CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Religion plays a vital role in the personal and social life of an individual. It serves diverse functions for the individual as well as for the society in which he lives. Religion is instrumental in bringing about social solidarity. By establishing general principles and moral beliefs, religion helps to provide the consensus which is necessary for order and stability in society. It is a medium through which the members of a society express their faith in common values and beliefs. Many people see religion as a response to man's intellectual and emotional needs. Religious beliefs provide guidelines for human action and standards against which man's conduct can be evaluated. They answer man's questions about himself and the world he lives in, thereby giving meaning to life.

The development of scientific knowledge, the various economic and political changes that have been taking place today are believed to have eroded
religious faith. Many social scientists hold that modern societies are undergoing a process of secularization. What is usually meant by this is that the influence of religion in all areas of social life is steadily diminishing. There are prophecies that religion would dwindle and die. However, religion seems to be capable of surviving in spite of predictions to the contrary. What is happening now-a-days is that collective worship is being replaced by privatized worship, and collective interpretation of doctrine by individual interpretation. The continuing proliferation of sects and the growth of new religious movements are taken by some as evidence of the vitality of religion. They indicate that the importance of religion has not declined for the individual. Rather, its form of expression has changed. No longer is religious doctrine imposed. Modern man has a greater freedom than ever before to search for and construct his own meaning.
Until recently, the personalities of individuals in all societies have been shaped solely by religion and religious institutions. Even today many parents bring up their children in accordance with traditional religious principles.

Religious behaviour is a highly complex phenomenon. It seems to be related to the total life experiences of the individuals. Social sciences like anthropology, sociology and psychology have tried to understand and explain religious behaviour from their own perspective. An empirical investigation to probe the relationship between religiosity and personality traits gains importance due to the fact that these two variables are intimately connected with each other. The relation between religious beliefs and practices and certain personality traits has long been recognised. Indeed, some social theorists have regarded these traits as being present universally and treated them as the causes of religious beliefs, feelings and behaviour.
A lot of empirical literature is available on the relation between religiosity and personality traits such as insecurity, conservatism, anxiety etc. When we consider the fact that home and parental influences play a predominant role in shaping the religious attitudes and behaviour of children, we have to admit that religiosity can develop independently of the personality factors. But this leaves out the question, whether the parents themselves might in addition to transmitting their religiosity, also transmit at the same time their fears, anxiety, conservatism etc. to their children. Further, the religiosity that is developed because of parental influences may be strengthened or lessened by the said personality factors.

The utility of the present investigation lies in the proper assessment of the role played by different personality, socio-economic, demographic and family variables in influencing religiosity among the people. A study of this nature seems to
be called for to increase our understanding of religious behaviour, and to replace mere condemning of religious beliefs as superstitious, ignorant etc. by an analysis of the functions subserved by religious beliefs in meeting certain personality needs.

In the present investigation an attempt has been made to study "religiosity in relation to certain personality traits of college students". It has been designed as a multivariate study where the simultaneous influence of several personality variables upon religious behaviour is traced.

The main objectives of the present investigation are (1) to find out the relation between religiosity and I-E control of reinforcement, (2) to find out the relation between religiosity and various other personality traits, (3) to trace the relationship of socio-economic, demographic and family variables to religiosity, (4) to find out whether the personality profiles of the high religious group and low religious group differ
significantly, (3) to develop multiple regression equations in order to assess the combined and individual contributions of the personality traits to religiosity.

On the basis of the above objectives, the following hypothesis were formulated:

1. Religiosity would be positively related to external locus of control.
2. Religiosity and insecurity would be positively related.
3. There would be a positive relationship between religiosity and conservatism.
4. Religiosity would be positively related to dependency.
5. There would be no significant relationship between religiosity and tenseness.
6. Cyclothymes would not significantly differ from the schizothymes with regard to religiosity.
7. Students with high mental ability would not significantly differ from the students with low mental ability with regard to religiosity.
8. Maturity would not be significantly related to religiosity.
9. Submissiveness - Dominance would not be significantly related to religiosity.

10. Desurgency - Surgency as a personality factor would not be significantly related to religiosity.

11. The personality dimension Casual - Conscientious would not be significantly related to religiosity.

12. Timidity - Adventurousness would not be significantly related to religiosity.

13. The personality dimension Tough - Sensitive would not be significantly related to religiosity.

14. The personality dimension of Trustful - Suspecting would not be significantly related to religiosity.

15. The personality dimension of Conventional - Eccentric would not be significantly related to religiosity.

16. There would be no significant relationship between the personality dimension of Simple - Sophisticated and religiosity.

17. There would be no relationship between the personality dimension Uncontrolled - Self-controlled and religiosity.
18. The personality profile of the high religious group would not significantly differ from that of the low religious group.

19. Socio-economic family and demographic variables such as father's income, father's education, father's occupation, mother's income, mother's education, mother's occupation, sex, size of the family, birth order and rural-urban background would not be related to religiosity.

The dependent variable in the present study was religiosity. The independent variables are grouped under the following four categories:

1. Personality variables
2. Socio-economic variables
3. Demographic variables
4. Family variables

The tools used for the present investigation were:

1. A religiosity scale developed for the purpose of the present study.
2. Cattell's 16 PF questionnaire.
3. Rotter's I-E control of reinforcement, and
4. A personal data sheet.
To measure the religiosity among the students, a religiosity scale was developed following the Likert method of summated ratings. A pilot study was conducted on 195 students from professional and degree colleges. Item analysis was carried out and validity indices, discriminative indices, scale value differences and t-values were calculated for all the 55 items in the preliminary form of the scale. On the basis of these four criteria, 30 items were selected for the final form of the scale. Content validity, item validity, criterion validity and intrinsic validity of the scale were established. The reliability of the instrument was established by the split-half reliability and by the test-retest reliability methods.

The 16 personality traits were measured by adopting Form C of the 16 PF questionnaire developed by Cattell. The English version of the questionnaire was used. Rotter’s I-E control was the other scale used in the study.

A multi-stage stratified random sampling
technique was adopted for the selection of the sample of students. Out of the 23 districts in Andhra Pradesh, 3 were selected at random. From these districts a list of the degree and professional colleges was obtained. Three professional and nine degree colleges were randomly selected from the list. From these colleges 628 students were randomly picked up.

Thus a total of 628 subjects from degree and professional colleges participated in the present study. Initially 193 subjects were used for the standardisation of the instrument. The remaining 433 subjects took part in the main study.

The tests were administered to the subjects and their responses were scored by using the scoring keys. The total scores obtained by the subjects on all the variables were computed. The data were carefully analysed employing appropriate statistical techniques like the Chi-square, the t-ratio, the F-ratio etc. to know whether differences in the independent variables contribute significantly
to differences in religiosity.

The profile similarity coefficient \( r_p \) was computed to test whether there was any significant difference between the high and low religious groups with respect to the personality traits. The t-test was employed to know the personality variables which were associated with religiosity. A multiple regression analysis was carried out with those variables which were associated with religiosity.

The findings of the investigation may be summarised as follows:

1. The five personality variables viz., conservatism, insecurity, I-E control, dependency and tenseness explain about 48 per cent of the variation in religiosity. Out of this, 20 per cent of the variance was accounted for by conservatism, 6 per cent by insecurity, 7 per cent by I-E control, 7 per cent by dependency and 6 per cent by tenseness. The partial regression coefficients of all the five variables were significant at .01 level.
2. The twelve personality variables viz., aloof-warm, dull-bright, emotional-mature, submissive-dominant, glum-enthusiastic, casual-conscientious, timid-adventurous, tough-sensitive, trustful-suspecting, conventional-escentric, simple-sophisticated and uncontrolled-self controlled are all found not to be related to religiosity.

3. Rotter's 'external' persons are likely to be more religious than internals. Externals are those individuals who appraise the world as externally controlled. They espouse external beliefs as a defense against anticipated failures. They rationalize both their potential and real failures by attributing to these forces beyond their control. To them religion also functions as a defense against failure. It offers various rationalizations not only against failure but also against many of the events which the individual cannot explain in a rational manner.
4. Conservative individuals are likely to be more religious than experimenting individuals. The conservatives are usually opposed to change. They are inclined to go along with traditions, unquestioning about accepted views generally, more inclined to moralize, etc. They are more interested in customs and traditions. Religion as a social institution integrates the traditional moral values of a society and lends sanctity to them. There is no wonder, then, that a conservative individual tends to be more religious.

5. Insecure individuals are likely to be more religious than confident individuals. This statement should not be interpreted as stating that confident individuals are not religious, nor that all religious persons are insecure. It only indicates a tendency for the insecure individuals as a group to score significantly more than confident individuals on religiosity and vice versa.
Researchers usually distinguish between 'state' and 'trait' anxieties. It might be presumed that religion is more effective as a coping mechanism with state anxious individuals than with trait anxious individuals.

There are many occasions in the life of an individual that induce anxious insecurity, like, the death of a family member, an accident to a close friend etc. These occasions might induce an individual to take solace in religion. While we talk of religion as a coping mechanism in dealing with anxieties, we should also keep in mind the fact that religion itself on some occasions might induce anxiety and insecurity among the individuals. The non-performance of a ritual, temporary deviance from a religious principle might cause in individuals intense guilt feelings.

6. Dependent individuals are likely to be more religious than self-sufficient individuals. The dependent individuals tend to go along with
the group. They usually depend on social approval and admiration. Some of the earlier studies (e.g., Hassan, 1975) found a significant difference between religious and non-religious groups on dependency.

7. Tense people tend to be more religious than the stable group of people.

8. The profile similarity coefficient for the high religious group and the low religious group was not significant. This may be interpreted as indicating that these two groups differed in terms of the personality factors. The high religious group and the low religious group differed significantly on personality factors, \( O_6, O_7, O_8, \) and \( O_9 \) and also on I-E control.

9. The socio-economic variables examined viz., father's income, father's occupation, father's education, mother's income, mother's occupation, and mother's education were found to be not related to religiosity.
10. Of the two demographic variables studied viz., locality and sex, locality is not related to religiosity. The results of the present investigation indicate a significant relationship between sex and religiosity. Females have been found to be more religious than males.

11. The two family variables studied viz., size of the family, and order of birth have been found not to be related to religiosity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the light of the research work undertaken by the present investigator, the following suggestions are offered for further research in this area.

i. Some variables like the religiosity of the father, the religiosity of the mother, and other members of the family play an important role in determining the religious behaviour of an individual. Hence a study may be carried out
including the above variables in the investigation.

2. The scope of the study may be broadened by including variables like dogmatism, authoritarianism, and self-concept. This will reveal the differential contribution of these variables to religiosity.

3. Another suggestion for further research may be to make a comparative study of the religious behaviour at various age levels, especially during old age and middle age.

4. The religiosity scale may be utilised by the counsellors in counselling centres in providing proper direction to the clients.

5. The religious behaviour of persons who have renounced the world and taken ‘sanyas’ may be probed. This will reveal whether these people have a personality structure which differs from that of the common man.

6. It is usually said that religiosity increases
with age. A longitudinal study of the religiosity of the same group of individuals at different ages may be undertaken to test the proposition.

7. Life threatening experiences are commonly held to increase the religiosity of an individual. A study of persons who have had such critical experiences may be helpful in revealing the dynamics of religious behaviour.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Attitudes. In Carl Murchison (Ed.),
Hand Book of Social Psychology.
Massachusetts : Clark University Press,
1935.

The Individual and His Religion.

Allport, G.W., J.H. Gilleispie, and J. Young. The
religion of the post-war college students.
Journal of Psychology, 1948, 26, 3-33.

Amon, Jesus. New analysis on the dimensionality of
utilisation religious behaviour. Revista

Argyal, Andras. A theoretical model for personality
studies. Journal of Personality, 20, 11-31,
1951.

Argyle, M. Religious Behaviours. London : Routledge

Arnold, M. Literature and Dogma. London : Macmillan,

Baither, Richard, C., and Salzberg, Lester. Relation-
ship between religious attitude and
rational thinking. Psychological Reports,

Banerji, Saradindu. Psychoanalysis and Religion.
Sakimsa, 1975, 39, (B), 110-116.


Fraud, S. Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, Translated and edited by A.A. Brill. New York: Modern Literary Inc. 1921.


Glick, C.P., and Young, K. Justification of Religious Attitudes and Habits. The Journal of Social psychology, 1943, 17, 45-68.


Goldman, R.J. Researches in Religious Thinking. The University of Reading, 1962.

Harrison, Jane E. Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903.


Molitor, Jon, W. Religiosity, Fear of Death and Suicide Acceptability. Suicide and Life Threatening Behaviour, 1979, 9(3), 163-172.


Phares, E.J., Ritchie, D.E., and Davie, W.L.


Xenophanes. Quoted in Edwyn Revan, Stoics and Sceptics, Oxford, 1913.
