

Administration of Religious Institutions in South Asian Countries: A Comparative Study

Ambarish Mangaraj

Siksha O Anusandhan Deemed to Be University

Abstract—The analysis compares the administration of religious institutions in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh by looking at their growth, role in society, government laws and oversight, division of resources, and legal systems. Using mixed methods, I assessed secondary data to look for ways governance can vary, from the government keeping all authority to involving the local community more. According to the results, while some countries insist on centralized control to follow the rules, others prefer giving more freedom and involve their communities. The study points out the ways laws, culture, and politics play a role in managing religious institutions, letting authorities develop better policies across the region.

Index Terms—Religious Institutions, South Asia, State Control, Governance, Legal Frameworks, Comparative Study, Resource Management, Community Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Religious institutions have long been part of the social, cultural, and political life in South Asia. For a long time, from ancient areas up to modern times, these earners of faith operated as houses of worship and were key to teaching, special forms of care, and leading their communities. In South Asia, which is home to many religions like Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Christianity, religious groups have a strong hold on their members and the society as a whole.

The manner in which these institutions are governed can differ widely between South Asian countries due to differences in their historical background, being under colonization, the types of governments, and social and religious practices. There are places where religious groups and organizations have much freedom, with local groups and customs leading their operations. Meanwhile, in other markets, public

officials take a more direct role by managing administration, implementing rules, and using specialized agencies. It links changes from governments that do not interfere in religious matters to those that play a bigger role in handling religious matters.

Understanding how religion is run in South Asia matters since it plays a role in keeping society united, stable, and respectful of its traditions. Such organizations hold wide-ranging resources, including land, money, and skilled workers, and often focus on education, healthcare, and helping people who are poor. If they are not handled properly and overseen in the right way, they might not have the desired results or be considered rightful.

The study aims to provide a detailed comparison of religious institutions in the five major South Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. It will explain how these organizations have evolved throughout the ages, the several roles they have in society, and the laws that oversee them. State registration, regulations, and the methods of control in managing resources will receive special attention.

A review of how various approaches to governance function will highlight the ways religious institutions acts with both the state and the wider society, pointing out both their problems and prospects. Ensuring that religious institutions remain accountable and transparent is the goal in which the results of this study can support and direct scholars, religious leaders, and policymakers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jurado Pérez and Salvachúa (2021) considered ways to apply a multi-service design structure to reactive e-health apps for older adults living in urban homes.

They applied cloud computing solutions to improve the reliability and quick response of IoT services, proving that it could improve healthcare services.

Sarma (2023) demonstrated implementation of metaheuristic approaches for auto-scaling in microservices operating in the cloud. Researchers introduced a way to schedule applications in containers that allows for automatic changes to resources when needed to efficiently support changes in microservice workload. Using the method increased output without costing more to operate.

Ogunwale et al. (2023) resolved the issue of updating legacy systems by proposing methods that can handle large volumes of data. The research showed that using seamless integration tools made it easy to adopt modern systems without interfering with the activities of traditional ones. The research summarized main ways of ensuring scalability and interoperability as companies change and grow.

DesLauriers et al. (2021) Investigated issues related to moving workloads between clouds and laid out possible solutions by making use of TOSCA and MiCADO. Their efforts focused on enabling cloud applications to move easily from one provider to another, therefore lessening the issue of vendor lock-in and helping with varying deployment plans.

Ajiga et al. (2024) researched various ways to create scalable software structures to address changing requirements of a business. By combining several design patterns and guidelines, they helped software systems manage advancements in user and organizational tasks. It was shown that being scalable is a crucial aspect for modern software development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To look at the management of religious institutions in South Asian countries, the research took a mixed-methods comparative approach. It was mainly focused on reviewing how each nation formed historically, the actions of its government, laws, rules, and ways of governing its resources. Information was gathered using various means, such as numbers and interviews, to see the differences in governance and state involvement between the countries under study.

3.1. Research Design

To investigate both the similarities and differences, researchers looked at how religious organizations are

managed in a handful of nations. With this, the study was able to factor in the different influences of history, culture, law, and politics that shape governance everywhere.

3.2. Data Collection

Secondary data collection was the main part of how this study was done. Legal and historical documents such as old records, papers from the government, legal text, and research studies were looked at to figure out how religious institutions have changed and been regulated over time. Institutional reports by religious and government groups included details about what these groups do, how people join and are registered, and how they are run. Quantitative information about how much the government decides things, how transparent things are, and how much people in the community are involved came from looking at surveys, lists of how well countries manage their government, and reports from different organizations.

3.3. Variables and Measurement

The research measured things like how much time people spent playing games or how serious they took the tasks. Religious institutions' functional roles were measured by looking at how much people are involved in worship, learning, helping their community, and things that relate to their culture. State control was measured by looking at what part of running the facilities the government itself actually did. Quality of governance was judged by looking at how much information was shared and how much the local people got involved, both using the same basic measurement. In addition, we looked at how the laws work in practice by checking things like how projects are registered, what rules are in place to control work, and how the system keeps things in check.

3.4. Data Analysis

Charts were drawn to illustrate the data and track trends in the activities of institutions, their control by the state, and the governing quality in different countries. Researchers examined historical and legal texts through qualitative content analysis to compare the quantitative info and explain the progress of government administration and its relationship with law. The paper used a comparative method to study

how different countries manage control, resources, and handling the law.

3.5. Sampling

Research was performed in five South Asian countries called India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. This decision was made as their religious traditions, forms of government, and society offered a good platform for analyzing the two countries.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

This study compared how religious institutions are managed in South Asian nations, paying special attention to their past, what they do, how the government controls them, their financial resources, and laws involved. The research aimed to discover how religion is managed and its institutions developed, with different levels of involvement from

the state and people within the community. Sufficient data gathered on established affairs, how the state governs, and transparency provided well-balanced comparison between the cases.

4.1. Development of Religious Institutions from Ancient to Modern Times

South Asian religious institutions have changed dramatically from ancient to modern times. Traditionally, most were set up as places of worship and cultural hubs that were patronized by royal patronage or community effort. They grew to encompass social welfare and educational functions as time passed, responding to changed societal needs. This transformation is demonstrated by the multi-faceted roles these institutions play today, as demonstrated in Table 1, where worship still takes center stage, but education and social welfare have become essential elements in the majority of nations.

Table 1: Relative importance (%) of different functional roles of religious institutions across South Asian countries

Country	Worship (%)	Education (%)	Social Welfare (%)	Cultural Role (%)
India	90	75	70	85
Pakistan	95	85	80	70
Sri Lanka	85	60	50	80
Nepal	80	65	60	90
Bangladesh	92	88	78	60

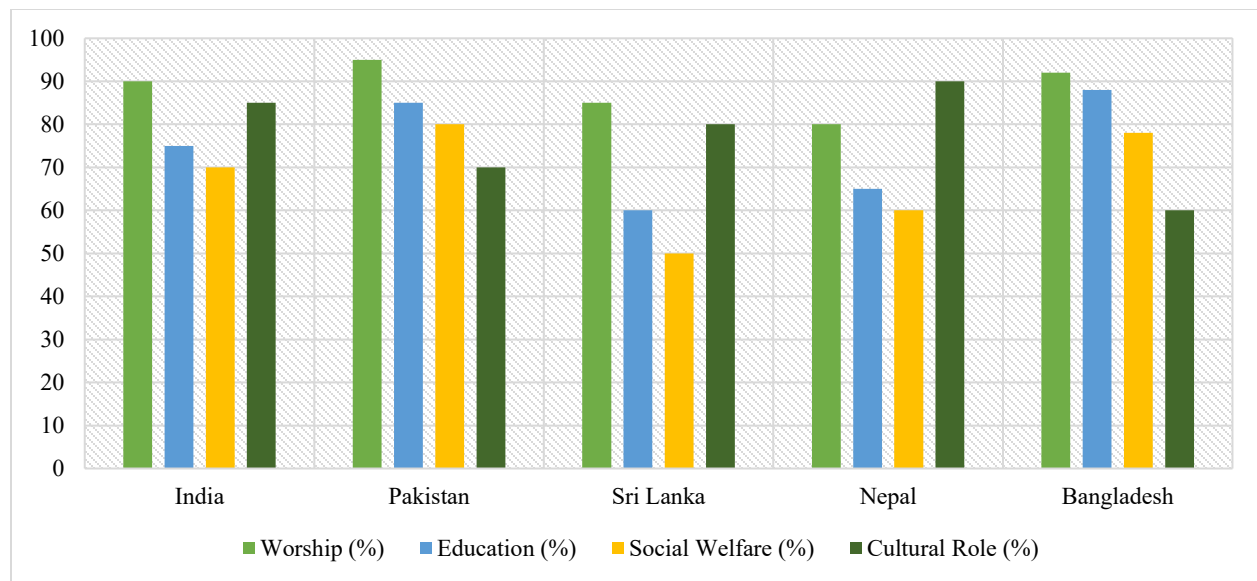


Figure 1: Roles of Religious Institutions in South Asian Countries

The table emphasizes the diverse roles of religious institutions in five South Asian nations, demonstrating their overall reach across worship, education, social welfare, and cultural activities. Worship is the most prevalent function, with exceptionally high activity in Pakistan (95%) and Bangladesh (92%), highlighting the primacy of religion in everyday life. Educational engagement is also high, particularly in Bangladesh (88%) and Pakistan (85%), as it represents the direct contribution of religious organizations to formal and religious education. For social welfare, Pakistani (80%) and Bangladeshi (78%) institutions are at the forefront, demonstrating their well-established involvement in charity and community welfare services. Cultural participation is strongest in India (85%) and Nepal (90%), with religious institutions significantly contributing to tradition, festival, and identity conservation. In summary, the findings show that religious institutions continue to be strong cornerstones of South Asian society across different levels influenced by historical, political, and social factors.

4.2. Types and Roles of Religious Institutions in Different Countries

The research classified religious organizations into some functional types—worship sites, education institutions, welfare organizations, and cultural centers. Table 1 illustrates that although all nations value worship, Pakistan and Bangladesh have

invested relatively more in educational and welfare functions, perhaps because of socio-political realities necessitating more extensive community service. Sri Lanka and Nepal exhibit a more robust cultural function, reflecting the distinctive entanglement of religion and nation in these nations.

4.3. State Mechanisms for Registration, Regulation, and Oversight

State engagement in religious organizations ranges considerably throughout the region. Mechanisms range from formal registration through regulatory agencies to oversight committees that guarantee conformity with legal frameworks. Information in Table 2 demonstrates that Pakistan and Bangladesh have the greatest levels of direct state control, presumably because religious affairs are approached on a centralized basis. Conversely, India and Nepal have a more decentralized model with high levels of community involvement, as reflected in higher ratings for transparency and participation in Table 3.

Table 2: Percentage Of Direct State Control Over Religious Institutions In South Asian Countries

Country	Direct State Control (%)
India	30
Pakistan	90
Sri Lanka	80
Nepal	50
Bangladesh	85

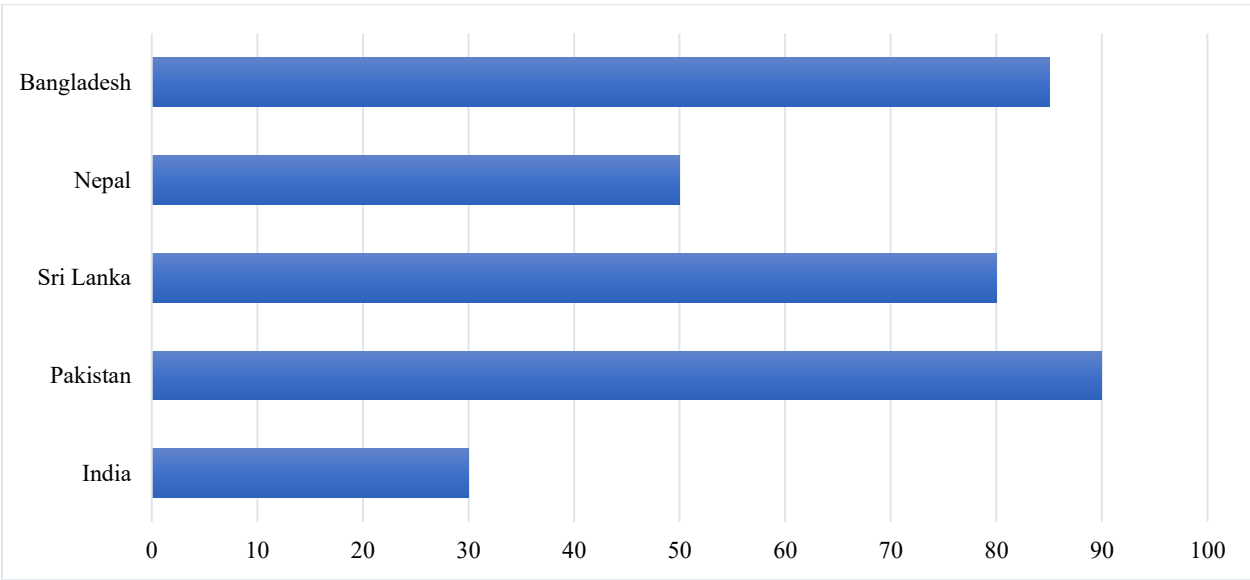


Figure 2: Extent of Direct State Control Over Religious Institutions in South Asian Countries

Direct state control over religious organizations in South Asian nations indicates considerable differences in governance strategy. Direct state control is most prominent in Pakistan (90%) and Bangladesh (85%), which are characterized by high governmental intervention and administrative control of religious matters, potentially to contain sectarian forces and preserve political stability. Sri Lanka also displays significant state control at 80%, as it historically entangled religion and the state, particularly regarding Buddhism. Conversely, Nepal (50%) exhibits a more even-handed approach, as it has moved from a Hindu monarchy to a secular republic, where the state maintains moderate control. India, with only 30% direct state control, proposes a more decentralized or community-led management of religious institutions, consistent with its constitutional pledge of secularism and religious freedom. The data overall highlights a range of state involvement throughout the region, varying according to each country's particular political history, legal traditions, and social needs.

4.4. Comparative Analysis of Direct and Indirect State Control and Resource Management

The level of state control is related to how resources, both human and financial, are controlled within religious institutions. High direct control countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh) have state-nominated management boards and tight resource controls, which can restrict community participation but can enhance compliance with regulation. Alternatively, indirect state control in Nepal and India permits more autonomy, encouraging community-led resource management and possibly greater transparency, as evident in their respective ratings in Table 3. This comparative structure emphasizes the sacrifices of one for the other between central power and local participation.

Table 3: Ratings Of Transparency and Community Participation In Religious Institutional Governance

Country	Transparency Rating	Community Participation Rating
India	8	7
Pakistan	4	3
Sri Lanka	6	5
Nepal	7	8
Bangladesh	3	2

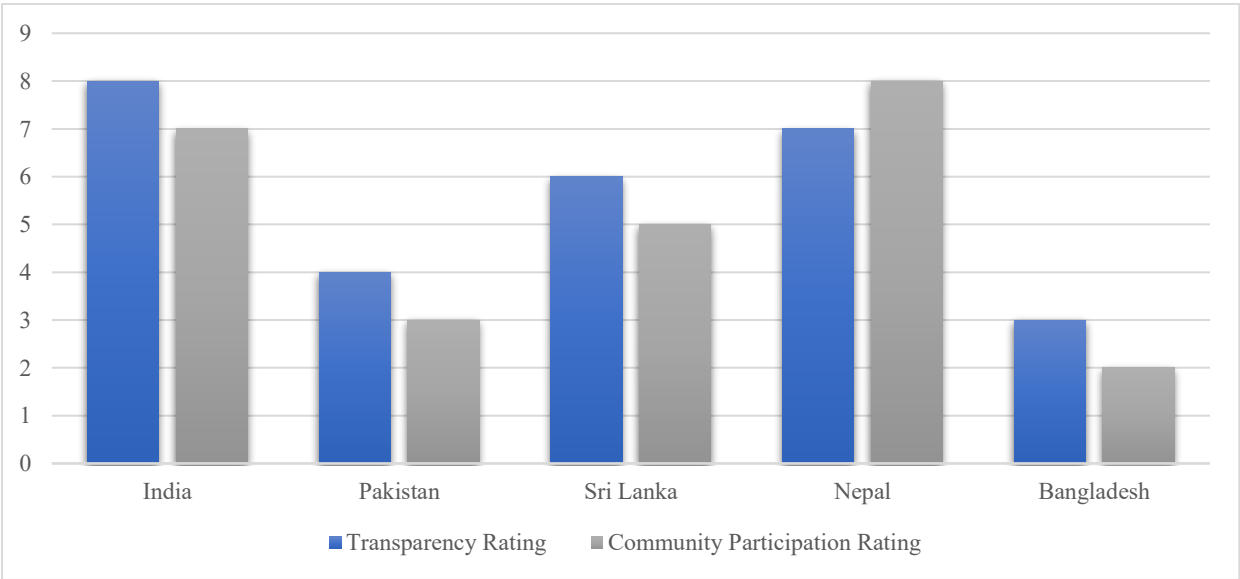


Figure 3: Transparency & Participation in South Asian Religious Institutions

The transparency and community involvement data for the management of religious institutions in South Asian nations exhibit striking differences in governance and inclusivity. India and Nepal exhibit fairly robust performance with India posting 8 in

transparency and 7 in community participation, while Nepal posts 7 and 8 respectively. This means that in these nations, religious institutions are run with greater openness and active participation of local communities in decision-making. Sri Lanka displays

moderate scores (6 in transparency and 5 in participation), which mean that there exists some degree of institutional accountability but a lot of room for improvement in grassroots action. In contrast, Pakistan and Bangladesh demonstrate low scores in both areas—Pakistan with 4 for transparency and 3 for participation, and Bangladesh with the lowest rating at 3 and 2—reflecting centralized or state-dominated control with minimal public oversight and participation. These inconsistencies reflect larger governance issues and indicate that states with more community involvement tend to have more transparent and accountable religious institutions.

4.5. Legal Frameworks and State Involvement

legislation helps to outline the governance of religious organizations and sets the rules for state involvement. There are many different laws in South Asian countries that manage registration, property rights, taxation, and accountability in the government. More restrictive laws in Pakistan and Bangladesh support strict direct rule, while the freer systems in India and Nepal support more power diverted to the provinces. Failure to balance participatory governance and good legal oversight can cause tension or conflict as highlighted in Table 3.

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the analysis highlighted the different rules and systems each South Asian country has for religious institutions, directly shaped by their unique history, culture, and laws. The research showed that these institutions have differing roles, the state varies in how involved it is, and legislation and regulation can be effective to different degrees. While centralization tends to lead to better adherence to regulations, decentralization allows communities to get involved and remain transparent. Scholars and policy-makers can learn from the dynamics to resolve the issue of religious autonomy and state control.

REFERENCES

[1] Ajiga, D., Okeleke, P. A., Folorunsho, S. O., & Ezeigweneme, C. (2024). Methodologies for developing scalable software frameworks that

support growing business needs. *Int. J. Manag. Entrep. Res.*, 6, 2661-2683.

[2] Akerele, J. I., Uzoka, A., Ojukwu, P. U., & Olamijuwon, O. J. (2024). Improving healthcare application scalability through microservices architecture in the cloud. *International Journal of Scientific Research Updates*, 8(02), 100-109.

[3] Blinowski, G., Ojdowska, A., & Przybyłek, A. (2022). Monolithic vs. microservice architecture: A performance and scalability evaluation. *IEEE access*, 10, 20357-20374.

[4] Calderón-Gómez, H., Mendoza-Pittí, L., Vargas-Lombardo, M., Gómez-Pulido, J. M., Rodríguez-Puyol, D., Sención, G., & Polo-Luque, M. L. (2021). Evaluating service-oriented and microservice architecture patterns to deploy ehealth applications in cloud computing environment. *Applied Sciences*, 11(10), 4350.

[5] DesLauriers, J., Kiss, T., Ariyattu, R. C., Dang, H. V., Ullah, A., Bowden, J., ... & Terstyanszky, G. (2021). Cloud apps to-go: Cloud portability with TOSCA and MiCADO. *Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience*, 33(19), e6093.

[6] Jurado Pérez, L., & Salvachúa, J. (2021). An approach to build e-health iot reactive multi-services based on technologies around cloud computing for elderly care in smart city homes. *Applied Sciences*, 11(11), 5172.

[7] Nadeem, F., & Ahmad, N. (2024). Scalable Solutions in Distributed Computing for High-Demand User Applications.

[8] Ogunwale, O., Onukwulu, E. C., Joel, M. O., Adaga, E. M., & Ibeh, A. I. (2023). Modernizing legacy systems: A scalable approach to next-generation data architectures and seamless integration. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, 4(1), 901-909.

[9] Oyeniran, O. C., Adewusi, A. O., Adeleke, A. G., Akwawa, L. A., & Azubuko, C. F. (2024). Microservices architecture in cloud-native applications: Design patterns and scalability. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Interdisciplinary Scientific Endeavours*, 1(2), 92-106.

[10] Raj, P., Vanga, S., & Chaudhary, A. (2022). Cloud-Native Computing: How to

design, develop, and secure microservices and event-driven applications. John Wiley & Sons.

- [11] Sarma, S. K. (2023). Metaheuristic based auto-scaling for microservices in cloud environment: a new container-aware application scheduling. *International Journal of Pervasive Computing and Communications*, 19(1), 74-96.
- [12] Sheffield, N. C., Bonazzi, V. R., Bourne, P. E., Burdett, T., Clark, T., Grossman, R. L., ... & Yates, A. D. (2022). From biomedical cloud platforms to microservices: next steps in FAIR data and analysis. *Scientific Data*, 9(1), 553.
- [13] Shethiya, A. S. (2023). Next-Gen Cloud Optimization: Unifying Serverless, Microservices, and Edge Paradigms for Performance and Scalability. *Academia Nexus Journal*, 2(3).
- [14] Suleiman, N., & Murtaza, Y. (2024). Scaling microservices for enterprise applications: comprehensive strategies for achieving high availability, performance optimization, resilience, and seamless integration in large-scale distributed systems and complex cloud environments. *Applied Research in Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Computing*, 7(6), 46-82.
- [15] Zaki, J., Islam, S. R., Alghamdi, N. S., Abdullah-Al-Wadud, M., & Kwak, K. S. (2022). Introducing cloud-assisted micro-service-based software development framework for healthcare systems. *IEEE Access*, 10, 33332-33348.