CHAPTER - II

RELIGION, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE
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Religion is one of the universal, permanent, pervasive and perennial interests of man. Man is not only has biological, economic and social needs, but also religious need. He has a religious quest, which makes him to become restless even beyond the satisfaction of his basic physical needs. Hence, the Biblical saying, "Man cannot live by bread alone". It is also true that man is from the earliest times has been "incurably religious".

Religion is one of the wondrous creations of man. Though religion is a creation of man it is religion that has controlled man's social and personal life all through the ages. Its influence has faded a little today. But its grip over man is not completely lost.

Religion influences every aspect of individual and collective human life from birth to death. All religious guide and modify human activities in complex ways. Which vary from one religion to another and within each religion according to such categories as male and female, young and old, clergy and laity, learned and ignorant, rich or poor?
Religion is internal, external aspect of man, the internal aspects of religion are the body of ideas, convictions, and emotional concerning means religion to god. While its external aspect is the system of prayer, ceremonies and rites through which the religious spelling is manifested.

It is very difficult to separate Indian religion from the social life and all these social activities have some religious bearing or the other. All rural institutions like family, marriage and caste are related with the religion. Religion dominates the life of the villagers and it is respected in thought and conduct of the rural people. It is very difficult to understand a motive of rural people unless the religious background is studied comprehensively. Therefore Durkheim (1991) says that “Religion establish group solidarity and harmony and cements the network of social relations in a given society.” And the same way Rausch (1995) “Religion has interacted with political, economic and cultural factors to produce the social order in which we live in.”

The word 'Religion' is derived from the Latin word 'religare' which mean to bind together or to rehearse, to execute painstakingly suggesting both group identity and ritual. Religion is the system of beliefs and practices. If contributes to the formation, maintenance and contribution of social order. The great pioneer of the science of religion Smith and Robertson has pointed out "In connection with every religion,
whether ancient or modern, we find on the one hand certain beliefs and on the other hand certain institutions, rituals, practices and rules of conduct. Religion is an important and essential part of the social machinery.

Therefore, D. S. Sharma says that, "Religion is the highest need of human nature, just as our bodies required food for their sustenance and our minds require knowledge for their expansion, so do our souls require religious experience for their perfection". Most of the Indians religiously oriented. It is observed that rural people of India are ahead of urban people in the field of religious activities and worship. Therefore, Sir Harcourt Bufler says that, "The Indians are essentially religious as Europeans are also essentially secular. Religion is still the alpha and the omega of Indian life". In the same way Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has stated that, "the religious conceptions in this country (India), are so vast that they cover every aspect of life, from birth to death, there is nothing which is not religion". Thus, religion is the second name of India.

Definitions of Religion

Emile Durkheim defines, “religion in terms of its social functions. Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals with reference to the sacred, which binds people together into social groups.”
Geertz says, religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence.

Max Weber defines religion is a condition and effect of a certain type of social behavior from the viewpoint of the subjective experience ideas and purposes of the individual concerned.

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Turner says religion is that interrelated network of statuses, roles and norms revolving around beliefs and rituals pertaining to the sacred and supernatural ".

Characteristics of Religion

Religion has the following characteristics they are:

1. Religion as essentially a group phenomena
2. Religion is concerned with the sacred
3. Religion is commonly concerned with the supernatural
4. Religion is characterized by a body of beliefs

5. The norms accompanying religion prescribe and sanction a particular set of practices

6. Religion provides group members with moral prescriptions. Besides this, Religion has certain common elements. They are notions of the sacred and supernatural beliefs. Values and natural activities in cultural structures.

Functions of Religion

Religion has performed two universal functions (Turner 1972). They are as follows:

1. Reinforcing Norms

2. Alleviating Anxiety and tension

1. Reinforcing Norms

Religious beliefs, values and rituals reinforce crucial norms in other social contexts. By making norms appear as extensions of the supernatural order, they are given additional weight. People are less likely to violate norms that have been ordained by their gods. Again, the early sociologist Emile Durkheim (1912) provided us with our first insight into this function of religion. He observed that rituals and other
religious activities reinforced society. They were directed not just at the sacred and gods but as society.

2. Alleviating Anxiety and Tension

Both the societies (primitive and modern), have fear and tensions. However, nowadays it has increased and changed. Therefore, modern societies have created new worries and anxiety. They are: will I get the promotion? Will I be laid off? What happens after death? Religion provides answers for many. It gives them a place to go, people to consult, and things to do in arriving at answers. Thus, it alleviates tensions for many people.

Importance of Religion

1) Religion Provides spiritual experience

This is the primary function of religion. Prayer, worship and meditation are the summary of religious experience. Through these means man express reverence, gratitude and allegiance to the Almighty or the God, or the supernatural force. When an individual meets the supernatural things, he undergoes somewhat peculiar, inexplicable experience. He converses with the divine through prayers. He forgets the worldly life and its problems. An individual thinks that he is not alone in
this world. He has the feeling of having something that lives inside as well as outside him.

2) Religion promotes social unity

Religions feelings provide sense of oneness among the members of the family. In the same way deities, church, fairs and festivals free the people of all castes and creeds together. Some times leaders of some religion arrange meetings, build free boarding houses and publish journals with a view to binding members of their respective religion.

3) Religion provides recreation

Religion promotes recreation through purana, kirtana, fairs and festival, dramas, dance, music, bhajans and religious lectures.

4) Religion promotes social welfare

Religion renders service to the people and promotes their welfare. It appears to the people to be sympathetic merciful and co-operative. It rouses in them the spirit of mutual help and co-operation. It awakens the philanthropic attitude of the people. It reinforces the sense of belongingness to the group. It promotes art and culture and provides means for the development of character on the right lines.
5) Religion provides peace of mind

Religion provides for the individual the most desired peace of mind. At every crisis, personal or collective, religion is called for consolation and peace of mind. It promotes goodness and helps the development of character. In a world full of uncertainties, indefiniteness, dangers, insecurities and unhappiness the need for safety and security is great. Religion here acts as the heater of the ills of life. It reduces one's grievances to some extent. It gives the individuals emotional support in the face of uncertainty. It consoles them when they are disappointed. It offers man inspiration, hope, faith, optimism and courage.

6) Religion is a form of Social Control

There are so many aspects of social control. Among the all, religion is the most powerful element of social control. Religion controls the activities of people. It prescribes rules of conduct to be followed by people. It puts up a fence for human behaviour. But, religion is not a mere fence. A garden contains precious elements of social heritage. It is the worth of God which forces us to follow the codes of conduct. Some religious conceptions such as spirits, ghosts and souls also enforce discipline; notions of heaven and hell also have strong effects on the behaviour of people. Thus religion has a great disciplinarian value.
Temples

Generally, temples are called as God's place or God's House. These are called God's temple, God's house, God's residing place etc. Temples are the places denoting the existence of God's eternal-sacred place. These carry the attention of human beings towards salvation and become the main reasons of social peace, coordination, friendship and together leaving. In addition, these have become the places of reflecting the history, tradition and culture of that religion. Temples have become the center of spiritual and wonderful power. From the past and until today they are functioning as directing, controlling and patronizing the life of the people. People are worshiping the god and goddesses for physical protection, escaping from disease, become economically sound, to be rid-off from afraid.

Types of Temples

Generally, three types of temples are to found. They are -

(i) Single grouping temples

(ii) Dual grouping temples

(iii) Triple grouping temples

(i) Single grouped temples are having only one worshiping place door. They are called as small temples. Such types of temples are
found in some streets of villages where the lower caste people are residing and found in new layouts of cities.

(ii) Dual grouped temples have two doors, with two frequencies and having two entrances. These are found in villages and center place of cities, more populated areas. These may be called as medium sized temples.

(iii) Triple grouped temples are having three doors, three frequencies and three entrances and one main entrance. These are found more in big villages and towns. In such temples, there will be shops selling flowers, fruits, coconut, sandal etc., in surrounding corridor. These are called big temples.

**Idol of god:**

In every temple there will be one or the other God’s idol will be established to bring the divine feelings. The God’s idols will be in the form of human being animal’s form and in the mixed form of human being as well as animals form are found.

(i), God’s idol in the form of human beings: Generally, Shiva, Parvathi, Laxmi, Venkatesh, Raghavendra, Manjunath, Sidrameshwar, Sharan Basaveshwar, Yallamma etc., will be the God’s idols either in the male or female forms.
(ii), God's idols in the form of animals. Generally, the God's Idols in the form of animals are found as Nandi (Basavanna), Marutl, Naag, Varaaha etc.,

(iii), God's idols in the fixed form of human being and animals:

Generally, the God's idols in the mixed form of human being and animals found are Ganesha, Ugra Narashimha, Daksha Brahahaha etc., like wise, the form of God's Idols found in different forms.

Building of Temples

The belief among the people about the God is found that, God is forever, permanent, stand still. Therefore, it is found that, the followers of God built the temple using solid and big stones, wood with the feelings that, the temple should also be durable and forever. I addition to this, the belief of the people as, God is mighty and beautiful. Therefore, the temples are found to be built on the height places and beautifully. Now-a-days, these have older history on par with human society generally, the temples are found to be built a symbol of victory, matter of remembrance and protecting places. Kings, rulers and strangest when they attain victory in wars used to build temples as a mark of victory, whereas kings, queens, rich people when they marry or blessed issue also they used to construct temples as a mark of remembrance. Like wise the ordinary citizens used to construct temples thinking that, to
System of Worship in Temples

In every temple, the worshipping system is found. But, the worshipping system in all the temples is not found to be similar. Therefore, in different temples different types of worshipping systems are found. Due to this reason, in some temples six times, worshipping is done, in some temples three times, two times and one time worshipping is done. Similarly, in some temples worshipping will be carried weekly, yearly, once in three years or even more.

System of Prayers in Temples

As the worshipping system is found in temples, the prayer system is also found. Among the prayer, there are two types (1) Prayer for self and (2) Prayer for others. Prayer for self-means, a person submit prayer for the betterment of himself and his family members This prayer will be undertaken by large number of people. In this, it is found that the person prays for his own betterment, own interest and individual profit. Then, second type of prayer is for others betterment. Betterment of others means a person submits prayer for himself his village/town, his
State/Nation's people. In this prayer, both betterment of self and others are found. Such type of prayer is offered by those who have feelings of broader mentality, people having care about society.

**Priests of Temples**

Generally, the people who manage the worshipping activities is called priests or Archaka. Among priests, two types are found (1), Hereditary priests 2) The priests deployed by the Committee or deployed by the elders of the village/town.

(1) **Hereditary Priests**

These people have been managing the worshipping activities from their ancestors. These priests will have power for entire utilization of donations received in the temple. These priests mostly resides on the campus of the temple.

(II) **Priests appointed by the committee / Village Seniors**

There are priests manage the worshipping activities appointed by Trust/Committee/village or Town seniors. A sum of monthly salary will be fixed. They are not allowed to accept the donations/gifts offered to the temple. They may be terminated at any time. In addition to these
priests, some saints and such others were rendering services as priests in some of the temples.

Data of Temples

Though the temples are ancient as to the human society, the total statistical data of the same are not available exactly. Only the statistical data of the temples registered in *wakf* and *mujarai* departments are found. However, in these departments, many of the oldest and small temples have not been registered. Therefore, it is found that the temples that have not registered are more than that of the registered ones. Either the archaeology department or the Commissioner of Religion has not collected entire statistical information of the temples. Therefore, the total number of temples being in India is not found. The same situation is also prevailing in Karnataka.
Number of temples and *Archakas* of the gazette institutions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>No of Temples</th>
<th>No. of Archakas</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Bagalkot</td>
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Important of Temples:

Temples are found in villages, towns and cities. But, they play important roles in village rather than the towns and cities can be said. Temples are found in the villages as the place of worship or temples are the symbol of deity and a centre for spiritual release. These temples are managed by a priests or pandit who receives livelihood from the villagers in the form of money and crops. Villages often visit the temples to offer their prayer but the number of woman visitor is more than the men. Rural temples are public property. All the villagers contribute for the development and maintenance of public temples.
Generally, the temples perform the following functions.

1. Religious Importance
2. Social Importance
3. Moral Importance
4. Cultural importance
5. Educational importance
6. Recreational importance
7. Judicial Importance

1), Religious Importance

Religiously Temple plays an important role. Generally, the functions like marriage, threading ceremony and other social and religious activities will take place. In addition to this, community meals, community bhajan-kirtan, puranas etc. will also take place.

2), Social Importance

Temples have social importance. The functions like fairs, BhajansKirtanas, brings unity among the different castes, creeds and religion of a region. Due to this it creates introduction, friendship, cooperation. This makes secularism among the people. it can be said that, due to this secularism peace, co-ordination, Unity will take place.

3), Moral Importance

Creation of morality among the people the temples have prime importance. There is belief among the people that, God creates the
feelings of morality-immorality right-wrong, good-bad. Due to this reason the people away cultivates themselves good behaviours. Because, the God will punishes the people who does misbehaviors that the people possess the imagination.

4), Cultural Importance

The temple playa predominant role to retain-growing the culture and tradition of a region. The temples are protecting the singers, dancers and musicians. In addition to this the temples help in carrying out the literature, culture and traditions etc., of an area from heredity to heredity.

5), Educational Importance

Temples have been important from the point of view of education is concerned. Since very past the Sanskrit lessons were being taught in temples. These lessons were mostly availed by the youths belonging to the upper classes. In addition, the teachers, physicians, medicine men, ethical leaders, song star, experts and other seniors used to open their experiences and day-to-day activities before the people in the temples. Along with this, Scribes, Astrologers, Astronomers and Sooth Sayers also used to express their different thoughts. Even today in many temples educational institutions bring run is found.
6), **Recreational importance**

From the point of view of the entertainment also the temple have importance Bhajan - Kirtanas, worship-prayers, fairs-festivals, purana- ethical stories artistic exhibitions provide the people in different types of entertainment. In such religious meets-functions, the persons of different castes and creeds, a gender of an area enjoys.

7), **Judicial Importance**

The temples also play an important role in solving the difference of opinions and internal quarrels held between the people. In villages quarrels may takes place due to different reasons between two persons. In case of such quarrels, the seniors try to extinguish the quarrels by offering grains and other thing to god by both the quarreled persons. The behaviors of miscreants like thieves and other such people the activity will be concerned by the seniors by imposing fines.

Not only this, the temples also helps in creating social peace, co-operation, co-ordination even they creates desires in undesired, courage in disguised, health in unhealthy and helpful in helplessness makes the people to march ahead towards enthusiastic life. Due to this reason itself the people are worshiping and praying the different Gods and Goddesses since past and till today is found.
MOSQUES

Mosques are the Muslims’ place of worship. Mosque became a symbol of submission and purity. The Mosque is supposed to provide ultimate fulfillment of their feelings. The Arabic term "Masjid" literally means "a place where one prostrates oneself (before God), or in other words completely surrenders to God. This would mean that, strictly speaking, a sanctuary was not considered a fundamental necessary, since all places we equal for God and complete resignation and humanity into him could be shown anywhere. Mosques are the meeting place of the people of the locality or the village.

Functions and Importance of Muslim Religious Institutions

Muslim religious centers perform the below mentioned functions:

1. Equality and Brotherhood
2. Educates the Muslims
3. Provide the lodging and boarding
4. Recreational Importance
5. Cultural Importance
1), **Equality and Brotherhood**

The religious Muslim centers play a very important role in creating equality and brotherhood relations. The Muslim religion says that, any person does any occupation (higher lower level), all are equal in occupation and should not make differentiation as to higher or lower. Similarly, it also says poor-rich, villager-urban all should be as brotherhood.

2), **Educates the Muslims**

Muslim religious centers also play a predominant role in providing education to the Muslim people. In addition to teaching Urdu and Arabic languages in masjids, Madrasas to the Muslim people, also explains the ethics of sacred religious book of Khuran. Also, provide the information to the Muslim people about the systems of prayer (Namaz), and allied information.

3), **Provide the lodging and boarding**

The religious centres of Muslim provide lodging and boarding facilities to the Muslim people. For example, different Madarasas, Masjlds provides lodging and boarding facilities along with the education to the youths.
4), **Recreational Importance**

Muslim religious centres provide recreation. In different 'Urus' occasion lighting etc., provides entertainment to the people.

5), **Cultural Importance**

Muslim religious centers have also become helpful from the point of view of culture. The Babas of different Masjlds, Madras’s teaches the system of prayers from heredity to heredity. Further, playing drums, dancing, singing etc carried by them not only thus the Marjids-Madarasa of that region throw light on history.

**DURKHEIM THEORIES OF RELIGION**

**Religion as the Worship of Society**

Durkheim’s approach to the study of religion is based on the structural functional perspective. He assumed that if religion is universal there must meet basic needs of society; it must serve important functions. Durkheim began his analysis of religion (1), a distinction between the sacred and the profane (2), a set of beliefs, and (3), a set of rituals.

**THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE.** A Central component of all religion is the division of human experience into the sacred and the profane. The profane represents all that is routine and taken for granted in the everyday world, things that are known and familiar and that we
can control, understand, and manipulate. The sacred, by contrast, consists of the events and things that we hold in awe and reverence—what we can neither understand nor control. In pre modern societies a large proportion of the world is viewed as sacred. Many events are beyond control and manipulation. As advances in human knowledge increase a society’s ability to explain and even control what was previously mysterious, fewer and fewer events require supernatural explanations less is held sacred. When an event can be explained without reference to supernatural forces, then it is no longer sacred. The process of transferring things, ideas, or events from the sacred to all profane is called secularization. Science and technology have been major contributors to secularization. They have given us explanations for lightning, rainbow and death that rely on physical rather than supernatural forces.

**BELIFES MYTHS AND CREEDS:** A second common dimension to all religions is a set of beliefs about the supernatural. Religious beliefs center around uncertainties associated with birth, death, creation, success, failure and crisis. They become part of the worldview constructed by culture a rationale for the human condition and the recurrent problem expensed. As beliefs become organized into an interrelated set of assumption about the supernatural, they form the basis
for official religious doctrine which find expression in the rituals of the church.

**RITUALS:** Religion is a practice as well as a belief system. It brings people together to express through ritual the things they hold sacred. In contemporary Christianity, rituals are used to mark such events as births, deaths, weddings and Christ’s birth and resurrection. In an earlier era, when most people lived off the land and life was more uncertain, planting and harvesting were occasions are important rituals in the Christian church, they are more important ritual occasions in many religions.

**The Functions of Religion:** Durkheim argued that these elementary forms of religion serve functions for individuals and for society as a whole, for individuals, the beliefs and rituals of religion offer support, consolation, and reconciliation in times of need. On ordinary occasions many people find satisfaction and a feeling of belongingness in religious participation. This feeling of belongingness is the moral-community, or community of believers, that is part of the definition of religion.

On a societal level. Durkheim argued, the major function of religion is that it gives tradition a moral imperative. This means that most of the central values and norms of any culture are taught and reinforced through the religion. These values and norms cease to be
merely the usual way of living things and become the only moral way of doing them. They become sacred. When a tradition is sacred, it is continually affirmed through ritual and practice and is largely immune to change.

Within this functionalist perspective the worship of God is seen as a process through which religious answers are developed and how their content affects society.

For most people, religion is a matter of following tradition; people worship as their parents did before them. To Weber, however, the essence of religion is the search for knowledge about the unknown. In this sense, religion is similar to science; it is a way of coming to understand the world. In the more than 80 years since Weber's analysis, other scholars have explored the same issues, and many have come to somewhat different explored the same issues, and many have come to somewhat different conclusions. Some argue that the spirit of capitalism arose from class antagonisms set into motion by the decline of feudalism and that the society.