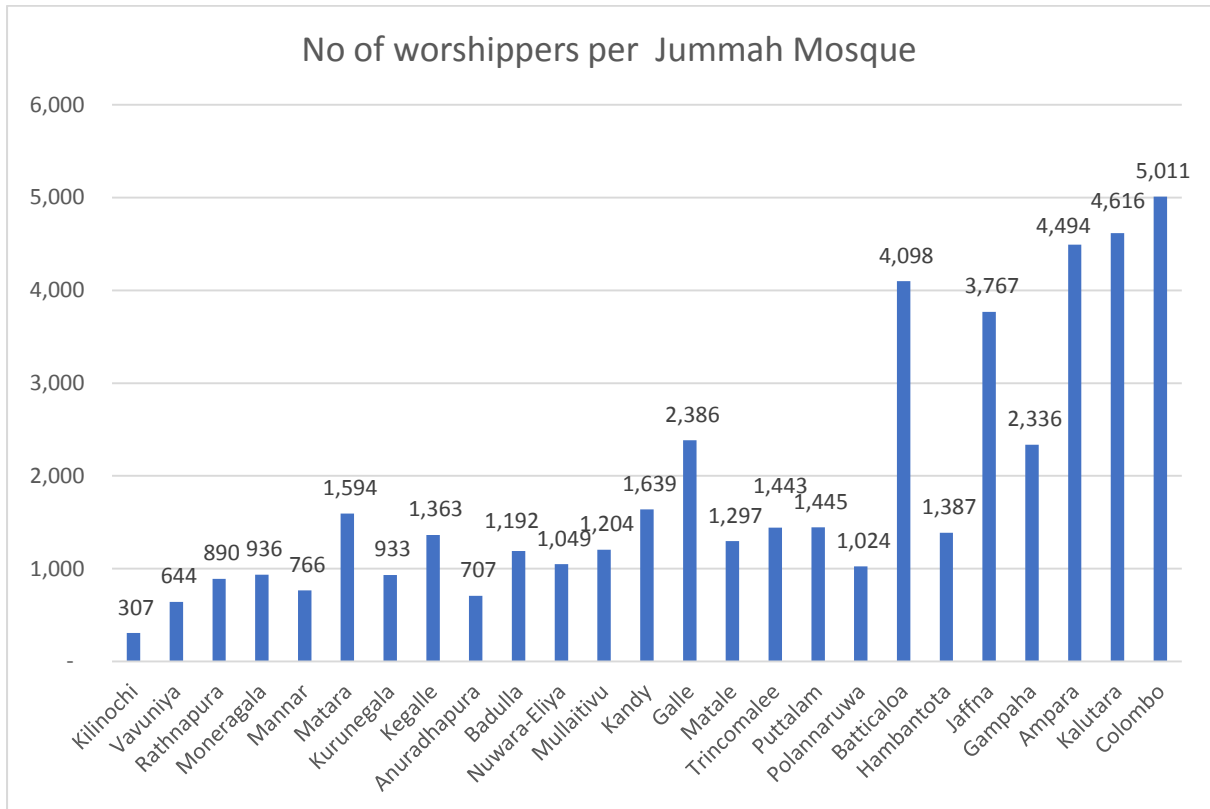
The number of places of worship of each religion is roughly proportionate to the population of its followers in Sri Lanka. Muslims have about 3243 mosques (2292 registered and 951 unregistered) for a population of 2,189,929. That is 675 worshippers per mosque.

**7. No of worshippers Per Jumma Mosque - District Representation**

S.No	Districts	Percentage of Muslim population (%)	Total Muslim Population	Jumma Mosques	No of worshippers per Jumma Mosque
1	Kilinochi	0.07	1,533	5	307
2	Vavuniya	0.5	10,950	17	644
3	Anuradhapura	3.55	77,742	110	707
4	Mannar	1.68	36,791	48	766
5	Rathnapura	1.26	27,593	31	890
6	Kurunegala	5.75	125,921	135	933
7	Moneragala	0.47	10,293	11	936
8	Polannaruwa	1.59	34,820	34	1024
9	Nuwara-Eliya	1.15	25,184	24	1049
10	Badulla	2.45	53,653	45	1192
11	Mullaitivu	0.22	4,818	4	1204
12	Matale	2.31	50,587	39	1297
13	Kegalle	3.05	66,793	49	1363
14	Hambantota	0.76	16,643	12	1387
15	Trincomalee	7.84	171,690	119	1443
16	Puttalam	7.72	169,063	117	1445
17	Matara	1.31	28,688	18	1594
18	Kandy	10.03	219,650	134	1639
19	Gampaha	5.44	119,132	51	2336
20	Galle	2.07	45,332	19	2386
21	Jaffna	0.86	18,833	5	3767
22	Batticaloa	6.55	143,440	35	4098
23	Ampara	14.16	310,094	69	4494
24	Kalutara	5.48	120,008	26	4616
25	Colombo	13.73	300,677	60	5011
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,189,929</b>	<b>1217</b>	

Table 6

## A Population Survey on Jummah Mosques in Sri Lanka



## 8. Conclusion

The Sri Lankan constitution upholds the fundamental right of a citizen to follow the religion and culture of their choice. On that basis, all citizens also have the right to access the place of worship affiliated to their religion, and for the protection of these sites.

The purpose of a mosque is to help Muslims offer their prayers, propagate moral guidance to the community and to promote interfaith harmony. Islam as a religion, urges its followers to offer the five daily prayers at the mosque. Mosques have also operated as coordination centres during disasters such as the 2016 floods and during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Many humanitarian related activities are conducted without any racial or religious discrimination.

There is a common misconception that there are more mosques in Sri Lanka than the Muslim population requires. In reality, the number of Muslims using a mosque is similar in proportion to the number of adherents worshiping at other places of worship. Mosques are built based on need and the population distribution of each area.

For example: Fewer mosques are required in an area with fewer villages and a large population. When there are more small villages it is necessary for each village to have at least one mosque.

Based on this study it is not possible to say whether the number of mosques is sufficient or greater than the requirements of the community. According to the available data, the mosques in Sri Lanka are proportionate to the Muslim population and built to meet the needs of the community.