

In India the religious aspect of totemism is almost dead to a considerable extent, and the social aspect is more operative.

Radcliffe Brown suggested two important words in respect of the idea of totemism—(a) Ritual relations between persons and their totems and (b) Ritual attitude, where every society adopts and imposes upon its members certain objects. The primary reasons behind the development of totemism is a social order.

Traditions regarding the origin of certain clans among the Tamaria, indicate that the totemic animal or plant has helped to protect the human ancestor of the clan. Most of the explanations in relation to the origin of clans among Ho, Munda and the santhal conclude that totems originated out of necessities at a time when human help failed to provide required relief. Thus in most cases totems have been conceived as the substitute or representative of the divine spirit thereby linking them with religion.

We can take the example of Santhals who are identified with totems and totem worship is very popular and it is often obligatory for them. We find Hansda clan with a totem duck, Pansia clan with totem pigeon etc.

FETISHISM :

If a particular natural object is imaginatively attached with some supernatural power and individual being to have faith in it directly, this type of association is known as fetishism. The objects used for this purpose is known as 'fetish', It may be a feather, a shell, a bone etc. For example, if some one has touched a skull and felt the flow of power in his body and with the help of that power, he might have saved a patient's life or brought the rain in time etc. This idea of fetishism is much related with magic. This is entirely a faith in something unexplainable and uncontrollable in general. It's test is it's efficacy, i.e. for how many times or in how many occasions the object could be used successfully—This consideration and understanding may fetish character of the respective object.

FUNCTIONALIST THEORIES

Durkheim, Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown have proposed the functional explanation of primitive religion. Malinowski considers religion as a device to secure mental and psychological stability in an individual's life. He feels when functioning for a social life people fail to cope up with problems they search for an absolute power which can help them to overcome all problems and offer them solutions in even an unexplicable manner. Human mind always suffers from pain and tension and it seeks a relief from the same, then religion is made to bring about a readjustment between man and the supernatural in upset states of existence. He cited the example that, Trobriand Islanders organise religious ceremonies mainly during the time of fishing expeditions which is the main activity for the tribe and around which the pressures and tensions revolve all the time.

Radcliff-Brown observes from a different angle as he says religion is emerged to instill a sense of dependence in it. To him, the individual should learn to depend on society through some rituals and behavioural norms.

He feels religion is not a device to save individual from his individual stress and strain rather it is to assure a social solidarity and homogeneity. All the members of a particular society come close to one another and share their failures and

expectations by practising religion. For example, Mahalis worship 'Surji Devi' or God sacrificing chickens, pigeons, goats etc. and after the rituals they take them together. After every twelve years the Mahalis worship 'Surji Devi' for the welfare of the village. Also they worship 'Dharam God' together to show their gratitude to the soil after harvesting the crops. Their practices show religion is the instrument to combine the people on some common cause and they show reverence to supernatural spirit being united thereby accepting the functional role of religion.

Durkheim also emphasises the functional aspect of religion and he stresses the beliefs and rites. He offered two important concepts viz. sacred and profane. In every tribe a distinction is made between these two. He is of the opinion that the positive beliefs referred to God is related to sacred and profane consists of magic and pseudo-science. Some activities are performed as compulsory in every religion and some others are forbidden so the first one is the sacred and the second one is the profane. For example, Mahalis worship Surji Devi as a joint performance and of several animals—this is sacred. On the other hand in each family it has its own deity 'Orak Bonga,' nothing is told to the outsiders about this deity, thus telling anything about others is profane.

Thus according to him religion is a part of social activities comprising right and wrong, good or evil and guiding the functions of the respective societies. While studying Australian tribes he discovered the youngmen among them are taught normal laws through sacred ceremonies.

Thus, religion has a definite purpose to train the people with social behaviour and religion is not related only to supernatural forces which do not have any direct contact with real social life.

THE THEORIES

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| Animism— | Tylor's theory indicating the power of soul, ghosts, illusions, imaginations hallucinations etc. |
| Animatism or Manatism— | Every object, both animate and inanimate are rich with a force of life. Propounder was Marett. |
| Naturism— | All the natural objects are to be worshipped as they have enormous power to bless or curse man. The main theoretician in this respect was Max Muller. |
| Functionalist School —1. | Malinowski—Religion helps man to get rid of stress and strain. |
| | 2. Radcliffe Brown—religion is for social cohesion and stability. |
| | 3. Durkheim—Religion is a social practice to develop a 'right society' in place of a wrong one. |

WORLD RELIGIONS

Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of all the world religions, originating in the Indus River Valley about 4,500 years ago. Hinduism is sometimes described as an 'ethical'