

CHAPTER VII

ROLE OF RELIGION AND SUICIDE

RELIGION

Spirituality is considered as an innate quality of human beings. They search for that invisible and invincible force which transcends time and space and influence everything in the universe. Religion may be considered as the apparatus, which reveals and realizes spirituality of human beings. Religion is defined by the oxford dictionary as “Human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience, effect of such recognition on conduct and mental attitude”. (Oxford, 1963: 1048).

Man’s intellectual urge for completeness is basic to religion; man has a craving for God though his realization of what that End is – has varied greatly from age to age” – (Spinks, 1963:50). In the light of this fact C. G. Jung has defined religion as “the fruit and culmination of the completeness of life” – (Jung, 1958: 42).

Philosophy also upholds the connection between human and the superhuman, all pervading force. According to the great Indian Philosopher Radhakrishnan “everything that lives aims at its own perfection and man is intensively aware of the fact that he is incomplete. Religion has that unique human activity by which man can seek the larger life of perfection and freedom because it gives meaning and purpose of life and supplies the courage to live” (Radhakrishnan, 1969: 443).

Roland Robertson states that religion “refers to the existence of supernatural being which have a governing effect on life” (Robertson, 1969: 170). Melford E Spiro adopts a similar definition when he states that religion is based on “beliefs in

superhuman beings and in their power to assist or harm man” (Spiro, 1968: 196). Geertz looks religion in yet another way. According to him 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 and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz, 1947: 92).

The functional perspective changes the emphasis from human needs to society’s needs. Durkheim defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden” – (Durkheim, 1954:47]. According to Durkheim, totem is a sacred emblem of a clan of Australian aborigines. To explain the origins of religion, Durkheim studies totemism, among the Arunta tribe of Australia. It is once the symbol of God and of the society. Thus he suggests in worshipping veneration. Primitive man comes to view society as something sacred because he is dependent on it. Durkheim argues that social life is impossible without the shared values and moral beliefs which form the collective conscience. Religion reinforces the collective conscience. The worship of society strengthens the values and moral beliefs, which form the basis of social life. By defining them as sacred, religion provides them with grater power to direct human action. It ultimately means the norms of the society become the sacred rule of the religion. Thus the doctrines of the religion are being decided by the society itself. And the law of the society is the doctrines of the religion. The religion strengthens the unity of the group/ society and it promotes societal solidarity. When the group comes

together for religious rituals, actually the group/society express, communicate and comprehend the moral bonds, which unite them.

Durkheim considers religion as a universal social fact. It is universal because of the reason that any group worship is really society worship itself. The society is held together by religious rituals and festivals in which the group's values and beliefs are reaffirmed. Durkheim rejected Spencer's notion of 'animism' that is the spirit worship as the most basic form of religious expression and Max Muller's concept of 'naturism' i.e. the worship of nature's forces. He opined that reliance on spirits and supernatural forces will make religion an illusion and the essence of religion is not on a belief in transcendental God but on society. According to him religion is not a spiritual force but a social fact.

Bronislaw Malinowski differs with the ideas of Durkheim and he does not see religious rituals as the worship of the society. Malinowski argues "the existence of strong personal attachments and the fact of death, which of all human events is the most upsetting and disorganizing to man's calculations, are perhaps the main sources of religious belief" (Malinowski, 1954: 194). The funeral ceremony expresses belief in immortality and so comforts the bereaved. The social group unites at the funeral ceremony to support the bereaved. This expression of social solidarity reintegrates society. Like Durkheim, Malinowski sees religion as reinforcing social norms and values and promoting social solidarity. According to Malinowski, "the purpose of religion is to purge the human mind of its stress and strain". (Malinowski, 1948:49). Malinowski points out with reference to the Trobriand Islanders that religion is intimately connected with various emotional states, which are states of tension. i.e.

their magical and religious practices centre round the fishing expeditions. Religion has the function of bringing about readjustment between man and the supernatural in upset states of existence. Malinowski's distinctive contribution to the sociology of religion is his argument that religion threatens the stability of society.

Radcliffe-Brown takes a different stand. The function of religion he says "is not to purge fear and other emotional strains from the human mind, but to instill a sense of dependence in it" – (Radcliffe, 1952; 43). He opined that ultimately, the survival of the group is more important than that of the individual and if the latter has to make some sacrifices it is in his own interest to do so, because without social survival individual survival is not possible. Adherence to a norm of behaviour is essential in terms of social survival. It is the fear of supernatural control and punishment as also the expectation of support in the case of socially approved conduct compel the individual to adhere to the norms of the society. Therefore, the function of religion is to create a two fold feeling of dependence on society and there by obtain the individual's concurrence with the social norms, the ultimate aim being social survival

Talcott Parsons is of the view that religion provides certain guidelines for human action and standards against which man's conduct can be evaluated, just like the ten commandments of the Christian society. Parsons like Malinowski, view religion as "a mechanism for adjustments to such events, which hit life and jeopardize the normal life and religion is a means for restoring the normal pattern of life" (Parsons, 1965: 76). The uncertainty of life and the inability to predict about the

future cripples the man. The religion maintains social stability by allaying the tension and frustration, which could disrupt social order.

Talcott parsons argues that human action is directed and controlled by norms provided by the social system. The cultural system provides more general guidelines for action in the form of beliefs, values and systems of meaning. Religion is part of the cultural system. As such, religious beliefs provide guidelines for human action and standards against which man's conduct can be evaluated.

Social life is full of contradictions which threaten the meaning man bestows on life. Parsons argues that one of the major functions of religion is 'to make sense' of all experiences, no matter how meaningless or contradictory they appear. An example is the question of suffering, 'Why must men endure deprivation and pain and so unequally and haphazardly, if indeed at all? Religion provides a range of answers: Suffering is imposed by God to test a person's faith; it is punishment for sins; suffering with fortitude will bring its reward in Heaven. Sufferings thus become meaningful. This allows intellectual and emotional adjustment. On a more general level, this adjustment promotes order and stability in society.

Berger and Luckmann write 'throughout human history religion has played a decisive part in the construction and maintenance of universe' (Luckmann, 1990: 464). They argued that all the certainty is basically uncertain; it has a very precarious foundation. Things are real because people believe they are real. They further argued that religion is the most effective mechanism for the legitimation of universe meaning. Unlike other sources of legitimation, only religion links meaning with ultimate reality.

Max Weber rejects the view that religion is always shaped by economic factors as was argued by Engels. Weber was of the view that religious beliefs can be a major influence on economic behaviour. Weber claims that Ascetic Protestantism was a vital influence and their teachings such as a restless continuous systematic work must have been the expansion of the spirit of capitalism. Making money became both a religious and business ethic. It justified the activity of business man. Restrictions in a frivolous spending created frugality and paved way for capitalism (Weber, 1963-38).

Sigmund Freud argued that the origin of religion can be found in the problems of the child seeking to work out adequate relationships with his parents, particularly his father. At first the child considers his father to be a figure of absolute power. When he learns that his father to be figure of absolute power. When he learns that his father is only a weak and imbecile human like any other human with definite limitations to his benevolence and his power, the youth feels deprived of the psychological support and security he felt once as a small child. He therefore, is constrained to turn to the universe and to a belief in cosmic Father or God who can continue to give him support he once had from his human father.

Karl Marx held that “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people” (Marx, 1963:28). According to him, ruling classes adopt religious beliefs to justify their position both to themselves and to others. He added further that man makes religion and religion does not make man. Sociologists who analyzed religion, by and large, highlighted the contributions of the institution to the society. Marx and

his associates have structured particularly the downtrodden masses. Religion has an exploitative role as highlighted by the philosophers in religiously plural society like ours, religious rivalries may emerge and when it attains the dimension of fundamental damages the social fabric. “Religion is an expression of need felt by fearful individuals searching to return to the safety of the womb, says Freud and adds that it is a universal obsessional neurosis of mankind” (Freud, 1979: xi). Karl Marx considers religion as an outcome of economic factors and hence it is essentially a social affair. Mahatma Gandhi regarded religion as an individual experience. Engels held that religion is nothing, but fantastic reflection of mind of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces. In the beginning of history, it was the forces of nature that were at first reflected and in the course of further evaluation they underwent the manifold and varied personifications among the various people. Julian Huxley, who has been regarded as “religious humanist”, affirms that if religion wants to continue as an element of first-rate importance in the life of the community it must drop the idea of God. If this is admitted, even atheism can be regarded as a religion – the religion of those who passionately deny the existence of God.

Origin of Religion:

There is a great deal of disagreement among thinkers on the origin of religion. Philosophers look upon the genesis of religion from different vantage point. In the 18th century Charles de Brosses argued that “the primary form of religion was fetishism – the worship of inanimate objects like stones, and animate objects like trees, animals, etc”. (Brosses, 1972: 8). It is the adoration of material things because

of their mysterious hidden power. The word fetishes derived from the Portuguese explorers, who first applied it to wooden images of the West African Negroes. The essence of a fetish is that it has attributed to it a mysterious power for good or evil which some preliterate people call '*mana*'. The fetish is adored or insulted as to whether it fulfills or does not fulfill its possessors' wishes.

The philosopher Herbert Spencer gave a similar theory with some variations. Spencer proposed that man converts the ghosts of his ancestors into gods. Thus ancestor –worship is the root of every religion. The primitive people had some kind of belief in the continued existence of the soul after the death. This belief in ghosts developed into a persistent ancestor worship. The belief in ghosts seems to have played significant role in the developed religion. This theory is sometimes called euhemerism after fourth century BC thinker named Euhemerus who argued that the gods of religion were originally living men of great power and authority who were raised to the status of divine beings. (Spencer, 1972: 6).

James Frazer an exponent of magical theory was a classical scholar who collected a great deal of material on religion and wrote a very influential study in many volumes called '*The Golden Bough*' (Frazer, 1972:6). According to him, religion is the child of magic. The theory is based on the supposition that man's first attempt to control nature was through magic. But when he realized that it was impossible to subdue the powers of nature through magic, he began to propitiate and worship them. Frazer infers the origin of religion in this transition of belief from magic to the supernatural. Frazer believed that a magic stage preceded the animistic one. According to M F Keesing, magic is a term which summarizes a variety of

methods by which man purports to influence automatically the course of events by that touch of supernatural.

According to the renowned British anthropologist Robert Ranulph Marett animatism i.e. belief in impersonal power behind every material objects, designed as *mana* which preceded animism should be regarded as the root of all religion. This impersonal power is worshipped to maintain peace and prosperity in the group. It is known as the animatistic theory. (Marett, 1990: 502). Defining faith in *Mana* found in tribal society, R. H. Codrington has pointed out that *Mana* is a force altogether and distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil and which is of the greatest advantage to possess or control. The Ho and Munda tribes of Cota Nagpur call it *Bonga [Bongaism]*. Madan, 1990: 166) *Bonga* is a form of *Mana*.

Totemism consists in the fact that a tribe is supposed to be related to an object mainly animal or plant towards which they behave in a reverent manner by adopting its name and offering sacrifices or adoring it. The totem is considered to be the originator of a particular tribe.

Durkheim was intrigued by the phenomenon of totemism i.e. the practice of taking a particular natural object or animal and making it into the symbol for totem] of a particular social group called a clan. Durkheim believed that in totemism the social nature of religion as well as its social origin was clearly demonstrated. (Durkheim, 1972: 9).

Naturistic theory is generally associated with the name of F. Max Muller and has found acceptance by David Hume, Giddings and number of other German scholars Naturism means the belief that the forces of nature have supernatural power.

Max Muller believes this to be the earliest form of religion. Nature contains surprise, terror, marvels and miracles, such as volcanoes, thunder and lightning. Awed by the power and wonder of nature early man personified, defined and worshiped these objects. Where animism seeks the origin of religion in man's intellectual needs, naturism seeks it in his emotional needs. Naturism is man's response to the effect of the power of nature on his emotions. The Garo tribe of Assam worships sun and moon, rivers, mountains, stars, trees and other natural objects. (Max, 1967: 22).

The 18th Century English Deists tried to narrate the origin of religion on the basis of human reason. They felt that the fundamentals of religion, such as the being of God, immortality of the soul, the authority of moral law etc. are basically the ideas of reason. Thus, according to them, religion of reason is natural to man and known to him from the inception. But the priests then began to exploit the fears and credulity of the masses to bring them under control for their own advantage. They invented superstitious and elaborate systems of rituals which gradually replaced the simple religion of reason. Therefore, according to the Deists, religion has a two fold origin; human reason and deceitful priest-craft. But the purest form of religion had its origin in the very rational nature of the primitive man.

Sumner and Keller opinioned that religion arose as a response to a definite need to the supernatural or imaginary environment which appears just as real as the actual environment and adaptation to which is just as impelling. According to them had there been no aleatory element, religion might not have come into existence. It is known as the Aleatory Theory. (Sumner, 1990: 502).

W. Robertson Smith maintained that ancient religions consisted primarily of institutions and practice, i.e. of rites and ceremonies which are to be regarded the most elementary forms of religion. Durkheim also ascribed to this view. For him Totemism is the very core out of which religion developed. He concluded in his book 'The Elementary Forms of the Religious life' that society itself is the ultimate source of religion and thus arrived at sociological explanation of religion. It is known as the Sociological Theory.

Divine revelation has been considered as the source of religion by the Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan theologians. Religion for them is revealed by God for the guidance and salvation of mankind. But modern scholars have rejected the divine revelation theory as unscientific and dogmatic.

Functions of Religion

Manifest Functions of Religion in Primitive society:

Taboo is the unwritten law of the primitive savage society. Taboo is not an English word. It means to forbid, or forbidden. The aim of taboo appears to be to limit an individual to the norms of the society. Its purpose is three fold, productive, protective and prohibitive. Taboos associated with the process of cultivation are designed to be productive; those like keeping women, children and in cases keep men away from certain places; actions and objects are said to be protective; and those which seclude a person or limit contact with him or her, as is done in the case of a chief, priest, a magician or a menstruating woman, are designed to be prohibitive in the sense that they prohibit the persons tabooed from doing harm to others. Protective and prohibitive taboos are almost the same. The sexual relationship between bloods

relatives are incest taboo. Taboo is an essential ingredient of social morality. Taboo, therefore, functions to sustain the awesomeness of the supernatural by reinforcing attitudes of care and mystery and by punishing the attitude of carelessness and profanity in dealing with the supernatural. It also sustains the social system by using supernatural sanctions to punish social deviants and prospective heretics. Radcliffe – Brown considers taboo as a social mechanism by which an orderly society is able to maintain itself in existence. (Radcliffe, 1931: 161).

In many societies, human illness is closely connected to the spirit world. In Navajo societies, doctors sometimes consult with Navajo medicine men and the “Navajo Healers” treatment is considered a unique medicine for the spirit – inferred from [William, 1975: 37].

According to Durkheim religious ties are signs of the individual’s integration into the society and its norms. He avoided making guesses about what preliterate people thought about the universe. But he had concentrated on the ways in which religion becomes a kind of social cement, binding the individual to his or her society – sociologically, the most prominent manifest function of religion.

For Durkheim, the key to understanding how religion works was the idea that traditional religions have divided the world into two realms, the sacred and the profane. This distinction is basic to Durkheim’s definition of religion. “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” – (Durkheim, 1965: 52). Profane things are the stuff of every day life: furniture, food, working, playing. The

sacred world consists of spirits and mythological personalities, of magic and of special objects or persons, all very powerful. The profane means business as usual. The sacred inspires awe and fear; it calls for reverence and caution.

The most sacred objects to the Australian aborigines were certain stones called Churinga. These stones housed the souls of the clan's ancestors, the spirit of then clan's totem animal, and the spirits of the clan members themselves. The churinga, then, performed several binding functions. The churinga gave each generation a link with the past because they were the homes of the ancestral spirits. Therefore they implied link with the eternity. The spirit of then totem animal in the churinga bound the clan to the world of nature. The churinga also contained the spirits of all the living clan members, making an unbreakable bond between them.

Ultimately, like the most sacred objects, the churinga, became the symbolic society itself. These symbols create an amazingly strong emotional bond. Realising this, Durkheim concluded that all gods and spirits become symbols of society. Eventually, he said 'God and society is the same thing'.

Historical evidence supports Durkheim. Ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Israelite, Persian, Assyrian and Hittite cultures were centered on their gods. For this reason, in war, statues of the enemy gods were often the first objects to be destroyed. Since the foreign gods were symbols of the enemy, their destruction would assume the destruction of the people themselves.

Durkheim considered the major manifest functions of religion to be that of providing social unity. Religious rites and ceremonies also contribute to social unity.

They develop formation of habits or cooperation, a uniform order of conduct and imbue in them a common social idea. All these help social integration.

Religion formed the chief support of a society's norms and institutions, according to Durkheim. Even such practices as slavery had been justified in the name of religion. This was attained in America, They claimed that the black race descended directly from Noah's son Ham, who had sinned and was punished by being made a slave.

Societies depend on the cooperation of their members. For the most part, cooperation is won through ordinary processes of socialization. But the socializers need all the help they can get, particularly when a large amount of self discipline is required. By adding divine sanction to human values, religion buttresses social norms and creates a moral community. The members feel a common bond because they share a belief in an unobservable or transcendent reality. Many religionists and some social scientists argue that even when alternative belief systems are available, only religion can meet the deepest human and social needs.

Religion as Cultural Habits and Values:

Students of cultural anthropology have taken religion seriously as one aspect of cultural patterning. They are intellectual heirs to Durkheim, Weber and Freud. Like their predecessors, anthropologists view religion as a product of human imagination that functions to establish patterns of cultural self awareness and communication and the means to establish equilibrium within society after a crisis such as war or the death of a leader. Thus, religion is derived from cultural and social needs. As a product of the human mind and social interaction, however, it plays a decisive role in

the patterns and forms that constitute any culture. They become the unconscious assumptions on which the conscious patterns of culture are built. Very often these hidden configurations lying beneath the outward cultural manifestations provide the moving dynamics for society.

One of the basic ways in which cultural anthropologists interpret religion is to view it as a cultural habit. Religion is seen as a system of ideas and emotional responses whereby a culture reflects habitual ways of action and through which the society interprets and validates itself. In such a configuration of personal hopes, definitions of life and techniques for solving problems reside cultural values, norms, and standards of living. This view of religion is found in the works of Alfred L. Kroeber, who emphasizes that “the essential elements of a culture are its patterns, which provide the integration of people into an organization and the channels whereby segments of society can function as a culture” (Kroeber, 1969: 32).

Manifest Functions of Religion in pre-modern society:

Religions do have some moral expectations from its members and usually enforces them upon its members in one way or the other. The violators of moral norms of the religion do have to face the threat of disease or some other forms of disaster in this life itself and even in their after life. It is very obvious, that to a great extent the moral norms supported within the religious group are at the same time norms of the society and social control within the religious group has functional importance for the wider society as well.

Many religious rituals serve as social control instruments. The religious funeral emphasizes the importance of living in terms of the religious value system and often indirectly appeals to the authority through the deceased over survivors by indicating “this is what he would have wished”. (Parsons, 1951: 304). “Modern legal institutions and many of the laws related to ethics and morals which they uphold are closely linked with religion” – (Nicholas, 1939: 326).

In most cases, a type of unity can be brought about during times of crises, even through people have very divergent religious beliefs. Religious rituals and festivals in which the group’s value and beliefs are reaffirmed hold the society together. One important consequence of a group of persons having the same religious heritage and beliefs is unity. All believers, whether of high or low status young or old, are united through the sharing of religious beliefs. Thus religion, through the holding of common values to be cherished, sins to be avoided, rules to be followed and symbols to be revered, integrates. Group unity is also accomplished by creating the universal feeling that God looks upon this particular group with special blessings. Religion fosters social solidarity by uniting believers into a community that shares values and perspectives.

More than any other institutions, it has encouraged men to care for self, for neighbours, for the varied life around us, for the natural world that supports us. “The primary function of religion is the preservation of social unity. So everything leads us back to this same idea; before all, rites are means by which the social group reaffirms itself periodically” – (Durkheim, 1954: 387). W. Trotter, Emile Durkheim and others, look upon religion as the manifestation of collective feeling.

Religion expands one's self to infinite proportions. Man unites himself with the infinite and feels ennobled. Through unity with the infinite the self is made majestic and triumphant. Man considers himself the noblest work of God with whom he shall be united and his self thus becomes grand and luminous. Society also gains from the self-flattery provided by religious belief. Religion assures a grater reward in the after life to worldly failures than to the successful. Such kind of assurance drains off much discontent and members are encouraged to continue to play their part in society.

Religion is the ultimate source of social cohesion. The primary requirement of society is the common possession of social values by which individuals control the actions of self and others and through which society is perpetuated. These social values are never scientifically demonstrated but emanate from religious faith. Children should obey their parents, should not tell a lie or cheat, women should be faithful to men; people should be honest and virtuous are some of the social values which maintain social cohesion. It is religion that asks man to renounce unsocial activities and requires him to accept limitations upon his wants and desires. Love and service are two great teachings of religion. All religions have preached them. Religion is the central element in the life of civilization. According to Demant, "the impulse that makes civilization is a kind of spiritual restlessness seeking to fashion the structure of life that will satisfy the carving" – (Demant, 1990: 505). Religion also provides a good opportunity for friendship. The religious congregations serve as a

place for men to find their mates and for friendly association. This friendship function of religion is a vital service to adults and youth as well.

Religious consciousness in man inspires him to perform activities of social welfare. The church and other religious associations organize various humanitarian functions which contribute to the well being of society. The social welfare activities carried on by the religious institutions are greatly significant. The following are some of them:

Religious support the folkways and customs by placing the powerful sanctions of the supernatural behind them. They make certain acts as not as only offences against society but against God as well. Disobedience brings condemnation from the spiritual forces. In its positive form religion provides a model for living. It upholds certain ideals and values. The believer imbibes these ideals and values in his life. Religion can help our youth to become moral, disciplined and socialized citizens of society. There is also the function of educating the children at least in the tenets of religion. Through the transmission of religious heritage to the young, the religion conserve ethical and religious teachings and moral directions, rebuild them and perhaps extend them in each new generation. Religious ideology and practices control the behaviour of individuals and groups.

Besides, religion has also contributed to the growth of literature, art and music. The desire to laud and please gods has led people to extol them in song, sculpture, painting and architecture. Some of the world's most beautiful monuments are buildings erected glorify the gods. Vast temples, mosques, cathedrals and artistic images express man's desire to portray his conceptions of the supernatural in aesthetic

and inspiring ways. The sacred writings stimulate an appreciation of beautiful prose and poetry. Religious themes are the inspiration for some of man's finest paintings and the desire to sing praises has led to the creation of some of the world's fine music.

Religious symbolism is drawn on to explain the environment and interpret the place of human beings within it. This may take the form of a cosmology explaining the origins of the earth and the heavens; various animals may be seen as mysterious beings whose qualities of swiftness or cunning need special explanation; the fruitfulness or barrenness of the land, the cycles of birth and death, winter and summer can all be represented in a more or less elaborate mythology. This process of interpretation reflects an impulse to make the world more comprehensible usually by attributing familiar, human motives to supernatural beings and forces.

In all societies there is evidence of a search for moral meaning. Human beings seek an organizing principle that will validate their most important strivings and make sense of their sufferings. If they can believe in a God given scheme of things, individuals can exercise power or accept frustration with greater equanimity. They can turn potential chaos and meaninglessness into an orderly world view.

According to S. Radhakrishnan the function of the religion is to further the evolution of man into his essential divine stature through a development of increased awareness and intensity of understanding. It would bring about deeper and more enduring adjustment in life. Religion provides ways and means, by which individual could organize his inward being and respond to what is envisaged by him as the ultimate reality. Hence religion according to him is essentially intensification of experience, the displacement of triviality by intensity (Burnett, 1959: 353). The

purpose of religion, therefore, conflicts and divided consciousness and to lead him to a life of harmony, freedom and love.

Most human experiences are routine and do not evoke strong emotions or extraordinary feelings, but there are circumstances that transcend the routine. Great natural events may accomplish this by casting people into a state of wonder and awe. In addition, certain individuals are able to enter into psychological states that appear to enlarge their vision and bring them into mystical union with the world. Many religions foster this kind of experience through incantation and similar practices.

Life is mysterious in many of its aspects. How life begins and how it ends are beyond the comprehension of people. The same is true of the universe. What force commands is mysterious to most people. To explain such mysteries or at least to create some satisfactory attitude towards them both rural and urban people resort to religious interpretations and find happiness and consolation in them. Religious beliefs also provide satisfying explanations of life beyond the grave and no doubt play a major role in sustaining people in this life.

Catholics have lower rates of suicide than Protestants. Jews in spite of their urban residence, occupational distribution and anti-semitism, have the lowest rates of all. Durkheim theorized that these differences are due to variations in the degree of social cohesion of the groups. [Durkheim, 1962: 469].

Crises are more numerous in urban areas than in rural area. Accidents are more common. There is more violence more crime and juvenile delinquency. Personal disorientation is more common and there is more suicide. Pathological types are more

frequent. Those people loose their wealth, their homes and their status. Extremes of poverty and wealth are more apparent in cities than in rural areas.

One of the sources of support in crisis is religion, which frequently serves as a source of explanation. It often offers guidance and frequently restores faith. Religion is often used in psychological and psychiatric therapy for mentally sick persons. The development of religious interest in some mental deviates serves as a means of externalizing the thought and interest of the individual away from himself and his obsession. It serves also to reorient the individual away from himself and his obsession. It serves also to reorient the individual to new sets of values. In this dual role, religion is a therapeutic force. The impersonality of the city is a factor which certainly affects the peace of mind of the individual and is likely to be a factor in the precipitation of personal crisis. This being so, one contribution that religion would seem to make would be the cushioning of these shocks.

Social action implies that the religious institutions or its followers are motivated by societal concerns and considerations. These are designed to benefit humanity or at least a segment of it. Religion motivates people to belief and no action. Many religious bodies have been leaders in education and today support systems of schools or individual schools and colleges. An ethical basis of economic and political activity may be provided for by religion. For instance, it was not just an accident that capitalism, individualism, democracy and Protestantism developed together in the United States and in Europe. The four are related to one another and to some degree, at least, sustain each other. Such traits as asceticism and unworldliness in the beliefs and practices of people are sustained by their religions. Examples of this may be seen

in the religion of the Jesuits. On the negative side, organized religions divide populations. Historically and currently they have increased intolerance and hate.

In some cases religious leaders practice the healing art. Many religions allow the release of pent up emotional energy. In some religions, this release or catharsis, takes place quietly, through familiar soothing rituals, peaceful meditation, or the enjoyment of sacred music and art. In other religions emotional release is more overt – even boisterous. Singing and dancing, testifying and speaking in tongues are a regular part of the service. Some worshipers reach ecstatic states, losing the sense of self and reaching a feeling of oneness with the universe.

Latent Functions of Religion in Pre-modern Society:

One of the most often cited latent effects of religion is the relation between the “Protestant ethic” and the “spirit of capitalism”. Protestant leader of the reformation had no desire to erect the spiritual foundations for a capitalistic society and often denounced capitalistic trends in their day. None of these protestant practices originated in a deliberate desire to encourage commerce and perhaps for that reason their effect was all the more potent. Yet the industrial revolution and the growth of large-scale business concerns was much more rapid in predominantly protestant than in largely catholic areas and in mixed areas protestants were much the more active in business development. It means religion promotes economic prosperity.

Weber contends that early Protestantism caused its followers to worry intensely over hellfire. Eventually, they became convinced that the lord blesses the works of those he loves. Therefore, emotional reassurance was to be found in working hard, saving and getting ahead in the world for success was interpreted as a sign of

god's blessing. The role of missionaries in aiding commercial interests during the age of colonialism is frequently cited as an example of the latent function of religion.

Robert R Merton found that Puritanism in 17th century England helped to promote science. More than either Catholics or Anglicans, the puritans saw the study of nature as a pious undertaking, because nature was the handiwork of God. Merton viewed that puritan love of nature as the handiwork of God, led to an outburst of scientific study and discovery, among English puritans.

Manifest Functions of Religion in Contemporary Society:

In contemporary society the functions of religion have the impetus of great revolutionary change. In our country today religion is assuming a more important role than nuclear energy in shaping our destiny. If religion is not understood and followed in its true spirit, very soon it would engulf and destroy us as nuclear weapons could do. We have come to a stage in which either we use religion constructively or else allow the fanatics to destroy us. The true ideal of religion should reach the common mass also. It is the duty of the educated to enlighten the public on the genuine role of religion. The Religions in the contemporary society do perform a wide range of manifest and latent functions along with dysfunctions.

It may be mentioned that the world today has become very much materialistic, so much so that the higher values of life seem to have deteriorated. The result is that there is chaos and confusion in man's life. Distrust, treachery, exploitation, etc. dominate the present world. It seems that it is the absence of true religious trust and faith, which is the cause of all unrest and crisis in the present world.

“The extent and character of religious participation differ the socio-economic status” [Goode, 1951: 187]. The poor are less likely to be members of a congregation, to attend church, temple or mosque regularly, or to take part in organized religious activities. They are also less likely to be informed about religious matters. However the poor who go to church tend to be both more believing and more emotionally involved in their religion than persons who are better off.

The financially well off tend to be religious in a more intellectual, formal and organizational way. They attend church regularly, they are active in the church and they are informed about their religion. But, compared to poor church goers, they appear to be less believing, less expressive and less emotionally dependent on their religious faith. The poor attend church less regularly, their knowledge is scantier and they participate less in church activities.

Today’s religious pluralism has been interpreted as evidence of secularization. In particular, it has been argued that a range of competing religious institutions have reduced the power of religions in society. Bryan Wilson however, interprets the ecumenical movement as further evidence of secularization. He argues that ‘Organisations amalgamate when they are weak rather than when they are strong, since alliance means compromise and amendments of commitment’ (Wilson, 1990: 477). He believes that ecumenism represents a declining Christianity grasping at straws. Though it has caught the imagination of some churchmen Wilson argues that the ecumenical movement has aroused little general interest and produced a few positive results.

Indeed, in biological evolution modernists see evidence of divine plan and purpose. Modernists find nothing in modern science to prevent belief in a divine or ultimate power, shaping the world for the better. [Mathews, 1924: 132].

The Theologians point out that though the religions differ their beliefs, religious experience is common to all religions. Religious experience may occur in a communion with a higher being. It is felt in loyalty to a noble cause. There seems to be little question that the trend of modern culture is such as to make this need for religion a very genuine one. For instance, the modern city sometimes brings a loneliness in the midst of thousands of fellow beings more intense than that felt by the hermit. Religious experience seems to transform such a sufferer and brings cool water to parched lips. Saint Paul felt it on the road to Damascus, Saint Augustine has written about it and John Bunyan has described what it meant to him. So have many others. We quote here from Tolstoy, who suffered as have many others who lacked emotional integration and a sense of high purpose in life. "God is there, without whom one cannot live and to acknowledge God and to live accordingly are one and the same thing. God is what life is. Well, then live, seek God and there will not be life without God" (Tolstoy, 1928: 185).

When we are battered and beaten we turn to religion for comfort. When humiliated, we are able in religion to identify ourselves with a righteous cause and with the personalities of great saints and our spirit is lifted. When the strain is very great, we feel the need of a good shepherd who will "lead us by the still waters and make us to lie down in green pastures"- (Psalms 23: 2). Because religion helps to

make our purpose a high one, our conduct is ennobled. There is much strain in modern life. Our hospitals are overflowing with the mentally sick.

Nationalism and other ideologies may be integrative as some writers treat nationalism as a religion and the national flag as a 'sacred' object. However, there are non-religious functional equivalents of religion which may also help to integrate the society. To some extent national heroes and patriotic ceremonies also do have an integrative value.

The Contradictory functions of religion in modern societies:

Religions do have some contradictory functions also. Most modern societies which allow religious freedom are, like the United States, complex; they are not bound together by one church. Even countries with an official religion tolerate diversity. In Sweden there is an established church which hardly anyone attends. The Soviet Union, whose government tried to replace religion with ideology, has reopened churches which had been closed under Stalin. In Ireland, a political scientist has observed, "Even an atheist must be a protestant atheist or catholic atheist in order to have status in the society" – (Leo, 1974: 30). A Boy Scout official says 16 year old James Clark of foster (Rhode Island) has been denied scouting's highest rank because 'we can not in clear conscience allow any boy to the rank of Eagle scout who is an admitted atheist' – (Californian, 1970: 7). The Burkes, who earlier adopted a boy, now 3½ 'were found to be persons of high moral and ethical standards', but Essex Country judge William Comarata ruled Friday that Burkes 'were not suitable parents for the adoption of the child because they did not believe in god' (Times, 1970: 15).

The above narrations evince the contradictory functions of religion in modern societies. Religion appeared to have a number of contradictory functions in modern societies.

The contemporary Christian church is faced with a basic dilemma brought about by its two contradictory roles – to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comforted. The comforting function is criticized because it focuses on helping the individual but ignores the problems of society. The challenging function – the injunction to be an agent of social protest and social reform – is criticized because it is divisive, alienating some members who disagree with the position taken. The evidence is clear that the majority of clergy are opting for the ‘comforting’ function over the ‘challenging’ function.

The Psychological functions of religion in Modern Societies:

For both the individual and the group, religion performs certain psychological functions. For the individual, religion is a guide to the place and purpose of humanity in an immense, confusing universe.

Religion helps to shape behaviour by presenting moral and ethical codes. It also helps to organize life experiences. Most religions have rituals and ceremonies (baptism, circumcision confirmation, bar mitzvah, the marriage ceremony, last rites, funerals) which mark turning points in life.

Religion also tries to answer questions about death, suffering and the presence of evil in the world- questions for which ordinary experience has no answers.

Religion is an emotional safety net, comforting people and reliving their anxiety in times of suffering, tragedy and death. Thus it helps to relieve confusion and

despair. (Stewart, 1978: 393). To the extent the world is dangerous and unpredictable, people suffer and face both specific fears and more general anxiety. Unease may stem from fear of natural forces and the sense of human weakness and dependency. Social circumstances too can be cruel and capricious and there is always the uncertain certainty of death. Some human responses to such fears and anxieties are to revere the powers of nature, appease them or seek their cooperation. One may also look to a supernatural realm in which, after death the individual will be safe from the frustrations of human existence. Religions lessen the tensions of life and to bring peace to troubled souls.

Psychologically, religion has the function of giving people answers to moral questions and also a feeling of place and importance in the universe. It answers questions that can be sources of bewilderment and despair. For many, religion provides a feeling of emotional catharsis or cleansing through prayer, confession, or emotional ecstasy. Religion can heal psychological complaints and probably thus affect one's physical health as appears to be the case in Navajo healing ceremonies. Religion arises as a response to individual psychic needs and to their requirements of social solidarity.

Social functions of religion:

Common faith, a common set of values, common worship, common efforts to propagate or perpetuate the faith, common sentiments, and common religious experiences - especially if accompanied by persecution or opposition – have bound the believers together; into clans, cults, sects, utopian societies and other groups that vary in size from two members, comprising one sect discovered in a sociological

survey to millions that are members of the major world religions. Religion is a basic source of social solidarity in many family, nationality, and status groups in rural communities.

Religious Institutions usually help to conserve values and practices that have been found beneficial through trial and error experience in the Society. This we can cognize from the new religious policy adopted by all denominational apostolic churches that the Priest concerned can perform the rituals of the burial in cases of suicidal death also. Till recently, the priests were not allowed to perform the rituals of burial in suicidal deaths. It evinces that the churches modified the existing practices gradually as it needs to be viable in accordance with the pressure of the society.

The church tends to be neither completely conservative nor radically in favour of eliminating the status quo; it is rather a 'profound appreciator of the worlds value, as revealed to it through the eyes of its faith, against shallowness and despair' (Robert, 1952: 39).

The primary function of Religion is worship. The word is derived from two old English words which mean worth ship. In other words, worship involves attitudes and actions of reverence that declare the worth of whatever is worshiped (George, 1953: 3). At least four attitudes all of which are significantly influenced by social experiences are involved in worship: contemplation, or mediation on the divine; revelation, or insight into truth believed to be divinely imparted; the consciousness of a personal relation to God; and fruition, the new life which grows out of the experience – (Edgar, 1940: 71). Theologically Christian worship involves a fellowship with men and with god which is an outward, visible expression of the

religious function is public worship which is the basis and centre of organised religious life. Without it or a functional equivalent the church could not exist – Ernst, 1931: 1007].

Rituals tend to strengthen the socially important attitudes of respect of son for father and of younger brother for older brother. The effects of rituals tend to be heightened when the ritual is performed in public. The worshipper sees that his attitudes are held in common with other people. The rituals of Hajj are the most unifying influence in Islam. Thousands of Muslims, rich and poor, Arabs, Turks, Persians, meet on common ground and are impressed with their equality before God.

Facilitating individual religious experiences is the function of the Religion. The group exists for the benefits of the individual. In many ways the religious experiences of persons are facilitated by the religion, which is a basic means of “inducing, formulating, expressing, enhancing, implementing, and perpetuating man’s deepest experience [Hertzler, 1948: 5].

From religion to religion the philosophy concerning life after death varies. The Australian aborigines’ and modern Hindus believe in reincarnation. Ancient Egyptians, like modern Christians and Muslims believed that shall attain heaven if they lead an upright and righteous moral life. All the religions, regardless of their differences in faith and rituals, trust in the life of eternity. The link of all to one eternal world unites them.

Belief in immortality has helped innumerable persons to live fuller, more secure and more serene lives than otherwise would have been possible. Belief in

immortality is a socially derived need. It is significant source of social discipline and provides motivations for living that otherwise would be lacking. [Ashley, 1955: 67].

Some religious organizations have the function of providing recreation in dances, in athletics or in social parties. Numerous socio-religious recreational activities are provided by organizations like the YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, Catholic Youth Centres, Bible conferences, summer camps, and children's clubs loosely associated with churches.

Most participation in church activities occurs during "leisure time", from this perspective church attendance itself is a "recreational activity" Less of our conduct is regulated by religion today than in the middle ages. Even in the modern times, recreation on Sunday was forbidden at one time and smoking cigarettes was considered as sin. The concern with human behaviour is different in the Hindus and in the Christian religions. It is very strong in Confucianism.

As the conscience of society, religious institutions are critic and judge cultural institutions and their practices by its ethical standards. The social gospel movement, vocational discussion groups and social action committees illustrate the attempts to make religion relevant to contemporary life and direct the functions of society to be upright – Herbert, 1952: 89).

Latent Function of Religion in contemporary society:

Ministering to the grief-stricken is part of the more general religious task sometimes called the "cure of souls". But with respect to the social system, the cure of souls is essentially a control function. This is brought out in the use of sanctions, from admonition and occasional refusal of communion of excommunication. Like most of

the social functions of religion, the control function of the cure of souls is 'latent' (Johnson, 1960: 466).

Religions can also have the latent function of alienating certain groups in society. American and English missionaries found that the most willing converts in India were the untouchables. They with no status at all in their own religion had nothing to lose. "When the untouchables were aided by the Indian government beginning in the 1950s, many of them converted back to Hinduism since otherwise, they could not receive aid intended for untouchables" (William, 1971: 2). Moreover, in experience it is found that the converted new Christians are seldom given chances to come up in the main stream of Christians. Even the conventional group do not give their children in marriage to the new converted family and thus an isolation is created within the Christian group itself.

Dysfunctions of Religion in Primitive and Pre-modern societies:

Religion can be a divisive force when a number of different religious groups compete for communicants or when religion struggles with other institutions, such as the governmental, for pre-eminence. Religious differences accentuate the differences among societies. Since religious groups have feelings of superiority, there may be conflict brought about by discrimination, competition for converts or feelings of hatred. Also because religious ideas tend to be strongly held, groups may split rather than compromise. Liberals and fundamentalists even within the same religion, denomination or local church will doubtless disagree on numerous issues. A common result, of course, is division.

Religion is too much interested in its dogmas and institutions as a result of which the development of spirituality becomes a secondary affair. The idea of equality and brotherhood of mankind is the keynote of all religions of the world but it is seldom put into practice by the religious organizations of today. Howsoever, every religion may preach the ideal of universal brotherhood but in practice it is seldom materialized. Variations of ideas, dogmas and institutions in the realm of religion are permanent obstacles in the matter of fostering universal unity and amity. Often progress has been stopped in the name of religion. It has degenerated in dogmatism and bigotry denying freedom of thought. Blackmar and Gillin wrote that “religion, ever conservative and dogmatic has tried time and again to crush the spirit of earnest men seeking to discover the truth and to prevent them from revealing newly discovered facts. It retarded the advance of science; it interfered with the free inquiry of scholars; it suppressed the democratic aspirations of common people” (Blackmar, 1990: 506).

“It has favoured war and poverty, exploitation and fatalism, prostitution and idleness and advocated such practices as cannibalism, suicide, slavery, untouchability and incest. There is hardly a vice which religion has not at one time or another actively supported” (Sachdeva, 1990: 506).

Galileo, in the middle of the 17th century, was forced by the church to react his defence of the Copernican theory that the earth along with other planets, revolves around the sun; he was made to accept publicly the medieval religious cosmology, which placed the earth at the centre of the universe. Religion killed the great personalities, like Jesus, Galileo, Socrates, Mahatma Gandhi etc. mercilessly.

Religion has been involved in some of the bloodiest wars of mankind and has been a major factor in man's political and economic revolutions. – [John, 1961: 406]. The destructive influence results largely from the bigotry characteristic of zealous believers.

Dysfunctions of Religion in Contemporary society:

A prominent criticism of the religion is that it is too conservative. As a guardian of social mores, it sometimes is used by dominant social classes to maintain a social system which has become a stumbling block to progress. The conservative side of religion probably is the major cause of the traditional enmity science toward religion. It tends to endow prevailing customs and doctrines with divine sanctions and to repress new ideas and usages almost as if its primary task to prevent change – (Julian, 1953: 261). Too often through its well meaning but benighted representatives, religion has mocked the findings of careful and conscientious scholars – (John, 1948: 473).

When a person is in trouble, the priest concerned should help him rather than saying “Let us pray”. Of course, prayer is *unquestionably* worthy, yet when the other party expects a tangible help from the priest as “faith without works is dead” (James: 2: 26), syrupy words shall be in vain.

Much evidence supports Fallaw's belief that the Christian church generally has been so caught up by this “institutionalism” that organizational strength rather than personal spiritual growth has become its goal. The clutter of denominational machinery is overemphasized to the detriment of spiritual values (Robert, 1960: 19).

Religious congregations have often turned to be “an occasion to show off new clothing and similar motivations apply at other times” (Brinkman, 1955: 52). It weakens the motive of the religion. Religious formalities may be substituted for personal deficiencies. Cruel fathers may cloak their brutality with pious prayers and penitential phrases. Selfish or indolent mothers may hide behind a verbal religious barrier. Formal religious activities may be used as a shelter to hide dishonesty and social inadequacies (Moberg, 1962: 363).

Common prayers may significantly reinforce family unity if all members are in basic accord on religion. But if one marital partner is accustomed to formal ritualistic prayers and the other to emotionally expressive, spontaneous utterances or to the quiet devotion of silence before God, family prayers may become a major source of tension (Moberg, 1962: 363).

Historically, it is only rarely that the privileged classes of a society have effectively worked to change the conditions of the less fortunate of their society. This is because those very conditions serve to maintain the privilege in their exalted positions. Those who protest run the risk of bringing into play force which lead to their own destruction. If members of the privilege classes were to protest, they would run the risk of losing their position of privilege (Henslin, 1976: 272).

To Karl Marx, religion was the ‘opiate of the people’, (Marx, 1978: 391) serving as narcotic to close people’s eyes to the conditions surrounding them. In the hope of getting a better deal in the next world, some religions tell people to put up with their problems. Others tell them that they are fated to suffer. This attitude of resignation keeps people from attacking social problems. Marx’s charge against

religion contains some truth. Slaves, serfs and poor people in many parts of the world have been encouraged by religion to turn away from earthly problems. In considering religion and social action, then, we must remember that it can act in two ways as a stimulant and as a narcotic. Religion generally supports social order, its norms and institutions; yet it also takes on a prophetic function of protest against the ills of the social order.

In Marx's words, "Religion is the sob of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the spirit of conditions utterly unspiritual. It is the opium of the poor" (Marx, 1939: 38). Karl Marx called religion the 'opium of the people' because he believed that the workers escape into religion. He argued that religion diverts the energies of the oppressed from changing their circumstances because believers focus on the happiness they will have in the coming world rather than on their suffering in this world. He further said 'The idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilisation' (Marx, 1966: 69). According to him, ruling classes adopt religious beliefs to justify their position both to themselves and to others. He added further that "man makes religion, religion does not make man" (Marx and Engel, 1955: 11). To Marx, religion is an illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression. Religious teachings and practices reflect of those on power by teaching that the existing social inequality; it reflects the interests of those on power by teaching that the existing social arrangements of a society represent what God desires. Thus Marx ventures to utter that Religion is like a drug helps one forget the misery and focus on future happiness in the next world. Karl Marx, a conflict theorist, saw religion as inhibiting social change by making existing social arrangements seem right and

inevitable. Religion further promotes the status quo by teaching the faithful to accept their condition – thus religion is the ultimate tool to promote false consciousness.

Karl Marx never regarded religion as a social product. The individual, according to him, is only a social being wholly interested in materialized pursuits and satisfaction. Karl Marx regarded the essence of Christianity as theoretical Religion is not empirical and practical. It is only a philosophical ideology. According to him philosophy is religion brought into thought.

In India the country was partitioned in the name of religion and even today religion is the grab of communalism stands to threaten the national solidarity.

It is normal for the church not to effectively protest or to actively seek solutions on behalf of those being victimized by the social order. Church is not protesting the established order on behalf of the down trodden of society.

Religions become a source of social instability. This usually occurs during periods of drastic change or revolution for the culture as a whole, or in times of intense competition between religious bodies struggling for power, or in times of intense competition between religious bodies struggling for power. “When outside pressures produce divisions in society and when the established social and psychological expectances of people are frustrated, the church is less likely to have a manifest integrating effect” (Yinger, 1975: 72).

Internal divisions within a community over question of religious dogma and worship can lead to open conflict. It gives little consideration to hostility between different religious groups within the same society/ community/ religious group. Gandhi maintained that people of all religions have a deep interest in Christ. As he

pointed out, Hindus hail the claim of Jesus that “I and the Father are one” (John, 10: 30). Some Buddhists have spoken of him as the Buddha of the west. The Koran speaks of Jesus as the Messiah as a prophet and messenger of God. All this should provide a basis for a two way communication and spiritual fellowship between Christianity and the other great religions. Yet there persists the religious conflict as a dysfunction amongst the religions.

Conflict itself can occur between religious groups (with the sanction of each religion). Recent world history gives bloody evidence of this occurrence (for example, Muslim verses Hindus in India and Pakistan, Moslems versus Jews in the middle east, Catholics versus protestants in northern Ireland). Religious conflict has also occurred within the United States at various times. Confrontations between Catholics and Protestants, between warring sects of Muslims (Black Muslims versus Sunni Muslims) as well as Protestants and Jews, have been fairly common. Clearly, religious values are reason enough for individuals and groups to clash. The history of religion is mostly the history of persecution. Wars have been fought in its name.

Conflict theorists acknowledge that religion may unify in small societies but in diverse societies religious differences divide them. From the conflict perspective, religious unity within a society, if it does occur, has negative consequences. Such unity is used to legitimate the interests of the powerful [for example, slavery, racial segregation, conquest of ‘Pagans’ and war]. Similarly, the interest of the powerful are served if the poor believe that they will be rewarded in the next life. Such a ‘theodicy’ prevents revolutions by the oppressed and serves as Marx suggested as ‘Opiate of the masses’ [Marx, 1990: 505].

In the past Hinduism was pious religion upholding universal brotherhood and aspiring for the welfare of every living thing. However, it has lost its world vision and became fundamentalist due to various reasons. Naturally, other religions are skeptic about their security and existence. This creates inter-religious tensions.

Gandhi believed that “all religions are branches of one and the made tree the tree of truth. The shape and size of the branches may vary, but the same vital juice runs through them all” (Gandhi, 1978: 127). Conversion from one religion to another is dysfunctional to the religious harmony.

The Christian emphasis on monogamous marriage ha some latent consequences quite the opposite of the desires of churchmen. Protestant countries tend to emphasize the sexual exclusiveness of marriage and partly in consequence, have a high divorce rate. Catholic countries generally prohibit or restrict divorce and partly in consequence, see the rise of a number of more or less permanent extra marital relationships. Many among the lower classes react to the prohibition of divorce by setting up households without legal marriage and shifting mates when discontented husband may establish a relationship with a mistress which the wife is powerless or prevent, since divorce is either completely outlawed or religiously taboo. Thus both the protestant and the catholic approach to ideal family life have latent consequences which modify the monogamous character of the family (Horton, 1968: 195).

Belief in immortality has helped innumerable persons to lead a more secure and more serene lives than otherwise would have been possible. But it sometimes has dysfunctional by-products, such as causing men to take too careless a view on their own life as also of others' lives.

Religious trusts become owners of landed properties and do not hesitate to indulge in extreme forms of extortion and repression of the peasantry. Religions thus became agencies of disunity and disruption of humanity where as it should be a rule of conduct to live in a harmonious and corporate spirits, neutralizing all antisocial tendencies.

In their struggle for power and pelf the Spiritual Leaders of every denominational Church had forgotten all about the service to be rendered to God and mankind. People do have only a more superficial and transient interest in religious activities merely because it had become fashionable.

Today very little attempt is being made by leaders of the various religious organization to bring about amity and good will between their followers. Whenever some congregation of a multi-religious tendencies such gatherings fail to receive support or encouragement from the established religious originations. Such organizations do not think of considering ways and means of eradicating economic exploitation and political repression.

No doubt the development of science and technology has made it possible for all humanity to live in comfort and happiness but the faulty social order and service of the exploiting classes prevent the materialization of this happy prospect. In this grim situation one would normally expect religious men with their vaunted idealism and love for humanity to support the downtrodden and handicapped. But on the contrary, what we find is that they tend to support the status quo and try to put a brake wherever possible on the trends of the social transformation.

Professor Abdul Aleem in his article “Have religions Outlived Their Social Function” has pointed out that “recent history has shown that all social reforms were implemented without the support and on many occasions in spite of the active opposition of the men of religion. As these people have still got the power to sway the thought’s and actions of large masses of people in many areas of the world, they could have been the instruments of social change if they only wished it. It is, perhaps, impossible for the protagonists of institutionalized religions to get out of their grooves of to change the frame work of their thought, without this they cannot perform useful function” (Aleem, 1965: 307).

Giving and taking dowry is prohibited since 1961, yet the innocent girl is killed and persecuted. Though the religion knows the ways and means to protect its women folk, it neglect and flinch back from its responsibility, which is a dysfunction of the religion.

Religion is considered a means of weathering the storms of life, enriching spiritual experience, preserving social order of man and the world” (Leo, 1949: 18). It is made homocentric rather than Theo centric; the old beliefs become so hallow and empty that “Peace of mind” cults and other innovations centered on man rather than on God replace them.

Ascetic monasticism, celibacy or other forms of self-denial may be used to escape the burdens of family life and the rigors of society. Prayer may be used as an escape mechanism by the indolent or neglectful. Dependence upon God may be used as an excuse for evading responsibilities of medical care, soil conservation insect control or crime prevention. The religious cults which condone antisocial personal

habits and periodic confession which replaces painful personality reorganization alike emphasis a type of pseudo holiness that permits neglect of obvious social duties – (Fromm, 1941: 42).

Dysfunctions of religion also precipitate in the form of worshiping god men, fear of Satan etc. Among Hindus, the evil practices like untouchability try to reinforce their strength.

Religion and suicide prevention

All religions affirm the fact that life is a gift from God and we have no right to take it away, either own life or the life of others. Yet the rate of suicide of the increase even in the religious countries and states and not to speak about Kerala. In this context it would be appropriate to examine whether the religions play any part either in promoting or in preventing suicide.

Judaism

Judaism has traditionally viewed suicides as one of the most serious of sins. Suicide has always been forbidden by Jewish law in all cases. The prohibition against suicide is not specifically recorded in the Talmud. The post- Talmudic tractate Semahot search as the basis for most of later Jewish law on suicide, together with Genesis Rabbah 34:30 which bases the biblical prohibition on Genesis 9:5 “ and surely blood of your life will I require”. Although killing oneself is forbidden under normal Jewish law as being a denial of God’s goodness in the world, under extreme circumstances when there has seemed no choice but to either be killed or forced to betray their religion, Jews have committed suicide or mass suicide.

Islam

Islam views suicide as sinful and highly detrimental to one's spiritual journey. A verse in the fourth chapter of the Quran, An-Nisaa; "and do not kill yourself, surely Allah is most Merciful to you". The prohibition of suicide has also been recorded in authentic statements of hadith.

Buddhism

According to Buddhism, individuals' past acts influence what they experience in the present; present acts, in turn, become the background influence for future experience. Intentional action by mind, body or speech has a reaction. This reaction or repercussion, is the cause of conditions and differences we come across in the world. For Buddhists, since the first precept is to refrain from the destruction of life, including oneself, suicide is clearly considered a negative form of action.

Hinduism

In Hinduism, murdering one's own body is considered equally sinful as murdering another, with the exception of the currently defunct practice of sati. Suicide behaviours are referred to in the Indian epics- the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Suicide in relation to the doctrine of karma is also discussed. In the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata that are many centuries old. One comes across instances of suicide behaviour in many of the important characters. In Ramayana, Prince Rama while in exile, entertains ideas of suicide after being separated from his wife Sita. Sita, the heroine- princess of the epic, a victim of torture by Ravana, separated from her husband, surrounded by several female demons tormenting her, lost hope of being rescued. Lamenting that her virtues have all failed and have been fruitless, she

resolved to commit suicide. However, in a moment there occurred to her many good omens which gave her mental strength as traditional portents throbbing of left eye, left arm and the left leg. She was then rid of her sorrow and mind was freed from the grief and became joyous.

Surrender of the self to self

There is a class of suicides, which are termed the surrender of the self to self and are held as acts of dedication. They are undertaken not with depression, frustration, weariness of life, but as cheerful acceptance and with a sense of having achieved the ordained mission in their lives: Out of hundreds of such selective suicides, a few of them are referred to : Kumarila Bhatta, the great Mimamsa advocate of the vedic period entered in to the pyre lighted by him He was convinced that his mission in life was successful after establishing the supremacy of vedic doctrines. Sankaracharya after completing his mission entered in to the cave and sat in a yogic posture, At his request, one of his disciples sealed the entry of the cave. Sankaracharya himself described the attitude of detachment in one of his aphorisms: “one should take leave the very moment one renounces, whether at home or in the forest”. Chaitanya,. The architect of the Bhakti movement in Bengal leapt to death in to the waters of the Bay of Bengal at Puri. He visualized Krishna in the waters and rushed to embrace Him. Dnyanesvar entered in to the Samathi built by him which his elder brother and Guru Niwrutinatha sealed by placing the last slab. Eknath and Tukaram ended their lives in a similar way. Eknath walked into the river of Godavari while Tukaram entered the river Indrayani.

The Doctrine of Karma

The doctrine of karma implies that an individual's actions good or bad, in a given life determine the quality of his next life. By cutting short one's life by unnatural death like suicide or by euthanasia, one is compelled to reincarnate to live out the unexhausted karma. Hence, suicide or euthanasia provide only a temporary solution for the current problems but the remaining part of karma has be worse than the present one! Thus one finds some rare instance of persons going through pain and suffering patiently as determined by past karma to burn away all traces of their karmas. This lends a philosophical and spiritual dimension to counseling. However 'religious suicides' which are deliberate and without passion were encouraged.

Christianity

There are five causes of suicide mentioned in the Old Testament but in the New Testament there is only one clear case of suicide the death of judas, and it is recoded without comment. Paul is said to have prevented the suicide of the Philippian jailer. The Christian case against suicide was formally stated by St Augustine, who prohibited the act as a violation of sixth commandment 'thou shall not kill'. In the sixth century, suicide became a religious sin and secular crime. In the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas vilified suicide as act against God and as a sin for which one could not repent. Many Christian believe in the sanctity of human life, a principle which broadly speaking says that all human life is sacred and every effort must be made and preserve it whenever possible. But there were some groups who believe that by killing themselves they could attain martyrdom and go to heaven but they where eventually declared heretics. While suicide is certainly treated in a negative way in the

Bible, there is, however, no specific verse that explicitly states that suicide leads directly to hell.

Kerala is multi-religious society and religion is inextricably woven into all the major activities in society. Religion is a dominant factor in the life of people and it has own code of conduct. The followers in different religions, believe that God is sovereign and in control of human life. They believe he has given us everything we need for life: Religion is an institution which instills a particular philosophy of life, in an individual. An individual out look towards himself/herself, her faith and economic social aspiration are coloured by the religious doctrine, she/he has received. Similarly, her out look towards the society and her fellow beings is influenced by her religious faith.

In addition, by large, a common man understands religiosity in terms of ritualism like worshipping God observing fast and visiting religious institutions. Durkheim says that religion has many functions such as re-vitalizing and euphoric. That is, in this material life, men undergo many hardships and religion is a support system to energize and controls them. Euphoric, the religious faith and practices gives sufficient anticipation for men about the good future. In the present study it is categorized that those who get score $100 \leq 80$ is highly attached to their religious community, $80 \leq 60$ attached to religion $60 \leq 40$ moderately attached to religion $40 \leq$ poorly attached to their religious community. In this chapter the researcher tries to bring out the relation between suicide and religion.

Table no. 7.1
Sex Vs Religious attachment

Sex	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Male	0	11	27	38
% within sex	-	28.9	71.1	100
% within religious attachment	-	37.9	43.5	38
Female	9	18	35	62
% within sex	14.5	29	56.5	100
% within religious attachment	100	62.1	56.5	62
Total	9	29	62	100

The interpretation of sex and attachment towards religion the researcher observed from the table that 28.9% of the male respondents are moderately attached to religion and 71.1% of respondents have low attachment towards religion. In the case of female respondents 14.5% have high attachment towards religion, 29% have moderate attachment towards religion and 56.5% have low attachment to religion. The male respondents show low attachment towards their religion may be due to increasing alcoholic consumption.. The alcoholism affects the social networks of the respondents in the ground of family and religion. The decrease in religious attachment is also one of the cause for suicide. In the case of female respondents increasing influence of visual media especially television weakens their religious orientation. In olden days the evenings were filled with religious prayers and women take initiative to participate all family members. But now women spend the evening with T.V.

serials and other television programmes they were influenced by characters , while in a crisis women try to imitate characters in television serials. Stack (2000) observed that due to increase in religiosity level completed suicide less among women than men.

Table no. 7.2

Education Vs Religion attachment

Education	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Primary	0	9	5	14
% within education	0	64.3	35.7	100
% within religious attachment	-	31	8.1	14
Secondary	6	10	3	51
% within education	11.8	19.6	35.7	100
% within religious attachment	66.7	34.5	8.1	51
High school	2	10	3	15
% within education	13.3	66.7	20	100
% within religious attachment	22.2	34.5	4.8	15
S.S.L.C	1	0	3	4
% within education	25	-	75	100
% within religious attachment	11.1	-	4.8	4
PDC	0	0	5	5
% within education	0	0	100	100
% within religious attachment	0	0	8.1	5

Degree	0	0	2	2
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	3.2	2
PG	0	0	3	3
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	4.8	3
Technical	0	0	3	3
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	4.8	3
Professional	0	0	3	3
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	4.8	3
Total	9	29	62	100
	9%	29%	62%	100%

While analyzing education and religious attachment among suicide attempters those who shows low attachment to their religion were higher educated. Education helps for the proper path of development of the people and help to make right choices at right time some time even the high educators failed the take proper decision in their life Education strengthens spiritual and social life. Even though education and technological advancements hinders the religious beliefs and practices, for the majority religion is a tension relieving mechanism. The table shows 64.3% primary educators have moderate 35.7% shows low attachment to their religion. In the case of secondary educators 11.8% shown high attachment, 19.6% shown moderate

attachment 68.6% of respondents low attachment to their religion. In the case of high school education 13.3% of the respondents shown high attachment towards religion, 66.7% of the respondents shown high attachment towards religion and 20% shown low attachment towards religion. The respondents were unable to properly utilize their communication with God for solving their dilemmas or difficulties.

Table no. 7.3

Type of family Vs religious attachment

Type of family	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Nuclear	6	17	49	72
% within Type of family sex	8.3%	23.6%	68.1%	100%
% within religious attachment	66.7%	58.6%	79%	72%
Extended	3	12	13	28
% within Type of family	10.7%	42.9%	46.4%	100%
% within religious attachment	21%	41.4%	33.3%	28%
Total	9%	29%	62%	100%

While analyzing family structure and religious attachment the respondents from the nuclear families (8.3%) were highly attached to religion, 23.6% were moderately attached to religion and 68.1% have low attachment towards religion. In extended families 10.7% of respondents are highly attached to religion, 42.9% moderately attached to religion and 46.4% have low attachment to religion. From this table it is revealed that the respondents in the nuclear families show low attachment towards religion than extended families. In the extended families grand parents help other family members to inculcate religious values. But in the nuclear families

absence of such type of support mechanism leads to low attachment towards religion in nuclear families than extended families.

Table no. 7.4

Occupation Vs Religion attachment

Occupation	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Govt. employed	0	0	2	2
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	3.2	2
Pvt. Employed	0	0	5	5
% within education	0	0	100	100
% within religious attachment	0	0	8.1	5
Quasi employed	0	0	1	1
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	1.6	1
Self employed	1	4	2	7
% within education	14.3	57.1	28.6	100
% within religious attachment	11.1	13.8	3.2	7
Un employed	0	0	2	2
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	3.2	2
House wife	6	18	31	55
% within education	10.9	32.7	56.4	100
% within religious attachment	66.7	62.1	50	55
Student	2	0	4	6
% within education	33.3	-	66.7	100
% within religious attachment	22.2	-	6.5	6
Coolie	0	7	15	22
% within education	-	31.8	68.2	100
% within religious attachment	-	24.1	24.2	22
Total	9	29	62	100
	9%	29%	62%	100%

While analyzing occupation and religious attachment of govt. employed, private employed quasi employed, private employed, and coolies shows less attachment towards religion. It may be due to the increase in work load and instability of their work which make bitter experience in life. They always try to increase their material benefits rather than to give emphasis on spiritual concern. Another notable thing is that in this study all the respondents in these occupational category were male and all the respondents were alcoholic. The alcoholism is an important factor for decreasing the religious attachment. Analyzing house wives 10.9% of them were highly attached to religion, 32.7% were moderately attached to religion. In the case of housewives for a few religion is a tension relieving mechanism. In the case of students only two respondents showed high attachment towards their religion and four respondents shows less attachment to their religion. Even though people were attached to religion the religious leaders also played roles in monitoring and properly chanalising their religious activities and giving proper advise for relieving dilemmas in their life.

Table no. 7.5

Religion Vs religious attachment

Religion	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Christian	5	4	9	18
% within sex	27.8	22.2	50	100
% within religious attachment	55.6	13.8	14.5	18
Hindu	4	14	51	69
% within sex	5.8	20.3	73.9	100
% within religious attachment	44.4	48.3	82.3	69

Muslim	0	11	2	13
% within sex	-	84.6	15.4	100
% within religious attachment	-	37.9	3.2	13
Total	9	29	62	100

While analyzing the relation between religious beliefs and role of religion in the life of suicide attempters it is clear that 27.8% of the Christians are highly attached to religion, 22.2% of the them moderately attached to religion and 50% of the Christian respondents have low attachment to their religious practice. In the case of Hindu respondents 5.8% have high attachment to the religion, 20.3% were moderately attached to religion and 73.9% have low attachment to their religious beliefs. But in the case of Muslim suicide attempters, nobody have high attachment to their religious practices and 15.4% were have low attachment to their religious followers. From the above observation it was clear that high attachment to the religious practices lessen the suicide rate. The degree of attachment depends on two factors - the socialization in the family and socialization in the religious institutions. Both these agencies strengthen participation in religious beliefs and boost up the communication with God and man.

In this study one of the case says she is from Hindu religion. From her family she did not get proper foundation for religious belief. She is not interested in the religious rituals and practices. The religious teachings never influenced her. She never tried to communicate her feelings and sorrows with God. She don't know how to communicate with All mighty. She don't know how to share feelings with God. She shares her feelings with in herself. She never believed religion can bring down behaviour modification within her and it can't never strengthen personal relations in

her life. Her religious rituals practices not at all influenced her. Sandhya (1994) says the religiosity does give solace and relief during times of distress.

Table no. 7.6

Age Vs Religion attachment

Age	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Below 20	3	1	6	10
% within education	30	10	60	100
% within religious attachment	33.3	3.4	9.7	10
20-30	0	0	11	11
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	17.7	11
30-40	6	18	29	53
% within education	11.3	34	54.7	100
% within religious attachment	66.7	62.1	46.8	53
40-50	0	10	6	16
% within education	-	62.5	37.5	100
% within religious attachment	-	34.5	9.7	16
50-60	0	0	8	8
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	12.9	8
60 and above % within education	0	0	2	2
% within education	-	-	100	100
% within religious attachment	-	-	3.2	2
Total	9	29	62	100
	9%	29%	62%	100%

While analyzing attachment towards the religion and age it is clear that in the age group below 20, 30% of the respondents were highly attached to the religion, 10% of them were moderately attached to religion and 60% have low attachment to the religious practices. In the age group 20-30, all the respondents have low attachment to the religion. While explaining the age group 30-40, 11.3% have low attachment to religion, and 54.7% have low attachment towards the religion. In the age group 40-50 62.5% of the respondents were moderately attached to religion and 37.5% of the respondents have low attachment to their religious practices. In the age group of 50-60 and 60 and above all the respondents have low attachment to their religious practices. From the above observation it is clear that in the age group of 40 & above most of the respondents shows healthy attachment towards their religious institution which may be the reason for less suicide rate in these age group. In the age group below 20 and 30-40, some of the respondents show high attachment towards religion. From the in depth interviews the researcher observes that their impulsive behaviour constitute major cause for suicide behaviour. It is the characteristics of the younger age group who have strong attachment to religion. While in a crisis they took hasty decision by ignoring the moral teachings and moral values. It also noted that among youngsters the visual media especially Television channels made good impact on them. They like to spend their spare time with media than engaging religious activities. Especially the younger women highly influenced by the women characters of T.V serials. Thus they do not wish to spend the time with religious activities. The youngsters are highly attracted by the material well-being rather than the spiritual happiness.

Table no. 7.7

Place of residence Vs religious attachment

Place of residence	Religious attachment			Total
	High	Moderate	Low	
Rural	4	19	45	68
% within sex	5.9	27.9	66.2	100
% within religious attachment	44.4	65.5	72.6	68
Urban	5	10	17	32
% within sex	15.6	31.3	53.1	100
% within religious attachment	55.6	34.5	37.4	32
Total	9	29	62	100

While relating the relation between suicide and place of residence it was found that 5.9% of the ruralites highly attached to religion, 27.9% moderately attached to religion and 66.2% of the respondents have low attachment towards religion. But in the case of urbanites 15.6% of them have high religious attachment, 34.5% have moderate attachment to religion and 37.4% have low attachment towards religion. Even though urbanities have busy schedule they utilize specific time for religious activities.

Key important interview: - Interview with religious leaders

The researcher had got enough opportunities to interact with the religious leaders from three religions. It helped the researcher to analyze impact of religion on the life of people. They have given a brief account on their religious view on suicide. They have given brief description on how involvements in religious groups help for the development of personality. This was another efficient qualitative method to support the empirical findings of the researcher.

A priest from Christian's community discussed on their structuring of religious practices. They have different types of organizations to give orientation to the religious followers. The Christian communities have separate organization for children, youth, married and aged. During the preparation of marriage, they give counseling for couples and families to face problematic situation Catholics always stress for the importance to receive the sacraments frequently. There are various retreat programs for couples and families, whereby they take a weekend away from their normal duties and surroundings, and focus only on their relationship with God and each other. Prayer and the sacraments provide the centerpieces of these retreat experiences. A number of movements for youth retreats are growing quite rapidly. Along with retreats there are programs whereby couples and families meet regularly in small groups for prayer, spiritual guidance, and discussion, they encourage to mingle with boys and girls. For children they basically give religious orientation and taught religious practices and try to build up an intimate relation with God. When the family does not take initiative for cultivating religious values religious people took initiative and they make family aware about importance for holding religious values in life. In the case of youth they have their own organization for this building personality, to develop leadership qualities group solidarity and cultivating group solidarity among them. The religion provides a lot scope for all round development of their personality rather any other institution. They conducted courses for preparing marriage and for better marital adjustment. Religious functions and religious teachings help to bring out charismatic transformation among people. The sacrament such as "confession" helps to relax internal tensions. Religious institution also

conducts several programmes for empowering women. The Self Help Groups run under the religious management helped lots women to come to mainstream of society and for making their life meaningful. The religious institutions have provision for taking loans for economically needy people. Thus the institution ensures over all development of the people, those who are attached to the religious organization. If the person is not interested, religion will not interfere in his problems. He said that in Christian community religion played a vital role in moulding personality, solving problems in their personal life and bring out solidarity among people. Religion engaged all stages of life from birth to death. Some people are highly attached to this group and they make use of all opportunities of religion.

Muslim religious leaders also get same type of information. Now a day their madrasas encourage to give religious education to Muslim girls also. Every “mosque” has separates space for special gathering of women. Their religious practices are compulsory for all. But they give little scope for mingling boys and girls. They imposed restrictions for mingling between boys and girls. They gave religious oriented teachings and strict religious values hold the people together. A Muslim man wherever in the world should strictly follow the religious practices. Imam (priest in the Muslim religion) discussed the social issues and evils of alcoholism by correlating with their religion teachings. The community encourages every member to help the weak with in and outside their religion which brings solidarity and we feeling among them. Religious teachings help to cultivate morality and to lead religious oriented life to them. All religious people had to follow the religious teachings and ensure to practice the practice and customs within their religion. Imman strongly agree it is best

means to communicate with God. There is no mediator between God and man. He always tries to make direct communication with God which helps to bring out intimate relation with man and God. Religious belief and positive attitudes towards religion help for well-being of the personality and which helps to follow structured and lead meaningful life to the humanity.

Priest from Hindu religion told the researcher that they don't have compulsory religious practices. The priest didn't interfere in the family matters or religious matters of the people. He doesn't have personal or informal relation with people, even with those who come to temple. The people who know those who come to temple frequently or engaged in activities. He is close only to the people in the administration. They don't have compulsory religious practices. The family is obliged to cultivate religious values to people. During festivals and celebrations, the temple organized spiritual speeches to enlighten people and guide them in a proper direction. It might be influenced by only small percentage of people. For some it was words in the deaf's ears. Recently every year temple used to conduct religious speeches; He failed to say how much it can influence people.

From above discussion it was evident that Christian and Muslim religious leaders were very close to their fellow beings. They were concerned about religious activities and try to propagate religion in their local area. They were engaged in family matters of their own followers. The religious organizations under several heads and religious gathering helped for bringing solidarity with in fellow members and community. The religious institution was concerned about socializing fellow beings with in their community. But this type of strong binding forces the researcher was not

able to see in the Hindu religion. The institution was not much bothered about the religiously socializing their followers. On the basis the cross tables, case studies and the key informant interview the researcher proved the hypothesis that “Religion plays a vital role on suicide.”

Conclusion

Religion may affect life because of the perspective individuals use to interpret life experiences, to set personal and family goals, and to make value-based decisions. The particular ways in which religion will make a difference in life depend on many factors or dimensions of religion, including, but not limited to, the importance of religion to the individual (salience), devotional practices and sense of relationship with the divine, specific beliefs and emphases, the degree of support and shared activities by the religious community, congregational worship, the rewards expected for faith and the acting out of its values, and views of and behaviors toward significant others (family, friends) . Family outcomes (marital adjustment, reduced conflict, improved conflict resolution strategies) were more positive with enhancing proximal factors involved than with toxic or distal associations. What is at stake when we consider the family is not simply one issue among many. What is at stake is the very survival of human civilization. When, therefore, we consider the role of religion in the modern family, we are considering the role of religion in preserving the world. Dialogue between religions is not just something good. It is essential, for it is not simply dialogue in the sense of an academic exercise. It is dialogue in the sense of thinking through common problems and challenges, and discerning ways to join hands and solve those problems, for the good of our families and our children's

families. The researcher found that the younger generation, who have low education and are engaged in less income generating jobs showed less attachment to religion. Low attachment to religion may be the cause of completed suicide higher among men than women. This study also showed that due to influence of TV channels women who like to spent time with TV than engaging in religious prayers, Hindus showed low attachment with religion than Muslims and Hindus. The key informant interview with religious experts also supports all empirical findings. In this chapter the researcher proved the hypothesis right that” Religion plays vital role on suicide”.