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K. GOPAL
Ph. D.

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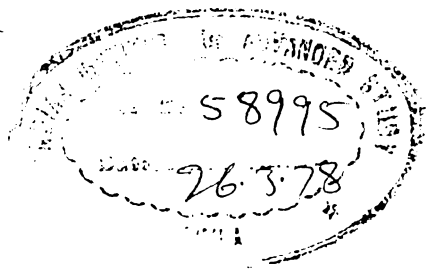

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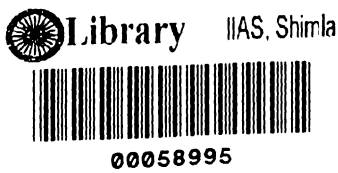

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To my Father

SHRI J.P. JAUNPURI

Submission

I do not wish to be autobiographical, but my interest in religion dates back to my childhood in mid-forties. when during the summers in Kanpur, I was forcibly detained in the house and my mother used to read Ramayana both to quench her religious thirst on one hand and to keep me engaged on the other. We both wept at the poor plight of Sita when she was abondoned by Rama on the washerman's remarks. I used to put several questions on this issue which my mother could never reply to my satisfaction. Even at that tender age it made me boil within myself.

Mother was a pukka Sanatanist. On the contrary father had been an Arya Samajist, denouncing all such practices. The religious contradiction in the house drew me more towards father whose approach seemed logical. This made me agnostic.

Father had been a great reader and had an impressive personal library studded with religious books. Age and family environment developed in me love for reading and my hands fell on my father's books. I read Hindu scriptures (all in translation) and commentaries on them, the Holy Bible, the Koran Sharif, Satyarth Prakash, etc.

Radhakrishnan appealed me. On entering college our teacher in Sociology Prof. R. S. Yadava of Meerut College, Meerut always provided us with rich material on religion. He is a profound scholar of religion with Marxian approach.

Thus my interest continued. I read 'Hindu Manners, customs and ceremonies' by Dubois and started cherishing a desire to work on practiced religion. The present project is a concrete expression of this desire.

In social sciences mathematization has entered quite deep. I personally feel that it might help for theory building but for the general reader, who is not aware of the development, it is not very helpful. As such deliberately only simple percentages have been given throughout.

I must express my gratitude towards those from whom direct or indirect help has come during this venture.

I acknowledge the debt of the scholars whom I have quoted. I am extremely grateful to my respondents without whose help and cooperation the report could not have its body at all. Words fail me to express my feelings for Mr. Kailash Mithal of Anu Prakashan who has always been considerate and indulgent towards me.

K. Gopal

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1

Introduction

It is a common place generalization these days that religion has lost its all pervading significance. It was with a view to test empirically the validity of the above generalization that the study of the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus has been undertaken. Initially, it was proposed to make this study a broad based one in which the idea was to collect information from varied strata of Hindu society. Hindu society caught the attention of the author for several reasons. The most important being the very nature of this Society, which is very varied, and is in a sense, a conglomeration of a vast range of beliefs and practices. It would not be a surprise if one finds different practices among Hindus of different regions. It may be illustrated thus that even the most significant ritual of 'Saptapadi' (walking of the bride and the groom together around the holy fire of Yagya) is different at different places. As the name suggests it should be seven rounds and in fact at some places seven rounds are taken, whereas at places only four rounds are taken.

Another reason for choosing Hindu was its largeness community and the researcher too being one of it.

The Scope of Study : In all research proposals which are not financed by any agency the scope has to be redefined at occassions. Similar thing happened in this project also. Originally it was planned to have the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus belonging to different professional cross-sections of this Society viz : businessmen, government servants, people engaged in private concerns, teachers, medicos,

legal practitioners and those doing other odd jobs. It was also thought of covering a large region, but ultimately the plan had to be chopped from all sides as there was no possibility of financial support from any side and as such the entire study had to be conducted by the author himself.

It was then finally decided to confine the study to the teachers alone. The author thought that it would be convenient to probe amongst the teachers engaged in teaching in the institutions of higher learning—the degree and post-graduate colleges affiliated to Meerut University and located in Meerut city including the teachers of Meerut University campus. Thus a study which was proposed initially to be of a whole community was confined to that of a profession-rather of a segment of a profession.

The present name of the study emerged out of the collected data. The classified data revealed that all the respondents rated themselves to be belonging to middle class. As such evolved the present nomenclature of the project 'The Religion of the Middle Class'.

The Field : In its physical sense Meerut can not be taken as a very big place but educationally it is rather significant. Apart from having a University campus it has a medical college and six degree and post-graduate colleges. They are : Meerut University, Meerut. Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College, Meerut. Meerut College, Meerut. Nanakchand Anglo Sanskrit College, Meerut. Raghunath Girls College, Meerut. Ismile National Girls College, Meerut. Dev Nagari College, Meerut and Kanohar Lal Mahila Mahavidyalya, Meerut. Of these institutions, Raghunath Girls College, Ismile National College, and Kanohar Lal Mahila Mahavidyalaya are institutions exclusively for women while the rest of the institutions are co-educational.

Again it was contemplated to includeonly those teachers who depended on the earnings of teaching profession alone. The idea was that medicos and teachers teaching law would not be included in the sample because of their earnings from other sources. This not only gives them an economic edge over their fellow professionals in other branches of teaching

but simultaneously alienates them from the profession also Thus the sample included the teachers associated with arts, science, education and commerce faculties alone.

Initially it was thought of approaching all the teachers teaching in the said faculties at the above institutions. It was hoped that this section of society being highly educated and logical—itself largely being involved in research of various types in its own respective disciplines—would be readily prepared to respond to the request of the researcher. It was later, during data collection, realized that whatever be the section the informant is an informant and the time of data collection is his/her time. As such though the questionnaires were distributed freely with an effort to reach all the teachers but due to poor response of return it was ultimately decided to proceed with further processing as soon as the hundredth case was completed. Though in themselves the number of cases do not appear to be very impressive yet viewed as a whole they form a good sized sample. The numerical strength of teachers in the institutions of Meerut in Oct. 1976—March 1977 is given below :

Table No. 1

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN MEERUT CITY

	NAME OF THE INSTITUTION	NO. OF TEACHERS
1.	*Meerut University*	*30*
2.	*Meerut College (Excluding law faculty)*	*200*
3.	*Raghunath Girls College*	*91*
4.	*N.A.S. College (Excluding law faculty)*	*75*
5.	*Ismile National Girls College*	*51*
6.	*Kanoharlal Mahila Mahavidyalaya*	*51*
7.	*D.N. College*	*70*
	Total	*494*

The hundred cases that could come to the researcher are mainly from Meerut University, Meerut. Meerut College, Meerut. N.A.S. College, Meerut and Ismile National Girls College, Meerut. Only very few cases could be had from the rest of the institutions. Now that all the Institutions have been put on par the researcher does not find the necessity of giving

the case-wise recovery from individual institutions. In fact het institutions have not been taken as a variable.

The Field Work : The duration of field work was Oct. 1976 to March 1977. The intensity with which the work was done varied from high to low depending on various factors. The most lean period was March, when the atmosphere was surcharged with election fever. During the month of December (second half) and early January also due to cold the field work could not proceed encouragingly. It was completed in the last week of March 1977.

The Tool : The tool utilized for collection of information was a questionnaire. Religious beliefs and practices being intriguing and involving field, would largely lure a researcher to adopt depth interviews. This temptation was avoided and finally over come. As the respondents were educated teachers it was thought fit to administer a questionnaire.

The Questionnaire Explained : It was a large questionnaire running into about fifteen pages. On such as absorbing subject it was very natural for the questionnaire to have become lengthy. It was first pre-tested and then administered. The questionnaire has nine sub-sections excluding the identification section, which forms the first part.

The questionnaire began with a letter of introduction explaining to the respondents the relevance of the study undertaken.

In the identification data major items of identification were age, sex, caste, family pattern, family background, family's stay in city, family's cultural level, marital status of the respondent, owning of the property, relations with the kinsmen living at ancestral village and financial status of the family. The onus of responsibility to place one's own family in a financial status stratum was left on the respondents. Even otherwise if they are asked to mention the family income the responses usually are not very reliable. The respondents either display inflated income or deflate it. In any case the researcher is not free from the risk of respondent's subjectivity.

Other sub sections of the questionnaire are general

religious beliefs, worshipping, sources of religious knowledge, pilgrimage, festivities, fasts, religious rites, religious taboos and inter-religious interactions.

In all there are about 111 questions on various aspects.

The Informants : Table–2 displays classification of the informants in various strata. Though there are nine variables with certain sub-groups but at the time of explanation some of the present groups will have to be merged either in the succeeding or the preceeding groups because independently they do not possess sufficiently large number of respondents to provide reliable and justifiable responses. As such, as a policy, wherever the number is 5 or less the merger will be operative. So, while analysing, there will be only three Age groups upto 35, 35 to 45 and 45 and above with frequencies 35, 47 and 18 and only two groups of family's stay in city *i.e.* upto 10 years and more than 10 years with frequencies 13 and 84, 3 having not responded.

The plan : Each section of the questionnaire as such would be adopted as a separate chapter. Apart from the introductory chapter which includes introduction and the significance of undertaken problem and applied research design there would be two parts. General religious beliefs will form part one and Worshipping, Religious knowledge, Pilgrimage, Festivities, Fasts, Religious Rites, Religious Taboos and Inter-religious interactions will form the second part. The final chapter would be concluding one high lighting the significant observations.

Table No. 2

THE INFORMANTS AT A GLANCE

VARIABLES	No.	%
i. **AGE**		
upto 25	*3*	*3*
25—35	*32*	*32*
35—45	*47*	*47*
45—55	*15*	*15*
55 & above	*3*	*3*
Total	*100*	*100*

VARIABLES		No.	%
ii. **SEX**			
Male		*79*	*79*
Female		*21*	*21*
	Total	*100*	*100*
iii. **CASTE**			
Brahman		*30*	*30*
Kshatriya/Kayastha		*35*	*35*
Vaishya		*27*	*27*
No response		*8*	*8*
	Total	*100*	*100*
iv. **FAMILY TYPE**			
Joint		*42*	*42*
Nuclear		*55*	*55*
No response		*3*	*3*
	Total	*100*	*100*
v. **FAMILY BACK-GROUND**			
Rural		*31*	*31*
Urban		*53*	*53*
Sub-Urban		*14*	*14*
No response		*2*	*2*
	Total	*100*	*100*
vi. **FAMILY'S STAY IN CITY**			
upto 5 years		*5*	*5*
5—10 years		*8*	*8*
More than 10 years		*84*	*84*
No response		*3*	*3*
	Total	*100*	*100*
vii. **CULTURAL BACK-GROUND**			
Traditional		*11*	*11*
Modern		*7*	*7*
Midway		*77*	*77*
No response		*5*	*5*
	Total	*100*	*100*

VARIABLES	No.	%
vii. **MARITAL STATUS**		
Unmarried	*9*	*9*
Married	*91*	*91*
Total	*100*	*100*
ix. **OWNING PROPERTY**		
Nowhere	*27*	*27*
In the ancestral village	*38*	*38*
In a city	*35*	*35*
Total	*100*	*100*

Major Concepts Defined : The two major concepts occuring in this study are religion and the middle class. Bonquet shows that religion is originally a latin word. In English it is "derived from the Latin rel (1) igio which itself is derived from either the root leg, which means 'together count or observe', or from the root lig-which means 'to bind'. In the former sense the implication is belief in, and observation of, signs of Divine Communication. In the latter sense the implication is the performance of necessary actions which may bind together man and the super natural powers that be."[1]

Religion has been regarded as 'the human response to the apprehension of something, or power, which is super—natural and superasensory. It is the expression of the manner, and type, of adjustment affected by a people with their conception of the supernatural."[2]

It is in this above sense that the term has been used in this study.

The second major concept is 'middle class'.

"The first known mention of the term 'middle class' is given, by the Oxford English Dictionary, as appearing in 1812. Before that time contemporary observers were more likely to see society as beeing composed of two different groups—the

1. Majumdar D.N. & Madan, T.N. '*Introduction to Social Anthropology*, pp. 151—52.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

gentlemen and the non-gentlemen, with various ranks and orders within each of these two main groups."[1]

In the present study the teachers as a class have been taken as belonging to middle class because they have themselves mentioned to be belonging to it. This has been supported by Raynor's classification.[2]

Problems and bottlenecks of Field work : People connected with research projects like to share their unique and sometimes already experienced tales with others. This tradition is continuous. In 1955 William Whyte "explained in detail how he did his work in Cornerville. He told the personal, subjective story of his experiences as a researcher. He thought his story would be useful for young social scientists because 'generally the published report gives little attention to the actual process whereby research was carried out."[3]

Such experiences related in details were not available in large numbers. Hammond grumbled that "There were almost no chronicles of social research'[4] even in 1964. It was inspite of such descriptions of Alvin Gouldner, Edward Shils and C. Wright Mills.

The major factors that distract young social scientists to go to field are lack of financial support from any agencies. Academic preoccupations, if any, (because research usually in Indian conditions is though very much demanded at the time of recruitment yet suitable circumstances are provided neither by the educational institutions which impose very heavy teaching load on youngesters nor are there such private agencies that would finance such proposals) and several other handicapps like lack of skill and incentive. In the presence of such gigantic

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1. Raynor, John, '*The Middleclass*', p. 3.

2. *Ibid*, Table—2 Occupational groups—Profesiona group 1. b., p. 28.

3. Whyte W.F., '*Street Corner Society*' (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1955) p. 279. Append to second edi.

4. Hammod P.E. '*Sociologists at Work*' (New York, Basic Books 1964) p. 2. See p. I4, Foot note 4, for references to Gouldner, Mills and Shils.

problems the young researcher normally has no option but to selve research for good.

There are no doubt certain bodies like U.G.C., I.C.S.S.R., N.C.E.R.T. and some others who may provide some financial assistance but to achieve them also is a cumbersome task. It is therefore left with the individual researcher to satisfy the personal hobby of research by himself. Everett Hughes remarks at the 1970 meeting of the American Sociological Association in Washington would prove a great inspiration for such researehers. He remarked "A man with an idea, some ingenuity and hard work, can do much himself."[1]

Now the things are better as the U.G.C. provides sufficient fellowships meant for faculty improvement programmes. This enables young entrents in the profession to utilize the assistance and also to improve their academic and professional qualifications. There are funds available with the Universities for small projects by individual teachers but these are also the victim of the same situations which occur in case of other funds. Whatever the things when a person goes to the field he/she experiences.

Fichter is quite correct when he remarks "Every one has a story to tell about himself, and when a sociologist is almost a compulsive writer.....he feels that the story is wroth telling. The fact that the story is personal makes it unique, but no set of reminiscences is so exclusively personal that others can not find parallels in their own experiences. Probably every sociological research project is singular, not only because of the researcher but also because no social situation to be investigated is exactly like any other. Never the less, there have to be analogies and similarities, otherwise there could be no academic discipline that goes by the name of research methodology."[2]

Very much like other field experiences the present one was also a combination of delites and discouragements. It was hoped that as the field and the respondents were already acquainted the data would be obtained without much difficulty.

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1. Everett Hughes '*French Canada in transition*' (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973).

2. Fiehter, Joseph. H., '*One-Man Research*'. Reminiscences of Catholic Sociologist. A Wiley-Inter Science Publication pp. 2—3.

But it proved otherwise. The previous acquaintance with the field was one of the significant factors why interview was avoided as a tool. Had it been adopted it would have proved both time consuming and infructuous. Since all the respondents are highly educated people, questionnaire was used but for the purpose of collection, it virtually became a schedule.

The respondents at the time of receiving the questionnaire always insisted on it being collected personally. It was only in very few cases that the completed questionnaire could be obtained at appointed time. Two to three visits for one questionnaire was the usual pattern. Rather the delayed recovery was directly proportionate to intimacy in majority of cases.

Professional status was also related to the keenness of cooperation. The professional elites (Professors) in the University were least keen to fill the questionnaire. In fact majority of them did not fill it in. Initially the social sciences people were supposed to be more cooperative but they proved to be less. One or two cases of extreme apathy deserve mention here. Whereas one gentleman claimed to know the true research and displayed his distrust in the opinion surveys of the present type 'the otherone' thought it 'below his dignity to respond to such questionnaires. He did not like to be a respondent.'

The length of the questionnaire generally proved prohibitive. Normally they appreciated the questionnaire but quipped 'it is rather long', though it was also appreciated that on such a vast topic a smaller questionnaire would not have sufficed.

Generally the respondents did not want to complete open ended questions. There are hardly few cases believing in good and evil omen who have enumerated ten of them.

The researcher also has some experience of working among uneducated masses. In his opinion the uneducated masses are more responsive. Once the researcher has established rapport with them they cooperate whole heartedly as a group while this spirit is largely absent among the educated lot.

2
Religious Beliefs

Mans life is full of uncertainties. These surrounding uncertainties of life have made man a philosopher. He thinks and analyses. He tries to find out why's, what's, when's How's, Where's, about all the things that affect him. Though with knowledge he is able to understand and predict some of the things still a very large body of happenings remain to be explained. These mystries and ignorances of life compel man to visualize a force beyond him, which is over and above him, and is controlling from behind the entire cosmos.

The etymological meaning of God suggests that each alphabet is meaningful in its place. In the word GOD, the letter G stands for generator, O for operator, and D for destroyer. The total meaning of GOD therefore is the force, the power that combines in itself the capacity to generate the world, to operate it, and to destroy it. All in one.

(*a*) *Existence of Good :* God is thus a powerful entity. A question was asked to the respondents if they believed in God. Their responses are given below.

Table No. 3

BELIEF IN GOD

BELIEVE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*82*	*82.00*
No	*11*	*11.00*
Cantsay	*7*	*7.00*
Total	*100*	*100.00*

It is evident from the table that we can classify our respondents as theists (believers in God) in a very large majority (82.00%). A small number is atheist (11.00%) and negligible is the number (7.00%) of agnostics.

(*b*) *Shape of God :* Once the existence of God is believed to be there other significant problems emerge. There has always been a controversy over the shape of God. Man is always keen to recognize God. The recognition can not be done unless the shape is determined. This raises the controvercy of 'Sakar' and 'Nirakar' Brahma. It also leads to the problem of 'Sagun' or 'Nirgun' Brahma. After all if God is there He should have some form. The diversity of opinion is so great that the thinker has to cry 'Neti' 'Neti'—It is not this, It is not this.

The opinion of our respondents on the issue of God's form is classified below ;

Table No. 4

GOD HAS A FORM

FORM EXISTS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*13*	*13.98*
No	*40*	*43.01*
Cantsay	*40*	*43.01*
Total	*93*	*100.00*

NOTE : 7 respondents did not reply.

It is apparent that there is sufficient difference of opinion on the issue of God's shape. Whereas a very small number of (13.98%) people believe that God has a form the non-believers and those with indefinite ideas on the issue are in equal strength (43.01%) and are in large number.

(*c*) *Gods' omnipresence and dwelling :* It is believed that God is omnipresent, omnicient, and ominipotent. Obviously when God is above man—rather He is supposed to be superman—the inferior man's mind is keen to find out the whereabouts of the superman. Since He is all powerful, His ways are impossible for man to follow. The same is true about His dwelling. Believers usually are heard telling that God is beyond everyone. He is everywhere and is in know of every-

thing we do. In the light of above a question was asked if God was everywhere ? The respondents responses are given below :

Table No. 5

GODS DWELLING

EVERYWHERE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*79*	*81.44*
No	*5*	*5.15*
Cantsay	*13*	*13.41*
Total	*97*	*100.00*

NOTE : 3 respondents did not reply.

It is obvious that a great majority (81.44%) believes in God's being everywhere. Only 13.41% so far have not made up their opinion on the issue. Those who are definitely opposed to the proposition are meagre (5.15%). They can safely be overlooked.

Abodes of God as generally believed are Heaven, Temples and idoles. Though they are all included in the statement that God lives everywhere. All the three specific dwellings very much form a part of everywhere. It appears form the available data that after expressing their views on Gods dwelling in the earlier question the respondants were not enthusiastic in responding the question regarding His secondary dwellings. However, a question was asked about the opinion of the respondents if they believed God living in Heaven, temples and Idoles. The responses are given below.

Table No. 6

GOD'S ABODE

ABODE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
a. **HEAVEN**		
Yes	9	*13.05*
No	*31*	*44.92*
Cantsay	*29*	*42.03*
Total	*69*	*100*
b. **TEMPLE**		
Yes	*5*	*8.33*

ABODE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
No	*34*	*56.67*
Cantsay	*21*	*35.00*
Total	*60*	*60*
c. **IDOLS**		
Yes	*6*	*9.84*
No	*35*	*57.38*
Cantsay	*20*	*32.78*
Total	*61*	*61*

The respondents replying the question on God's abode ranged from 60 to 69 only. About the question on Heaven 69 replied. Though not in large number yet the maximum number of respondents feel God living in Heaven (13.05%). In temples and idols as Gods dwelling only 8.33% and 9.84% respondents believe.

Similarly those certainly not believing in God living in Heaven and those not having definite ideas on this issue are almost the same in large number (44.92% and 42.03% respectively).

People not having faith in God's living in temples and idols are in majority. They are 56.67% and 57.38% respectively.

(*d*) *Realisers of God :* In the field of religion as in other fields various types of claims are made by people. There are several persons who claim to have seen or realised God. Such realisers naturally build an image of their own, and the simple devoted folk, swayed by the idea of these realisers having attained the ultimate goal, are prone to be exploited by them in several ways. It is with this idea to know if the respondents had faith in some peoples having seen or realised God, that the question was asked. The response is classified below :

Table No. 7

SOME PEOPLE HAVE REALISED GOD

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*24*	*25.81*
No	*44*	*47.31*
Cantsay	*25*	*26.88*
Total	*93*	*100.00*

NOTE : 7 persons did not reply this question.

It is obvious that respondents in large numbers (47.31%) believe that people might have realised Him is not possible. Those believing (25.81%) that this might be possible and others not sure if at all this can happen (26.88%) are almost in equal strength. As such it is obvious that the respondents do not believe in realisation having taken place.

(*e*) *Idea of Heaven and Hell :* Sanctions are always there attached with human interactions. There is an object of reward and punishment. If the behaviour falls within the accepted norms, it is rewarded. Mostly the reward is in the form of social praise and acceptance. The image that a person is gentle, just, good-fellow itself is a consolation for behaving according to accepted norms of the society. Likewise in the domain of religion it is believed that those who follow the religiously approved norms are ultimately favoured by going to heaven. The evil doers go to hell. The twin concepts of heaven and hell therefore, are the believed rewards and punishment for the behaviour of Hindu (Swarga and Narak). A question was asked from the respondents if they believed in the existence of heaven and hell. The responses are given below :

Table No. 8

HEAVEN AND HELL ARE THERE

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*21*	*22.58*
No	*49*	*52.68*
Cantsay	*23*	*24.74*
Total	*93*	*100.00*

NOTE : 7 respondents did not reply this question.

It is apparent that (52.68%) majority of the respondents did not believe in the existence of the heaven or hell. A small minority (22.58%) believed in their existence and even more than the believers (though not very significantly more 24.74%) are not able to give their definite opinion on the issue.

(*f*) *Belief in Soul :* Hindu sages and seers have given sufficient thought to this life and beyond it. They largely believe in the continuity of life. The present body for them is an illusion (Maya). It transforms and changes its form. The real content or soul or Atman remains the same but the body is changed after it is rotten either by age or misuse. Once the form is so changed the soul enters a new body according to its

previous performance. The most holy books of Hindus speak of soul or Atman. A question therefore, was asked about the belief of the respondents in soul. The Table will reflect the belief of teachers in soul.

Table No. 9

BELIEF IN SOUL

BELIEVERS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*69*	*71.98*
No	*17*	*17.70*
Cantsay	*10*	*10.42*
Total	*96*	*100*

NOTE : 4 respondents did not reply.

The table tells that majority (71.88%) of respondents have faith in soul. Only a small minority (17.7%0) does not believe in it and those unsettled in views (10.42%) are still smaller in number.

(g) *Belief in Rebirth and Karma :* Very much allied with the concept of soul are the concepts of rebirth and Karma. The soul never dies. It transforms itself from one body to another. But what is the basis of allocation of the body ? Is the soul free to enter any body found free ? Are there clashes between souls to enter any specific body ? Can there be several souls claiming a specific body ? There can be many more problems of this nature. The concepts of Karma and rebirth solve the riddle. The concept of Karma puts forward that a man is the master of his own destiny. A person is born again and again. The body assigned to him is according to his Karma in his previous life. Karma and rebirth stand for (deeds or actions and Punerjanma). A question has been asked on this issue.

Table No. 10

BELIEF IN REBIRTH AND KARMA

BELIEF IN KARMA AND REBIRTH	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*64*	*66.65*
No	*19*	*19.19*
Cantsay	*16*	*16.16*
Total	*99*	*100.00*

NOTE : One respondent did not reply.

The table indicates that majority of respondents (66.65%) believe in the theories of Karma and rebirth. A small minority (19.19%) does not believe in it while still smaller number of people (16.16%) are in a fix to answer the question.

(*h*) *The Yonies :* A pertinant question naturally emerges about the scope of transmigration of soul. The soul enters some body. But what are those bodies ? The answer to this question is simple. According to Hindu faith there are 84,00,000 Yonies or Species. The soul can enter any other body. These Yonies in fact are the variety of life available on earth according to Hindu faith. A question was asked about it.

Table No. 11

BEIIEF IN YONIES

BELIEVE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*18*	*18.56*
No	*48*	*49.48*
Cantsay	*31*	*31.96*
Total	*97*	*100.00*

NOTE : 3 respondents did not reply.

The respondents have expressed their disbelief in the Yonies. About half of them (49.48%) have categorically denied having any faith in 84,00,000 Yonies. Only a small minority (18.56%) believes that it is there. More than the believers are those (31.25%) who do not possess firm ideas on the question.

(*i*) *The Ghosts and Angels :* The dichotomy of good and bad, weak and strong, poor and rich, dull and the intelligent has always pervaded our lives. Similar things exist in the domain of religious beliefs also. Though the belief in souls is there but we have among Hindus the good souls and evil souls. Just as we have them among tribals in the name of evil and good Mana. It is a general belief again that people dying unnatural deaths or unsatisfied souls due to one or other reason become bad souls. They are the ghosts. We have angels also. They are the satisfied souls. In stories for the children we always have some angel character, who appears to help and support the hero or the heroin, who is a good person. Hence, questions regarding ghosts and angels were asked. The responses are recorded below :

Table No. 12

BELIEF IN GHOSTS AND ANGELS

BELIEF	Ghosts NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%	Angels NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*12*	*12.38*	*12*	*12.63*
No	*64*	*65.98*	*64*	*67.37*
Cantsay	*21*	*21.64*	*19*	*20.00*
Total	*97*	*100.00*	*95*	*100.00*

NOTE : *i.* 3 respondents did not reply the question on Ghosts.
ii. 5 respondentrs did not reply the question on Angels.

It is quite obvious that our respondents do not have faith either in Ghosts (65.98%) or in Angels (67.37%). They are emphatic in their faith. The mojority as evident from the table rejects them. Only a very thin minority (12.38% and 12.63%) believes that there are ghosts or angels.

The number of those who feel that it was difficult for them to commit on either side is rather larger to those who are definite believers. (21.64% and 20.00%).

(*j*) *Omen* : In the similar sequence of good and evil dichotomy is the faith in good and evil omen. Usually while at rest we analyse how the previous day or days had been ? Even in joke sometimes we say that if the day is started with pleasant things it is likely to be spent in pleasant manner. If it starts irritatingly, it is likely to be unpleasant throughout. The idea is that of the indicators of coming events. The popular English proverb goes thus 'coming events cast their shadows earlier'. The idea of good and evil omen generates here. There is an elaborate discussion on the issue in the body of the report (there is a separate chapter) still it would be proper to know the ideas on faith in good and evil omen. This belief is displayed below :

Table No. 13

BELIEF IN GOOD AND EVIL OMEN

BELIEF	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*29*	*30.52*
No	*48*	*50.60*
Cantsay	*19*	*19.48*
Total	*96*	*100.00*

NOTE : 4 respondents did not reply.

It is obvious that categorically (50.00%) half of the respondents do not believe in good and evil omen but (30.52%) quite a large number, though in minority, do believe in them. About one fifth (19.45%) do not have definite ideas over this subject.

(*k*) *Incarnations :* Religion is believed to have propounded a theory of origin and propogation of this cosmos. The emergence of life on earth has very aptly been described by the religious sages and seers. Hindu incarnations or Avtaras present a historical explanation of emergence of man. There are believed to be ten incarnations. They are Matsya, Kachhap, Varah, Narsingh, Baman, Rama, Balram or Parsuram, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki (Kaliyuga).

A question was asked about the faith of our respondents in incrarnations. The responses are tabulated below :

Table No. 14

BELIEFE IN INCARNATIONS

RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*29*	*31.53*
No	*36*	*39.13*
Cantsay	*27*	*29.34*
Total	*92*	*100*

NOTE : 8 respondents did not reply.

It is quite obvious from the table that the respondents are divided in their belief in incarnations. The differences in the percentage of people giving different reactions are not much. Only about one third (31.53%) believe in incarnations. A little more than one third (39.13%) do not believe in them, whereas almost about one third (29.34%) are in a delima to answer definitely on this issue.

(*l*) *Purpose of Religion :* After asking questions purely on religious beliefs, some more of them were asked on problems related to religious social issues. The foremost question in this category was about the utility or purpose of religion. The purpose of religion would be ascertained by its significance for all. So the question posed was to know if the need of religion for all was equal. The response on this issue is recorded below :

Table No. 15

IS RELIGION ESSENTIAL FOR ALL

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*59*	*60.82*
No	*25*	*25.77*
Cantsay	*13*	*13.41*
Total	*97*	*100.00*

NOTE : 3 respondants did not reply.

It is apparent that majority of respondents feel that religion is essential for all (60.92%). One quarter of them deny this proposition (25.77%). Those who have not been able to give definite opinion are few (13.41%).

(*m*) *Religion and Morality :* In social life a significant problem often associated with religion is that of morality. Morality is the approved normative behaviour. There is always a controversy over the issue of associating religion with morality. Whereas in some people's opinion religion and morality go together others equally vehmently deny it. This issue in fact is related to the orientation of a person. The religious oriented feel that all good in society emerges from religion while those believing in social orientation (or with sociological approach) feel that morality is not at all positively correlated with religion. Whereas a religious man may be immoral or amoral, on the contrary a moral man may not necessarily be religious.

However, the opinion of our respondents is given below :

Table No. 16

RELIGION AND MORALITY GO TOGETHER

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*52*	*53.06*
No	*31*	*31.63*
Cantsay	*15*	*15.31*
Total	*98*	*100.00*

NOTE : 2 respondents did not reply.

It is apparent that whereas the majority (53.06%) of the respondents believe that religion and morality go together (or they have a positive correlation) about one third (31.63%) oppose this proposition. An insignificant (15.31%) group failed to give a definite reply.

(*n*) *Secularism :* Secularism is a rather new term that has entered the arena of controversy. This term is now freely used by sociologists and political scientists. Secularism now forms a significant role is determining the policy of the modern state. It is more so in a multi-religious state like India. Indian constitution also talks of secular policy for state. It is rather as a contrast to theocracy. This definition of secularism holds good for political scientists. But for the students of sociology secularism is a pattern of social behaviour or interaction in which religious differences of the interacting groups do not influence the process.

In order to know the reaction of the respondents towards secularism a question was asked. The responses are recorded thus :

Table No. 17

BELIEF IN SECURARISM

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*81*	*84.37*
No	*5*	*05.02*
Cantsay	*10*	*10.41*
Tot. l	*96*	*100.00*

NOTE : 4 respondents did not reply.

It is quite obvious that a great majority of our respondents (84.57%) believes in secularism. Those who do not believe are negligible (5.02%). Only about one tenth (10.41%) have not been able to give definite response.

(*o*) *Hinduism and Secularism :* Having known the opinion of our respondents on secularism, it was quite natural to feel keen to know how people react about Hinduism being secular. It is really interesting to note that the respondents opinion on Hinduism being secular are quite revealing. They opine like this.

Table No. 18

HINDUISM IS SECULAR

REACTION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*45*	*49.45*
No	*18*	*19.78*
Cantsay	*28*	*30.77*
Total	*91*	*100.00*

NOTE : 9 respondents did not reply.

Though a great majority (84.37%) believes in secularism yet only (49.45%) less than half the respondents feel that Hinduism is secular. About one fifth (19.78%) feel that it is not secular while about one third (30.77%) are not definite about the proposition. However, it is obvious that 'Hinduism is secular' is not acceptable to convincing majority.

(*p*) *Religious Change :* In nature, if something does not change, it is the nature of change to change. Otherwise change is the law of nature. Naturally, it could be anyone's anxiety to know if Hinduism has changed. It was asked of the respondents if they thought that Hinduism had undergone some changes. Their replies are tabulated below :

Table No. 19

HINDUISM HAS CHANGED

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*55*	*58.51*
No	*9*	*9.57*
Cantsay	*30*	*31.92*
Total	*94*	*100.00*

NOTE : 6 respondents did not reply.

It is obvious that majority of respondents (58 51%) feel that Hindusm has undergone some changes. About one third (31.92%) feel that it is difficult to say if there have been changes, but a small section of respondents (9.57%) are confident that no changes have occured therein.

The respondents were further asked to mention the changes that in their opinion have been undergone by Hinduism. A detailed description of their reaction is given below :

'Hinduism is always contemporary. The change is periodic.'

'It has become liberal in daily routine.'

'Dilution' and multiple interpretation of traditional views.'

'It has assimilated Aryan and Non-Aryan and even some muslim beliefs and practices.'

'It is not so traditional and characteristic anymore. It is old and has accordingly been influenced by all sorts of factors.'

'Liberalization.'

'Some of the ways of worshipping Gods are being changed.'

'After education gradually the old traditions, beliefs and religion is going for changes.'

'Untouchability.'

'It is not religion that changes but people have undergone dramatic change in post-war period. 20th century an age of anxiety, must have a definite impact on religion, since the people following religion are shakey in actions and faith.'

'Hinduism has come to include more and more beliefs in course of its development.'

'Decline in varnashram vyavastha and caste system secularization.'

'With industrialization and education in its followers it has developed relatively more power of assimilation.'

'It is not as rigid as it used to be. It is good.'

'Temples are open for all. Court marriages, cut short of death Kiriya. Dont stick to vedas and puranas etc.'

'It has become more and more accomodative.'

'Changes have been frequent but in various directions.'

'At present some saints are trying to analyse it scientifically suiting to modern age.'

'Social change in Hunduism are fast taking place.'

'It has started taking people back to the fold of Hinduism.'

'The correct form of Hinduism is Arya Samaj.'

'Politics and wordly selfishness has stabbed it.'

'It has constantly being transformed, for example the emergence of caste from trible and its being driven underground by Arya Samaj and others in 19th century.'

'The best in the religion has been forgotten and belief has been lost due to imposters. The real priests are a few and materialism especially during this developing age has set in making people indifferent towards Hinduism.'

'Modern science and technology have made people self centred and small. Speed has affected the erosion of

morals. People have lost faith in God and their Gurus and parents. Non-vegitarian diet is accepted by force of fashion.'

'Hindus have started mixing with other religious persons, exchange their views.'

'It has shunned orthodoxy to some extent.'

'Inter caste-marriage.'

'Started wearing different types of clothes etc.'

'Arya Samaj/Brahmo Samaj have given persons some rethinking which results into changes.'

'Has become a bit liberal and practical.'

'Patience, secularism, adjustment with other religious sentiments.'

'Hindus are not rigid now.'

'People now do not believe in so many rituals and are free to move in any caste.'

'Changes have been taking place since vedic period and they are still going on.'

'It is undergoing certain processes viz. rationalization, secularization, humanization.'

'So many sects.'

'Understanding of other religions.'

'General.'

'Its versatilities have unleased.'

'From orthodoxy to flexibility.'

It is obvious from the above reactions towards change that the respondents largely feel that Hinduism is moving ahead towards flexibility, greater accomodation, Secularization, liberalization and democratization. Its weaknesses are now being removed due to various external and internal factors.

(*q*) *Proposed Changes:* Changes may be seen in different perspective. There are changes that occure beyond human control. But there might be some changes that may be desired or even directed by those seeking them. Hinduism has undergone changes but many of them have occured not because anybody wanted them to have taken place in the fashion they have come up. Hence a question was aksed if the respondents wanted some changes in the practice of religion.

Table No. 20

SUGGEST CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*35*	*44.30*
No	*44*	*55.70*
Total	*79*	*100.00*

NOTE : 21 respondents did not reply.

It is apparent that those demanding changes in the practice of religion are out numbered by those who do not need them. Those who want changes are 44.30% while not requiring them are 55.70%.

It was of obvious interest to know as to what are the changes that the respondents suggest to happen in Hinduism. A detailed description of suggested changes is given below. These desired changes are given in the words of the respondents as far as possible. The most desired change is "the rationalization of traditional practical of old Hindu religion." The other thing is that 'one should know one's self, should do good and at least should not do bad'. Next to these 'abolition of dogmatism', 'elimination' of show off and exhibitionism', 'development of understanding and brotherhood among the people' and above all some of the respondents suggested that 'all religions should be blasted off, done away with, and go lock, stock and barrel.'

Some people suggested that there should be no rituals, and that 'religion may be left to individuals own will'. There was antagonism against idole worship also.

Apart from these. some suggested that 'real feelings should replace empty ceremonies.' They said, 'It should not be ritualistic and idealistic only. All philosophic principles should be tested in the field of life'.

Over and above these, other suggestions were that 'cleanliness of the body in holy places should be enforced', 'Scoundrels should keep their hands off the religion', 'Satan and religion created by him should be put an end to', 'Arya Samaj method to be adopted', 'regular congregation should be held and moral ways of leading life should be taught', 'No propaganda in the name of religion should be done', 'there should be only one

God at each temple. There is no need of having several gods at one temple. 'Polytheism for which Hinduism is known should be done away with'. 'Instead of going to temples we should concentrate on sending our soul to heaven. This can be done with practice and can be done anywhere and any time'. 'Traditional practice of offerings to God in any form should be abolished', 'No restrictions should be imposed in the field of religion', 'Religion was required to be based on righteous conduct and humanitarian outlook'. 'It was also desired that 'religious practices should be simplified and taught through early childhood', and also was required 'greater mixing with the people of other religions.'

3

Worshipping

Worshipping is as universal as religion itself. In fact, it is the concrete expression of abstract religious ideas. It emanates from the concept of the supernatural. Once a supernatural, superhuman deity has been conceived of the effort then is to please the deity so that it does positive material and non-material good to the devotees. Even in case of the god's and goddesses' failure to procure some concrete benefit, they are to be worshipped at least to keep the evil forces away from the devotee.

(*a*) *Worshippers :* Our respondents are mostly worshippers (71.00%). The table below would indicate the variable-wise distribution of worshippers.

Table No. 21

WORSHIPPERS

VARIABLES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
AGE					
Upto 35 yrs.	*25*	*71.43*	*10*	*28.57*	*35*
35 to 45 yrs.	*30*	*63.83*	*17*	*36.17*	*47*
45 yrs. and above	*16*	*88.89*	*2*	*11.11*	*13*
SEX					
Male	*59*	*74.68*	*20*	*25.32*	*79*
Famale	*12*	*57.14*	*9*	*42.86*	*21*
CASTE					
Brahman	*20*	*66.67*	*10*	*33.33*	*30*
Kshatriyas	*27*	*77.14*	*8*	*22.86*	*35*
Vaishya	*19*	*70.37*	*8*	*29.63*	*27*
No reply	*5*	*62.50*	*3*	*37.50*	*8*

VARIABLE	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
FAMILY TYPE					
Joint	*50*	*71.43*	*12*	*28.57*	*42*
Nuclear	*38*	*69.09*	*17*	*30.91*	*55*
No reply	*3*	*100.00*	—	*Nil*	*3*
FAMILY BACKGROUND					
Rural	*21*	*67.74*	*10*	*32.26*	*31*
Urban	*37*	*69 81*	*16*	*30.19*	*53*
Suburban	*11*	*78.57*	*3*	*21.43*	*14*
No reply	*2*	*100.00*	—	—	*2*
Total	*71*	*71.00*	*29*	*29.00*	*100*

Looking at the variables it appears that age and worshipping are related. Though respondents of all ages worship yet those in the higher age group are worshippers in over whelming majority (88.89%).

An interesting result contrary to general belief is that males are worshippers in greater number (74.68%) as compared to females (57.14%).

According to caste kshatriyas worship in greater number (77.14%) as compared to others. Brahmans have the lowest number of worshippers (66.67%), though they are two third of the group.

Incidently the family type does not have any bearing on worshipping (Joint 71.43%) (Nuclear 69.09%).

Similarly the family background does not make a significant difference only in the cases of sub-urban people (78.57%) it is higher than other groups.

Thus it may be seen that age, sex, caste and family background affect the worhipping temperament.

(*b*) *The Deities :* When people worship, there are some objects and gods and godesses that are to be worshipped. There are two patterns of such deities. Some deities are accepted as family deities, while some people are always keen to adopt any God/Goddess. It may be anybody's observation that there are some traditionally recognised Gods/Godesses. In fact these are such deities who come to be recognised as family deities.

The table below speaks of our respondent's preference for deities.

Table No. 22

WHO IS WORSHIPPED

THE DEITY	NO.
The Family God/Godess	*17*
Your own God	*44*
No response	*10*
Total	*71*

To specify the Gods/Godesses worshipped it was specifically asked by giving twenty traditional and human Gods/Godesses as to whom did the respondent worship. In response to this question there were many who worshipped more than one God. The mundane habit of fashion pervades the domain of religion also. Sometimes when a new religious cult or Guru emerges people are crazy after him/her. But in due course the fever settles down. The table below entitled the Gods of worship indicates peoples preference of Gods.

Table No. 23

THE GODS OF WORSHIP

NAME OF THE GOD	NO.	NAME OF THE GOD	NO.
Shanker	*31*	*Sai Baba*	*2*
Ram	*24*	*Mahant Baba*	*2*
Krishna	*21*	*Bal Yogeshwar*	*1*
Hanuman	*21*	*Acharya Rajneesh*	*1*
Durga	*16*	*Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*	*1*
Saraswati	*14*	*Sheetla Mata*	*1*
Brahma	*8*	*Sachcha Baba*	*1*
Ganesh	*8*	*Nag Devta*	*1*
Kali	*5*	*Bhairon Baba*	*1*
Santoshi Ma	*3*	*Others*	*16*
Vashno Devi	*3*		

NOTE : One respondent declared that he could worship any and all objects that are being worshipped by any one.

In response to this question there are several respondents who have both family God/Godess and their own ones.

It is obvious from the table that people still have preference for traditional Gods. The most favoured Gods/Godesses are traditional Shanker, Ram, Krishna, Hanuman,

Durga and Saraswati. The followers of others in the sample are almost insignificant.

(*c*) *Nature Worship :* Apart from the popular Gods and Godesses nature provided a great many objects of worship to man. Naturism is not only a Hindu trait, among tribals naturism is a cherished practice. It is natural as the objects of nature have always been important for human beings both for positive help as well as great obstacles that man started worshipping them.

The worshippers of other objects are given in the table below :

Table 24

WORSHIPPING OTHER OBJECTS

	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
No	*27*	*62*	*11*	*100*
%	*27*	*62*	*11*	*100*

It is obvious that the number of people worshipping ther objects is very meagre (only 27%). Naturally the curioosity arises about the objects that are worshipped. It is given in the table below :

Table No. 25

NATURE WORSHIP

NATURAL OBJECTS OF WORSHIP	NO. OF WORSHIPPERS
(*a*) **TREES & PLANTS**	
Banyan	*1*
Peepal	*7*
Neem	*1*
Tulsi	*14*
(*b*) **ANIMALS & BIRDS**	
Horse	*2*
Lion	*1*
Cow	*12*
Buffalo	*2*
Sheep	*1*
Parrot	*2*
Peacock	*1*
Snake	*3*

NATURAL OBJECTS OF WORSHIP	NO. OF WORSHIPPERS
(*c*) **RIVERS & PLANETS**	
Ganga	*27*
Yamuna	*8*
Gomti	*3*
Sun	*11*
Saturn	*2*

(*d*) *Other objects of Worship :* It can safely by read from the table that the most popular natural objects of worship are Peepal and Tulsi among trees and plants, the cow among the animals and Ganga among the rivers. Next to Ganga in the north is Yamuna and among the planets is the Sun.

(*e*) *Frequency of Worship :* After having known the objects of worship, it is significant to know the frequency of worship. We may divide worshippers into three categories. The regular daily worshipper, the casual worshipper worshipping only on festivities or such other ritualistic occasions and the purposive worshipper who worships only during the calamity or somebody's illness. What type of worshippers we have among our respondents is given in the table.

Table No. 26

OCCASION OF WORSHIP

OCCASION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Daily	*43*	*62.00%*
On festivities	*23*	*32.40%*
On ill ess	*6*	*5.60%*

One may recall that the total number of worshippers in the sample is 71. The majority of them 62% are daily worshippers. A little half that number (32.40%) worships only on festivities and only a negligible (5.60%) number treat worshipping as a purposive device, they worship only during somebody's illness. It appears that one of the worshippers worships at two occasions.

(*f*) *Place of Worship :* Emile Durkheim has classified human behaviour as sacred and profane. Worshipping is a sacred act. It has got to be performed with some sanctity. That is why a specific place is provided for this activity. But we find quite the contrary response in this matter from our respondents.

The table indicates the place of worship of the respondents.

Table No. 27

PLACE OF WORSHIP

PLACE	No.
Anywhere in the house	*42*
Specific place of worship in the house	*21*
Public temple	*15*
Total	*78*

The first two are the exclusive categories because only ew people possess a place of worship in the house and if a person has it, he is not likely to worship anywhere in the house. No doubt whether a person has a place of worship in his house or not he can go to a public temple. It is obvious that regular visitors to public temples are few.

(*g*) *Patterns of Worship :* People's ways of worshipping are very varied. It is difficult to classify them. Some of the popular ways are sitting in Padmasana before the idole or picture of God with closed eyes. Some people concentrate silently while others chant the mantras or 'Padas' from any sacred book. Only Arya Samajis do Havan in a group or alone as the case may be. The Sanatanis first clean the temple or bathe the idoles. 'Prasad', the remains of the offerings to God, are afterwards taken by the devotee and distributed to others.

(*h*) *Bathing :* Worshipping requires some preliminary preparations. Apart from the material needed for worshipping bodily purity is also emphasised at. Physical, bodily purity can be obtained through bathing, but our respondents are not able to give a clear verdict on this issue.

Table No. 28

SHOULD WORSHIP FOLLOW BATHING

RESPONSE	No.	%
Yes	*39*	*39*
No	*22*	*22*
Cant' say	*27*	*27*
No response	*12*	*12*
Total	*100*	*100*

Though the majority is of the opinion that worship should follow bathing, it is significant that those opposed to these views or not clearly expressing themselves are larger in number.

(*i*) *Individual v/s group Worship :* Worshipping is of two types. There is individual worship and collective or community worship. There is a prolonged controversy on the desirability of the either type. Whereas some say that individual worship is a good form and others opine contrary to it. The data speaks thus :

Table No. 29

INDIVIDUAL V/S GROUP WORSHIP

RESFONSE	WORSHIPPING SHOULD BE DONE ALONE		GROUP WORSHIP IS A BETTER FORM	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	*59*	*66.6*	*9*	*12.5*
No	*5*	*4.4*	*29*	*40.5*
Cant' say	*23*	*29.0*	*34*	*48.00*
Total	*87*	*100*	*72*	*100*

The responses in the above table indicate that the teachers in majority (66.6%) are of the opinion that worshipping should be done alone, while only negligible size of the sample (4.4%) have categorically denied to accept the proposition. Rather a sizable number (29.00%) displays a stage of confusion to commit. The respondents have clearly rejected the idea that group worship is a better form (12.5%). About more than three times of the supporters feel that it is not a better form and about four times are not in a position to commit on either side.

(*j*) *Katha/Kirtan :* With mostly popular gods there are several tales associated with their generiosity and concern for their devotees. Whenever these gods are worshipped the tales associated with the god in appropriate situation is told. There are tales of epics. There are tales of individual Gods also. Even when somebody keeps fast at the time of its completion, some relevant tale is being heard. Many a time a popular teller is surrounded by the devotees of a particular God who relates those stories with great passion and involvement.

A situation in which the devotees of a particular god/godess collect together to sing the glory and the hymns of that particular deity is known as Katha/Kirtan. Such Katha/Kirtan is also an important religious activity.

A question was asked whether the respondents organised Katha/Kirtan at their place. The responses are given in the table.

Table No. 30

ORGANISATION OF KATHA/KIRTAN

ACTIVITY/RESPONSE	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE
Organisation of Katha/Kirtan	*29*	*59*	*12*

The popular Kathas that are organised by people are Satyanarain's Katha/Durga Path, Srimad Bhagwat Katha, and Akhand Ramayan. A question was asked about their organisation. It is obvious from the above table that only 29 people are interested in organising such activities. The next table will indicate the specific Kathas organised.

Table No. 31

POPULAR KATHAS

NAME OF THE KATHA	NO. OF PEOPLE ORGANISING
Satyanarain Katha	*26*
Durga Path	*5*
Srimad Bhagwat Katha	*4*
Akhand Rarmayan	*6*
Others	*8*

It is always likely that a person who organises one Katha might organise the other one also when the need arises. The table shows that most popular Katha is Satyanarain's Katha. It is generally heard by the people on the full moon day (Pooranmasi). This also forms part of a religious rite like marriage. It is the easiest Katha as it does not involve much time and money also.

Durga Path is arranged at the time of Nav Ratri alone. Srimad Bhagawat Katha and Akhand Ramayan in volve much time and organisation. In Akhand Ramayan the whole epic is loudly read from A to Z. It is therefore usually for full one day.

(*k*) *Donations for Religious Activities :* Some of the religious activities are group activities and whenever they are

organised, donations from the people are raised. It is likely that the people may be keen to participate in religious activities, but when it comes to parting with some money, there are bound to be some reactions.

Table No. 32

REACTIONS ON CONTRIBUTING FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

REACTIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Pay happily	*43*	*43*
Pay only to get rid off	*34*	*34*
Do not pay at all	*17*	*17*
No response	*06*	*06*
Totat	*100*	*100*

It is apparent that though largest number of people pay happily for organising religious activities but those who pay only to get rid off or do not pay at all form the majority (34+17=51%). This shows that people are not prone to paying.

Hinduism is a vast religion. It embrasses several Panths and Samprayadas. The people who start smaller sects ultimately become Gurus. Presently Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Acharya Rajneesh, Sat Sai Baba and many more such religious personalities are on the religious screen in order to give currency to their thinking and way of life. Kabir and Gorakh Panthis and Saivities and Vaishnavites are the popular panths and sampradayas of the people.

Table No. 33

THE DISCIPLEHOOD

THE DISCIPLEHOOD	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Religious Guru	*7*
Panth	*4*
Sampradaya	*2*

4

Religious Knowledge

Religious knowledge is imparted imperceptively with socialization process during the childhood. Later on if the interest persists, or if the family orienation is religious, and the people are fond of discussing religion and keeping religious books, the interest of the young may remain alive. If this interest continues the mythological information, based on heresay, is confirmed and corrected through reading of the religious literature.

(*a*) *Sources of Religious Knowledge* : The sources of religious knowledge were enquired into. They are given in the table.

Table No. 34

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

SOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Listening religious stories and discourses	*14*
Reading	*75*

Since our respondents are teachers, reading has been given as the basis of religious knowledge. In several cases both listening to religious stories and discourses and reading have been the sources.

There are three possible agents of dissiminating religious information through the medium of story telling. One of the most important of such agents is the old generation. In fact in big or joint families the old people are a great source of such knowledge. Children are always fond of listening to stories. The old and infirm, who are usually not very fit to undertake strainuous physical exertion, do baby sitting to engage the children. Normally the old find a great source of relaxation and purposive involvement in reading religious literature and

engaging in ritualistic, religious pursuits like worshipping etc. The children find it a great source of excitement and are tempted to observe the final finish of the Pooja as it always brings them something delicious to eat in the form of 'Prasad'. Thus the children stick to the old and listen these stories. The table provides the response about the source of legend tellers.

Table No. 35

THE LEGEND TELLERS

SOURCES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Old persons in the family	*32*	*44.80*
Religious priests visiting the family	*14*	*20.00*
Religious Platforms	*25*	*35.20*
Total	*71*	*100.00*

It is apparent from the table that the majority of people's sources of legendery and mythological information are the people of older generation in the family (44.80%). Next to this source are the religious platfroms wherefrom oceassionally the preachers provide rich legendery infromation (35.20%). The third possibility, the visits of religious priests in the family, is obviously a complicated affair. Priests visit only those families which like to invite them. It involves financial resources also. This is why those getting information through this source are only 20% of the whole lot.

(*b*) *Membership of Religious Organisations* : Another important source of religious knowledge is the association of the people with religious organizations. It appears that our respondents are not very enthusiastic to accept the membership of such associations.

Table No. 36

MEMBERSHIP OF RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Arya Samaj	*3*
Sanatan Dharm Sabha	*3*
Ram Krishna Society	*1*
Theosophical Society	—
Any other	*3*
Total	*10*

These 10 people who are the members of various organisations attend the meetings of their respective societies as and when they are organised.

Table No. 37

ATTENDING THE ORGANISATIONAL MEETINGS

MEETINGS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Weekly meetings	*3*
Annual conventions	*5*
Both	*2*
Total	*10*

It is apparent that people are more keen to attend the annual conventions than the usual weekly meetings.

(*c*) *The Religious Literature* : Hindus have a rich treasure of religious literature. The earlier form of literature was in the form of 'Shruti'—The information that is transmitted through listening. In due course of time all the religious literature that was communicated through recitation and listening was ultimately converted into books. It is all available now in print. All literature can be obtained from the market. Enough commentaries have also been produced. Researches have been done both by Indians and foreign scholars.

It was asked of the respondents as to how much of the literature they had read.

Table No. 38

READING OF THE LITERATURE

THE TEXTS	NO. OF READERS
Vedas	*18*
Puranas	*10*
Upainshads	*18*
Epics (a) Ramayana	*76*
(b) Mahabhbrata	*48*
Geeta	*66*
Smirities	*10*

The table indicates that most popular scriptures to be read are the epics—the Ramayana, Geeta and the Mahabharata. Ramayana is popular for the simple reason that it is something

more than a religious book. Particularly in traditional joint families it has a place in the temple rather than in the book-selves. The old people-men and women-particularly widow women revere the book as a God.

Mahabharata apart from being associated with Krishna has its abridged form in Geeta. It is believed that Geeta is the essense of what Krishna told to Arjuna during the Mahabharata battle. This book is a book of wisdom and worship and is also revered like Ramayana. Mahabharata is the full life portrait of a royal family battle.

Next in popularity as scripture reading are Vedas and Upanishads. Vedas are four in number. They are Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Atharvaveda. The least read are Puranas and Smritis. Except Epics and Geeta the other religious literature Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and Smrities have rarely been studied in full. For sociologists, of Vedas, Rigveda is significant as it describes origins of several social institutions. Among the Smrities Manu Smriti is quite popular as Manu is known as the ancient law giver.

(*d*) *Form of Scripture Read* : Most of religious literature is originally in Sanskrit. These days due to decay in number of Sanskrit knowing people and also the facilities for translation existing in several languages, it is significant to know if the respondent has read the scripture in original or in translation.

Table No. 39

THE FORM OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

FORM	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Original	*39*
Translation	*41*

It is really surprising to note that there is almost no difference in number of people having read the literature in original and translation. The number of readers in translation is little more for the simple reason that some of those who have read in original have not been able to resist the temptation of going through the translation only to quench the curiosity of seeing how far the spirit of original has been retained.

(*e*) *Repeated Reading of Scriptures* : Only negligible number has read the scriptures more than ones-except in the case of Ramayana which is a lyrical poetry and which one has to recite as a socio-religious duty if someone organizes an Akhand Ramayan Path.

(*f*) *The Religious Journals* : Significant source of continuity and healthy interpretation of religious literature are several religious journals published from various places. The most popular and established journal is Kalyan from Geeta Press, Gorakhpur. Let us see what religious journals do our respondents subscribe.

Table No. 40

SUBSCRIBING RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

NAME OF THE JOURNAL	NO OF SUBSCRIBERS
Kalyan	*11*
Any other	*3*

Kalyan is the only journal that is usually subscribed by such readers. Other journals belong to specific sects to which the respondents belong.

5
Pilgrimage

Be it any religion if some significant incidents concerning the key persons of the religion have happened anywhere the place assumes significance for the followers. Be it Mecca or Medina, Jerusulam or Lumbini, Punja Saheb or Patna Saheb, Ayodya or Gokul they are the aspirations of any devotee to visit. Hindus have great many centres of religious significance where people from across the country go on auspecious occasions of family importance.

Hinduism in India is not only the religion of the largest majority but it is distributed almost uniformally throughout the country. The four great centres and seats of Hindu authority are established in the four directions. Badri Nath in North, Rameshwaram in South, Puri in East and Dwarka in the West have the pious distinction of having four Peeths of Sankeracharyas. Though the three Sankaracharyas are little known otherwise the Sankaracharya of Puri has been making significant political debuts.

Visiting the religious places of pilgrimage is an attainment. The devotees feel that it is due to the good Karmas (good deeds) of a person in previous and present life that one is able to accomplish pilgrimage.

Table No. 41

Variables	No of Respondents						
	Total	Yes	%	No	%	No Response	%
AGE							
0 to 35	*35*	*16*	*45.73*	*18*	*51.42*	*1*	*2.85*
35 to 45	*47*	*30*	*63.82*	*16*	*34.04*	*1*	*2.14*
45 & above	*18*	*12*	*66.67*	*5*	*27.78*	*1*	*5.55*

VARIABLES	TOTAL	YES	%	NO	%	NO RESPONSE	%
SEX							
Male	*79*	*52*	*65.82*	*26*	*32.91*	*1*	*1.27*
Female	*21*	*6*	*28.57*	*13*	*61.90*	*2*	*9.53*
CASTE							
Brahman	*30*	*19*	*63.33*	*9*	*30.00*	*2*	*6.67*
Kshatriya	*35*	*21*	*60 00*	*13*	*37.14*	*1*	*2.86*
Vaisya	*27*	*13*	*48.15*	*14*	*51.85*	*Nil*	*Nil*
No response	*8*	*5*	*62.50*	*3*	*37.50*	*Nil*	*Nil*
FAMILY TYPE							
Joint	*42*	*27*	*64.29*	*14*	*33.33*	*1*	*2.38*
Nuclear	*55*	*30*	*54.55*	*23*	*41.82*	*2*	*2.63*
No response	*3*	*01*	*33 33*	*2*	*66.67*	*Nil*	*Nil*
FAMILY BACKGROUND							
Rural	*31*	*23*	*74.19*	*7*	*22.58*	*1*	*3.23*
Urban	*53*	*24*	*45.28*	*27*	*50.94*	*2*	*3.78*
Suburban	*14*	*10*	*71.43*	*4*	*28.57*	*Nil*	*Nil*
No response	*2*	*01*	*50.00*	*1*	*50.00*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Total	*100*	*58*	*58.00*	*39*	*39.00*	*3*	*3.00*

It is obvious from the table that majority of Hindus have been on pilgrimage to one or the other place (58%) (39%) have not gone on it while (3%) did not reply to this question. Several respondents have not cared to see the purpose that though they visited the places but it was not with the purpose of pilgrimage but for some social, educational or some other errend.

Looking at the variable wise distribution of the pilgrims the table reveals certain interesting facts.

There is a positive correlation with age and visit to places of pilgrimage. With rise in age percentage of people visiting them also rises. Whereas less than half (45.71%) of the 0–35 years age group has visited these places those in the age group of 45 years and above are in comfortable majority (66.67%).

Sex is also an important factor is pilgrimage. Majority of men have visited them (65.82%), whereas the women with an opportunity to go are very few (28.57%).

Caste too has its role to play. The status of caste in structural hierarchy is directly associated with visits pilgrimage. Maximum number of Brahmans having gone (63.33%) followed by Kshatriyas (60.00%). Only less than half (48.15%) Vaishyas having visited them.

Type of family has its impact on pilgrimage. Joint families prefer it more (64.29%) than the nuclear families (54 55%).

Family background also influences pilgrimage. Rural and sub-urban people go for pilgrimage more (74.19% and 71.43% respectively) than the urban lot (45.28%).

Thus pilgrimage is affected by all social factors-age, sex, caste, family type and family background.

The places that the respondents have visited as pilgrims are obtained in the following table :

Table No. 42

PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE

PLACES	NO. OF VISITORS
Vaishnavo Devi	
Badri Nath	*15*
Rishikesh	*66*
Hardwar	*76*
Ayodhya	*27*
Prayag	*46*
Puri	*13*
Rameshwaram	*16*
Mathura, Brindaban, Gokul, Barsana	*57*
Varanasi	*53*
Others	*14*

There are several people who have visited more than one place. A careful observation of these places would reveal that since the place of study is Meerut, the places nearer Meerut and in plains where transportation is comfortable have been visited and frequented mostly by all, be they pilgrims or ordinary tourists with shere interests of sight seeing.

Largest number of people have visited Hardwar followed by Rishikesh (76, 66) respectively. It is followed by Mathura,

Brindaban, Gokul, Barsana (57) and Varanasi (53). Then comes Prayag (46) followed by Ayodhya (27). Since Rameshwaram and Puri are at the Southern and Eastern corners of the country only few people (16) and (13) have visited them. Vaishnava Devi (9) and Badri Nath (15) are difficult and uncomfortable places as far as travelling is concerned.

Two more factors need being kept in mind. Hardwar and Rishikesh are at 3.00 to 3.30 hours motoring distance from Meerut. The two places apart from being of religious significance possess immence scenic beauty. Rishikesh has a panoramic beauty. The silence of the foothills with the calm of Ganga makes it a place for solitude. It is simply enjoyable. The Board of High School and Intermediate education and the High Court make Allahabad (Prayag) accessable to most of the teachers.

(g) *The Company of Pilgrimage :* People go on pilgrimage in three possible ways. They may go on there own all alone, they might accompany either someone in the family like old parents or grand-parents or some such other relation, or this too can be a possibility that when other members of the family are going it may become almost a compulsion. The third possible opportunity these days is provided by organisers of pilgrimage parties. Some transporters have made it a business to announce pilgrimage tours every year. These conducted tours by private and public agencies provide an easy way for devotees to utilize the opportunity. The table below tells about the way our respondents went on pilgrimage.

Table No. 43

COMPANY ON PILGRIMAGE

COMPANY	No.
Went on own	*41*
With Family members	*46*
With Pilgrimage party	*6*

Above three categories are not exclusive because this is likely that some one might have accompanied a pilgrimage party along with his family members. However, it is apparent that the maximum number of people went on pilgrimage with their own family. Quite close to them in numbers went on

their own. People do not prefer going with a pilgrimage party. In fact pilgrimage is something more than attaining a religious virtue or seeing a new place. Even if it so for some, others treat it as an opportunity of relaxation as it provides a change from the routine of life. As such they want to enjoy this change in the best possible manner which would be there either with ones own people or all alone.

A question was also asked about the duration of the stay which was in almost ninety per cent cases not beyond two days (It was mostly one day alone). In cases where anybody intimately acquainted was available at these places the stay could be of about a week.

Kumbha : Bathing in pious rivers as Ganga or Yamuna on auspicious days like Purnima (full moon day), Baisakhi, or occasions like solar or lunar eclipse are equivalent to pilgrimage or any other significant achievement. Bathing on Kumbha days is believed to be a religious exaltation.

Kumbha Ashnan falls usually after every twelve years. The Kumbha that has fallen this year is supposed to have occured after one hundred forty four years. One cannot imagine having performed a greater religious duty than having bathed himself at Triveni (a place in Prayag where three rivers Ganga, Yamuna (visible) and Saraswati (invisible) meet).

A question was asked about who had the distinction of bathing in Kumbha. The responses are given below :

Table 44

KUMBHA ASHNAN

BATHING AT THE TIME OF KUMBHA	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*11*	*11*
No	*89*	*89*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is obvious that very few persons had the distinction of bathing during Kumbha.

6

Festivities

Like important places important dates related with the lives and deeds of the religious priests or other personalities make festivals. The X-mas or Easter, the Buddha Jayanti or Mahabir Jayanti, the Id, Muharram or Chehallum, Guru Nanak or Guru Govind Singh's birthday all are similar instances of festivals. In the life of a nation also significant dates make national festivals. In India we have Independence day on 15th of August and Republic day on 26th of January.

Hinduism is a polytheistic religion. It has various sects and sampradayas, various Avtaras (incarnations) which number ten, while if all is taken into account, it may be 84,00,000 which is the number of species as believed by Hindus. Major Hindu festivals belong to major groups that are four in number, for instance Raksha Bandhan is a Brahman festival, Dusehra, a Kshatriya festival, Deepawali, a Vaishya festival and Holi is believed to be a Shudra festival. Ram Navami is the date of birth of Rama while Krishna was born on Janmastmi. However, whatever be the rationale of a festival, Hindus have maximum number of them, and they celebrate them enthusiastically.

(*a*) *The Festivals :* A question was asked about the festivals being celeberated.

Table No. 45

FESTIVALS

FESTIVALS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Deepawali	*95*
Holi	*95*

FESTIVALS	NO OF RESPONDENTS
Dusehra	*90*
Raksha Bandhan	*89*
Janmasthmi	*76*
Bhaidooj	*74*
Ram Naumi	*47*
Anant Chaturdeshi	*20*
Nag Panchami	*19*
Lohri	*13*
Others	*10*

It is obvious from the table that Holi and Deepawali are the festivals normally celebrated by the maximum number of Hindus (95). In fact these festivals involve the whole community. In Holi one may or may not wish but others would sprinkle coloured water or sometimes plain water or even other things without reservations. It is believed that since Prahlad, the son of Hirana Kashyap—a demon King worshipped God which was disliked by others, his aunt planned to kill him by putting him into fire but could not succeed. Rather she herself was consumed in the fire. The festival is celebrated as a symbol of end of evil. Holika the demon (Prahlad's aunt) symbolizes evil. Thus one is forcibly involved though it is an enjoyment in hilarity.

Similarly in Deepawali it is a worship of Goddess Luxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. In this festival there is the bursting of crackers and lightening is done. People get their houses whitewashed and cleaned. Next comes Dusehra which symbolises again the defeat of demon Ravana and victory of virtuous Rama. On this day great Mela (fair) is organised. And during Dusehra for about ten days Ramayana is staged. It is celebrated by 90 people in the sample.

The story behind Rakshabandhan is that when in olden days, the saints used to finish their Yagya they used to tie a thread (Raksha) around the wrist of Jajman. The purpose was the protection of the property of the vitruous from devilish. Krishna told Yudhistir that in Devasur-Battle when Indra and other Gods were fed up with the attacks of Asuras (demons) the wife of Indra engaged herself in a Yagya which was completed on Sravan Poornima. After the completion

of the Yagya the wife of Indra had the thread around Indra's wrist reciting the Mantra.[1]

येन बद्धो बली राजा दानवेन्द्रो महाबलः ।
तेन त्वां प्रतिबन्धामि रक्षेमाचाल माचल ॥

89 celebrate Rakshabandan.

Next to Rakshabandhan comes Janmasthami. Janmasthami is the day when Krishna was born. It is celebrated with a full day fast which is broken at 12.00 midnight as Krishna was born at that time. It is believed that the birth of Krishna symbolizes the end of exploitation of virtuous people by devilish Kansa, his own maternal uncle. In our study 76 respondents celebrate it.

Bhai Dooj is celebrated immediately after Deepawali. This festival symbolizes the love of brother and sister. This festival purports to pray for long life and continuance of pious brotherly-sisterly love. On this very day Kayasthas worship Chitra Gupta Maharaj who is supposed to be their initiator. The Bhai Dooj is celebrated by 74.

Ram Navmi which is the birth day of Rama is celebrated by 47.

Anant Chaturdashi (20), Nagpunchami (19) and Lohri (13) are celebrated by smaller number of people. Lohri in fact is a Punjabi festival. Among other festivals are Shivaratri, Karva Chautha etc.

(*b*) *Reasons for Celebration of Festivals :* When such a large number of people are involved in an activity it is natural to raise the curiosity to know from them the rationale of their involvement. The reasons for celebrating the festivals were asked. They are tabulated below :

Table No. 46

REASONS FOR CELEBRATING FESTIVALS

REASONS FOR CELEBRATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
For children	*41*
A religious duty	*40*
Celebrated by others	*27*
Insisted upon by other members of the family	*21*

1. Jankar Shastri (Sravan Poornima Adhyatam) Vol. 12, No. 7, Sravan 2023, Sri Sachcha Asram, Arail, Prayag.

It is obvious that for respondents it is not always one factor that prompts them to celebrate a festival. There are more than one purposes. One thing is apparent that for most of the people the festivities are celebrated for children (41) and are also a sacred religious duty (40). It is with these twin purposes that festivities are celebrated. The third reason is that since they are celebrated by others one has to celebrate them (27). In few cases (21) it is the insistence of other family members that compels respondents to celebrate festivals.

(*c*) *Worship on Festivities :* Since celebration is a sacred religious sentiment it was asked whether some sort of worshipping is also a part of festivals. It was asked as to how many people worshipped during festivities ?

The findings are given below :

Table No. 47

WORSHIPPERS ON FESTIVITIES

VARIABLES	TOTAL	YES	%	NO	%	NO REPLY	%
AGE							
Upto 35 yrs.	*35*	*7*	*20.00*	*24*	*68.57*	*4*	*11.43*
35-45 yrs.	*47*	*9*	*19.14*	*23*	*48.94*	*15*	*31.92*
45 above	*18*	*2*	*11.11*	*15*	*83.33*	*1*	*05.56*
SEX							
Male	*79*	*13*	*16.45*	*52*	*65.82*	*14*	*17.73*
Female	*21*	*5*	*23.81*	*10*	*47.62*	*6*	*28.57*
CASTE							
Brahman	*30*	*4*	*13.33*	*23*	*76.67*	*3*	*10.00*
Kshatriyas	*35*	*5*	*14.28*	*26*	*74.28*	*4*	*10.44*
Vaishya	*27*	*8*	*29.63*	*9*	*33.33*	*10*	*37.04*
No Reply	*8*	*1*	*12.50*	*4*	*50.00*	*3*	*37.50*
FAMILY TYPE							
Joint	*42*	*10*	*23.81*	*26*	*59.52*	*7*	*16.67*
Nuclear	*55*	*8*	*14.54*	*35*	*63.64*	*13*	*21.82*
No reply	*3*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*2*	*66.67*	*1*	*33.33*

VARIABLES	TOTAL	YES	%	NO	%	NO. REPLY	%
FAMILY BACKGROUND							
Rural	*31*	*3*	*9.68*	*23*	*74.19*	*5*	*16.13*
Urban	*53*	*9*	*16.98*	*32*	*60.33*	*12*	*22.64*
Suburban	*14*	*5*	*35.71*	*6*	*42.86*	*3*	*21.43*
No reply	*2*	*1*	*50.00*	*1*	*50.00*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Total	*100*	*18*	*18.00*	*62*	*62.00*	*20*	*20*

It is apparent from the table that very few respondents worship on festivities (18.00%). The majority does not worship (62.09%).

From among the meagre number that worships though the number does not exceed 20.00%, yet with rising age the number declines. It is thus inversally related.

Though males have been to pilgrimage more than women in case of worshipping on festivities women worship more than the males.

In case of caste also the relationship is inverse—*i.e.* higher the caste lower is the percentage of worshippers on festivities (Brahmans 13.33%—Vaishyas 29.63%).

Joint family people are more prone to worship on festivities (23.81%) than the people in nuclear family (14.54%).

It is an interesting finding that rural people are least interested in worshipping on festivities (9.68%). Highly interested in this act are the people with suburban background (35.71%).

The festival worship has some distinctive features. The different socio-religious acts during festival pooja are given below :

Table No. 48

PERFORMING FESTIVAL POOJA

STEPS OF POOJA	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Arati	*51*
Distribution of Prasad	*40*
Enchanting of 'Mantras'	*35*
Reciting 'Slokas' or 'Padas' of some book	*26*
Do Havan	*22*

It is apparent that one of the significant aspects of festival Pooja is performance of Arati (51). In festivities even otherwise sweets are distributed. Arati and Pooja signifies larger involvement of people. So Prasad is distributed (40). As has been indicated in the above pages all festivals have some religious touch so some Mantras are enchanted specifically meant for the occassion. 35 Respondents do it. Other 26 recite 'slokas' or read some passages of some book. Mostly Geeta or Ramayan passages are read. Havan is also one of the methods of celebrating festivals particularly for those connected with 'Arya Samaj'. Even otherwise Havan spreads good smell and purifies the surroundings as such respondents (22) do some Havan on festivals.

Kirtan is a form of community singing of hymns of the gods and goddesses who are being worshipped. It provides an aura of serenity and community participation. It was asked if people were interested in organising Kirtan at the time of festivities. It was revealed that 22 respondents organised Kirtans. It was organised usually by 20 respondents and the similar number (20) organised it sometimes else also. It appears that the same people who wished to organise Kirtan usually, if could not do it for some reason, were able to do it some-other time.

Festivities demand purchases. This is a social aspect of religion. Let us see what do people purchase.

Table No. 49

PURCHASES ON FESTIVITIES

PURCHASES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Sweets for children	*69*
Clothes for family members	*23*
Give charity	*14*

It is clear from the table that majority of respondents main purchase during festivities is sweets for the children (69). Next come clothes for family members. In fact timings of some of the festivals are such that the need for fresh clothes automatically arises. On Dusehra and Deepawali it is the beginning of Winters and Holi marks the beginning of Summers,

thus fresh clothes become essential (23). Now a days a fresh practice of giving charity to infirm, leprocy patients and orphanages, is in vogue. When a person is either customarily required to do so, or he feels like doing some good welfare work, he does charity. It is due to this social fashion that on festivities also people (14) make purchases for charity.

7

Fasts

Fasts have specific meaning . Foregoing meals does not mean fast in the sense in which it is meant in religious jargon. A person may be asked by the doctor to forego meals for physiological reasons, One may not eat due to over work, constipation or even otherwise being upset. We would not call it a fast. A fast is a deliberate foregoing of meals in observance of some religious practice.

(*a*) *Keeping fast* :—Most of the religious societies and sects have fasts as a significant practice. Muslims observe fast during Ramzan. Christians may fast during Easter. Arya Samajists keep fast on Shiva Ratri. Hindus have great many occasions of keeping fast.

It was asked from the respondents if they keep fast ? The responses are given below :

Table No. 50

KEEP FAST

RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*53*	*53*
No	*44*	*44*
No response	*03*	*03*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is obvious from the table that majority of the people (53%) keep fast. Others (44%) do not believe in keeping it

The variable-wise distribution of keepers of fast is given below :

Looking at the table from variables point of view it is obvious that though a majority keeps fast yet there are differences in the patterns of various groups.

Looking at age it is apparent that fast keeping increases with age from (48.57%) in the lowest age group of upto 35 years it mounts upto 61.12% in the age group beyond 45 years.

It is interesting to note that males are more fast oriented 54.43% than females 47.62%

Caste hardly influences fast keeping habit. Kshatriyas are more prone to keeping them (51.43%) as compared to the other groups. Vaishyas are mostly interested in fasts (59.26).

Members of joint family are more prone to fast keeping (59.52%) as compared to those of nuclear family (45.45%). In joint family many a time it is due to imitation that people keep fast.

Quite obviously urban people follow fast keeping (45.28%) more than the rural people (58.06%). Those with suburban background (64.28%) keep fast in large numbers.

Table No. 50 (a)

KEEPING OF FAST

	TOTAL	YES	%	NO.	%	NO RESPONSE	%
AGE							
0-35 yrs	*35*	*17*	*48.57*	*17*	*48.57*	*1*	*2.85*
35-45 yrs	*47*	*25*	*53.19*	*21*	*44.68*	*1*	*2.13*
45 yrs&above	*18*	*11*	*61.12*	*6*	*33.33*	*1*	*5.55*
SEX							
Male	*79*	*43*	*54.43*	*35*	*44.30*	*1*	*1.27*
Female	*21*	*10*	*47.62*	*9*	*42.85*	*2*	*9.52*
CASTE							
Brahman	*30*	*17*	*56.67*	*12*	*40.00*	*1*	*3.33*
Kshatriya	*35*	*18*	*57.43*	*15*	*42.86*	*2*	*5.71*
Vaishya	*27*	*16*	*59.26*	*11*	*40.74*	*Nil*	*Nil*
No response	*8*	*2*	*25.00*	*6*	*75.00*	*Nil*	*Nil*
FAMILY TYPE							
Joint	*42*	*25*	*59.52*	*16*	*38.10*	*1*	*2.38*
Nuclear	*55*	*25*	*45.45*	*28*	*50.92*	*2*	*3.63*
No response	*3*	*3*	*100.00*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
FAMILY BACKGROUND							
Rural	*31*	*18*	*58.06*	*13*	*41.94*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Urban	*53*	*24*	*45.28*	*27*	*50.94*	*2*	*3.77*
Sub-turban	*14*	*9*	*64.28*	*4*	*28.57*	*1*	*7.15*
No response	*2*	*2*	*100.00*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Total	*100*	*53*	*53.00*	*44*	*44.00*	*3*	*3.00*

(b) Days of fast : As a practice, except Wednesday, on all days of a week fast could be kept. The days are named after planets so 'are the fasts. Sunday is kept for Sun, Monday for moon or Shanker, Tuesday for Hanuman, Thursday for prosperity and wealth, Friday for Santoshi Man (the Goddess of satisfaction), Saturday for Saturn. Our respondents mostly keep fast either on Tuesday or Friday. Those who, though, believe in keeping fast, but not religiously, fast as and when they please. Mostly for them, though fasting is regular but its days are not fixed. Those keeping fast for more than one day are very rare (only 3%).

(c) Fast on religious festivals : Apart from the usual weekly fasts there are certain festivals on which fast is kept. Even otherwise normally at the time of eclipse solar or lunar, there are people who keep fast. A question was asked about the festivals on which fast is observed. The table below would provide an idea of fasting.

Table No. 51

FAST ON FESTIVITIES

FESTIVALS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Janmasthmi	*40*
Karva chauth	*8*
Ram Naumi	*4*
Ekadashi	*3*
Others	*17*

As is indicated by the table that Janmasthmi is observed mostly (40) by people as a fast. In this fast one has to observe it for the full day. It is at 12.00 midnight that Lord Krishna is believed to have been born. All those who are on fast mostly decorate a portion in the house dipicting Devaki and Vashudeo's confinement. There is a legend that it was known to Kansa–the king of Mathura, the maternal uncle of Krishna—that the Eighth issue of Devaki (the King's sister) will kill him. As such Kansa put Devaki and her husband Vashudeo in goal. It is believed that on Krishna's birth the locks of the jail opened and Vashudeo could take away Krishna, the newly born baby to Gokula (accross the Jamuna), where Yashoda wife of Nand gave birth to a daughter simultaneously. The news of the birth of the child could reach Kansa after Vashudeo was back into

the prison cell. Kansa came and in order to kill the girl lifted her. It is believed that she slipped out of his grip and fled in the sky saying that your enemy is in Gokula. She settled herself at Vindhyachal and is known as Sheetla Mata. In sympathy with Devaki and Vashudeo the people keep fast and break it only with the end of their anxiety.

Karvachautha is a fast for the health and prosperity of the husband. It is kept only by married women. In our study 8 respondents keep it.

Ram Naumi is observed (4) on the birth of Lord Rama.

Ekadashi is also observed by few (3).

Other fasts include Shiva Ratri, Ahoi Ashthami, etc. These fasts also have regional differences. In eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh Har Talika Teej, Lalari Chath and Amavashya are also observed.

(d) The Purpose of fast : People keep fasts with several diverse motives. It is not always believed to be religious need but it may even be inspired by other considerations. The purposes of keeping fast were asked by the respondents. They are given below :

Table No. 52

PURPOSE OF FAST

PURPOSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Purification of body	*34*
Purification of soul	*26*
Traditional Practice	*10*
On some one's request	*2*

One might observe fast for multiple reasons. Our respondents observe fasts mostly for purification of body (34,) so it is rather with a secular motive. Next to the most popular reason is purification of soul (26). These people appear to be religiously inspired. The other group (10) observes fast not because of any rationale behind it. They simply honour the traditional practice. Negligible(2) number of people have started keeping a fast on some ones request. It does happen sometimes that a person only in order to honour someones wishes starts observing certain practices. This is this category.

(e) In-take during fast : Fasts do not always demand the fasters to abstain from taking anything. There are fasts that are stringent, others are mild. It has changes with time and faith, Normally the people of the old generation still observe them with greater rigidity than those of the new generation. For instance during Har Talika Teej and Lalari Chhath not even plain water is allowed.

The following table presents the relevant information regarding respondents in take while fasting.

Table No. 53

IN-TAKE ON FAST

IN TAKE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Fruits	*36*
Milk and Juices	*29*
Only water	*8*
Any other thing	*6*

The table tells that most of the respondents take fruits while fasting (36). Others in quite convincing number (29) take milk and juices. To remain content without anything is a very tough condition if it is during summers. So a small group of fasters (8) take only water. Other things that can be consumed on fast days are sweets prepared with milk alone, potatces sweet potatoes, carrot, singhara, Kutu flour, Ram dana etc. Some persons observe certain donts in eating such as avoiding salt. The devotees of Santoshi Man avoidi sour things.

(f) Duration of fast : Duration of fast is a very significant point. The extent of observation of fast will be affected by the strict conditions it demands on the observers. A question regarding the duration of the fast observed was asked.

Table No. 54

DURATION OF FAST

DURATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Morning till evening	*47*	*79.66*
Morning to Morning	*9*	*15.25*
More than one day	*3*	*05 09*
Total	*59*	*100.00*

It is obvious from the table that a great majority of people 79.66% keep fasts lasting from morning till evening. The

enthusiasm for fast is blurred with its duration, 15.25% can observe fasts lasting full one day. And a mere 5.09 keep fast for more than one day.

(g) Reaction after fast : The purpose of fast being diverse, the reactions after fast are also different. A querry was made from the respondents as to how did they feel after the fast ? The responses are given below :

Table No. 55

REACTIONS AFTER FAST

REACTION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Feel Just so so	*26*
Spiritually elevated	*15*
Any other reaction	*6*

Reactions after fast indicate that majority of the respondents simply feel (26) so so after fast. Only (15) respondents feel spiritually elevated while others have mixed reaction. Some of them feel that there is nothing specific to mention.

8

Religious Rites

In every religion there are rites prescribed for the followers. A Christian cannot be one unless he undergoes christianing, the Muslim has to perform Khatana. Similarly Jains and Buddhists have their ceremonies for initiation. Entire Hindu life is divided into main seven samskaras. "According to Hindu Dharma Sastra, the individual has to pass through many samskaras–Sarira–samskaras as Manu and others have called them. For these are intended to sanctify the body (Sarira) beginning from the moment the foetus is laid (garbhadhana) to the death (antyesti) of a person.[1] Thus, they are supposed to purify (patanah) the person of a human being in this life and for the life after death.[2] All the Samskaras of a person are preceded by a symbolic sacrifice (homa).

The details of these samskaras (rites) can be had from Grihya–Sutras. Their number varies from authority to authority. The Grihya Sutras give their number at forty while Gautama Dharma Sutra enumerates them as forty-eight. The more significant ones and popularly observed are garbhadhana, pumsavan, jata Karma, nama-dheya or nama-Karan, Nish Kramana. anna-prasana. chuda Karma, upanayana, savitri, samavartana, vivaha, and antyesthi.[3]

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1. Man ii. 27, Quoted from Prabhu, P.H. 'Hindu Social Organization'.
2. Ibid.
3. See P.H. Prabhu, 'Hindu Social Organization' Popular Book Depot. Edition III, pp. 219-222.

(*a*) *Knowledge of Samskaras :* It was asked of the respondents if they knew about their Samskaras. The responses are give below:

Table No. 56

KNOWLEDGE OF SAMSKARAS

Know the Samskaras	*Yes*	*No*	*No response*
No. of respondents	*36*	*38*	*26*

It is apparent that only 36 respondents out of 100 have accepted the knowledge of Samskaras. 38do not know them and the rest 26 have not responded to this question. Only two people mentioned all the sixteen samskars. The rest know them partially.

There is only one respondent who has expressed his keenness to observe all the samskaras. Others observe only the main samskaras, connected with birth of the child, marriage and death. Only very few in negligible number have mentioned yagyopavita also.

(*b*) *Knowing of Planetary position at child's birth :* One of the old practices of Hindus has been their worry about the constellation of Nakchhatras (planets) or planetory position at the time of child birth. The fatelists, as Hindus by en large are, are always keen to know the fate of the new born. This is done with a dual motive of knowing both the fate of the child and the good or evil impacts of his birth on other kith and kin. The Brahman Purohita issues a chart of planetary positions at the time of a child's birth (Janm Kundalin). It is kept as a basis of prediction of achievements and failures of the person.

A question was asked whether the respondents called the Purohita (Brahman) to prepare the Planetary position chart. The table provides the relevant information.

Table No. 57.

PUROHITA TO TELL PLANETARY POSITION

PUROHITA REQUISITIONED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*57*	*57*
No	*35*	*35*
No response	*08*	*08*
Total	*100*	*100*

Majority of respondents (57.00%) as indicated in the table believe in knowing the planetary constellation at the time of child birth. For that they call the Purohit to tell it. Some people (35.00%) do not believe in it. A small fraction (08%) did not respond the question.

Ordinarily those who care to know about Nakshatras (constellation of planets) are naturally bothered about them.

(c) Rites de passage : Rites de passage form a significant role in some social groups. These rites are usually performed at the time of first menses of a girl. She is isolated under the care of an old lady. It is believed that these rites are to keep the evil spirits away from the person who now is entering a new social status. In the present study none observes any such rite.

(d) Yagyopavita : Yagyopavita is a significant Hindu rite. In fact it is an initiation ceremony. It is on this ceremony that a prson is provided with theacereds thread. Yagyopavita is a part of the Upanayan samskar. "The Grihya-Sutras and Smrities have given elaborate descriptions of these and various other rites to be performed at the Upanayan. A girdle (mekhala) has now to be tied round the waiste of the young boy to be initiated. This girdle is to be made of monja grass in the case of a Brahmana, bow-string in the case of a Kshatriya, and woollen thread in the case of a Vaishya. The boy is then to be given a staff (danda)-of palasa or bilva wood for the Brahmana boy, of nyagrodha wood for the Kshatriya, and of udumbara wood for the vaishya, or, in the alternative, it is also laid down that any sort of staff may be used by a boy of any varna. Thereafter, the sacrificial cord (Yagyopavita) is adjusted round his body."[1]

It is only after the perfcrmance of this Samskara that a Hindu boy is admitted into the twice born fold. A question was asked about the time when Yagyopavita was done in the respondent's family. In general we observe complacent attitude in observing these Samskaras. Upanayan-that was the vidya arambha ceremony-the beginning of education is

1. Ibid, pp. 109-10.

now-a-days done without any fan fare. The child is directly put into the school. The modern schools admit children at the tender age of three years. The Yagyopavita now-a-days is done as under in case of our respondents.

Table No. 58

YAGYOPAVITA PERFORMED

TIME OF PERFORMANCE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Young age	*21*	*21*
At the time of marriage	*34*	*34*
No response	*45*	*45*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is apparent that people are not quite particular to perorm Yagyopavita or Upanayan because those who did not reply are in the largest number (45%). Whereas originally Yagyopavita was supposed to be done as an initiation ceremony for Brahmcharya-Asram the majority of those who replied the question (34%) get it at the time of marriage, that is entry into Grahasthasram. Only in small number of cases (21%) it is done at the young age.

(e) Wearing the thread : At the time of Yagyopavita sacred thread (janeoo) is given to the Brahmachari or whoever is performing this rite. It is one of the practices that the Yagyopavita has to be used in a sacred way. While going for the natural calls the person possessing the thread is supposed to set it round the ears. If it is forgotten the thread is impure. It has to be changed.

A question was asked about wearing the thread with sanctity.

Table No. 59

SACRED THREAD WORN WITH SANCTITY

SACRED THREAD WORN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*20*	*20*
No	*47*	*47*
No response	*33*	*33*
Total	*100*	*100*

As is evident from the table, the largest number of people (47%) do not wear the sacred thread with purity. About one third (33%) of the respondents have kept quite on this issue and only (20%) wear it with sacredness. This again displays a loss of faith in traditional practice.

(*f*) *Propitiation of evil impacts of planets on child birth :* Planetory position is wished to be of the desired type on the birth of a child. If undesirable Nakchhatras are there they are supposed to adversely affect the kith and kin of the new born. There are ways and means to propitiate them. After propitiation the evil impact vanishes. It is not essential that such an occassion might arise in everyone's life. It is also likely that ones children might not have been born in 'Mool'. A question was asked about respondents reaction on the birth of a child in 'Mool'. The responses are classified below :

Table No. 60

PROPITIATION OF 'MOOL'

PROPITIATION OF MOOL OBSERVED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*27*	*27*
No	*50*	*50*
Occasion did not arise	*10*	*10*
No response	*13*	*13*
Total	*100*	*100*

The above table indicates that 50.00% of the respondents do not believe in observing any ceremonies connected with propitiation of 'Mool'. Only 27.00% observe such propititation. 10% did not get any such opportunity while 13.00% did not respond the question.

(*g*) *Antyesthi :* "The last Samskar of a Hindu is Antyesthi that is performed after the death of a person. "The antyesthi or the funeral rite, performed at death, marks the end of the human career of the individual, and his entrance into the realm of ancestors (pitris)".

There are different systems of the disposal of the dead in different societies. Christians and Muslims burry their dead. The Parasis keep the dead body on the tower while Hindus burn them. Antyesthi is an elaborate ceremony. It is for this occasion that a son is required. When a person's

own son lights fire to the pyre then only is there the likelihood of his attaining the Moksha. In fact the 'pitra rina' is fulfilled only on this condition. It is also an ordinarily prevailing faith that the family of the dead in general and the person performing the funeral rites in particular are defiled. It is with this purpose of keeping away from this family or the person that some other ceremonies are performed. Usually there are two ways of rehabilitating the bereaved family. The Sanatani way of observing these rites is that in case of females death the 'Daswan' is performed on nineth day and in case of males on the tenth day. The 'Terahi' is performed on thirteenth day in either ease.

(*h*) *Rehabilitation of the bereaved family :* About rehabilitation of bereaved family a question was asked.

Table No. 61

REHABILITATION OF BEREAVED FAMILY

CEREMONY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Daswan and Terahi	*63*	*63*
Shanti Yagya	*14*	*14*
Both are perfomed	*11*	*11*
No response	*12*	*12*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is apparent that majority of people (63.00%) observe the traditional way of performing Daswan and Terahi. Some people observe both, the traditional practice and 'Santi Yagya'. The Arya Samaj followers perform only the 'Santi Yagya' (14.00%) and after this has been done the bereaved family is included in the social fold again.

(*i*) *'Pinda Dan' :* It is again a matter of faith that Hindus offer Barley flour balls to their dead. It is believed that this leaves them satisfied. The desire for 'Pinda Dan', performed by the son again, explains the anxiety of a Hindu to bear a son.

It was asked of the respondents if they believed in 'Pinda Dan'. The responses are given in the table below :

Table No. 62

'BELIEF IN PINDA DAN'

BELIEF IN PINDA DAN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*30*	*30*
No	*55*	*55*
No response	*15*	*15*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is obvious that majority of people do not believe (55.00%) in 'Pinda Dan' while 30.00% believe in it. 15.00% did not offer any response.

In response to a question whether the respondents have performed 'Pinda Dan' for their ancestors, 26, out of 30 who believed in it did perform while the remaining 4 had no opportunity because it is done only by those whose parents are dead.

(*j*) *Shraddh :* Once a year, a fifteen day period called 'Paksha' is known as 'Pitra Paksha'. This period is near about 'Dusehra'. On whatever date a person breaths his last his 'Shraddha' is observed. Observation of 'Shraddha' is in a way a method of remembering the old and departed. The usual practice is that in the house good food is prepared—in which the taste of the departed is also kept in view. A question was asked to the respondents about their observing 'Shraddha' during 'Pitra Paksha'. The observations are tabulated below :

Table No. 63

OBSERVATION OF SHRADDHA

OBSERVATION OF SHRADDHA	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*44*	*44*
No	*45*	*45*
No response	*11*	*11*
Total	*100*	*100*

The table indicates that among all those who have responded the question the observers and non-observers of Shraddha are virtually equal in strength (44.00%—45.00%).

Brahmans have been having an upper most role in Indian society. Feasting Brahmans have been associated with almost

all ceremonies. Whenever a Samskar is observed Brahmans are feasted. Shraddha is no exception to it. Apart from feasting the Brahmans some other things are also in practice. The responses regarding behaviour pattern on 'Shraddha' is tabulated below :

Table No. 64

ORGANISATION OF SHRADDHA

ACTIVITY ORGANISED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Feasting Brahmans	*38*
Giving Charity to Brahmans	*14*
Sending food and money to charitable institutions for destitutes.	*8*

As is evident from the table the major activities performed while organising Shraddha of an ancestor are feasting the Brahman or Brahmans as the requirement may be. Some people in usual practice feast only one Brahman while others feast any odd number i e. three, five, seven, nine, eleven or thirteen. 38 respondents feast Brahmans as part of Shraddha celebration. Associated with feasting the Brahmans is giving them presents at the occasion. People who feast them usually also offer them presents like clothes, utensils, money, food for children at home, etc. Only 14 people do it. Due to unreasonable demands of Brahmans a new modern form of Shraddha celebration has started in which instead of calling able bodied Brahmans the people observing Shraddha initimate charitable institutions or other places were destitutes can be had. These destitutes usually orphans or otherwise handicapped, are called upon to take food, or they may be feasted separately, or else as per family advice previously conveyed, the food for that amount of people is sent to the institution. This practice is getting popular now but presently in our sample there are only 8 people observing it. There might be some people who observe more than one thing. The three activities are not mutually exclusive.

9

Religious Taboos

All activities have to follow some norms. The norms that are approved by the society and are desired to be observed are the dos. The donts are the prohibited activities. Human beings are cautious in undertaking new ventures. Anybody would like to start a new thing in such an aura that it completes satisfactorily giving desired results. Consideration of omen is one of the beliefs that motivates a person to start with a thing or not.

Taboo is of Polynesian origin. Tabu in polynesian language means 'to forbid' and 'Forbidden'. "It is used to designate all the restrictions, communicated through verbal 'Don't do's, and generally associated with ritualistic behaviour, which a member of a primitive society has to submit to."[1]

Taboos serve functional purpose in any 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 men also away from certain places, actions and objects are protective; and those which seclude a person or limit contact with him or her, as is done in the case of a chief, a 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."[2]

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1. Majumdar D N., and Madan, T.N. 'An Introduction to Social An thr opology', p. 163.

2. Ibid., pp. 163—64

(*a*) *Belief in Omen :* Omen are in fact the indicators of probable success or failure of a particular venture. It is believed that if good omen occur the task will be accomplished. If evil omen are there the success is doubtful.

A question was asked about respondents belief in omen. The results are given below :

Table No. 65

BELIEF IN OMEN

RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*16*	*16*
No	*48*	*48*
Cant say	*26*	*26*
No response	*10*	*10*
Total	*100*	*100*

It is apparent that only 16.00% of the total respondents believe in omen. Thrice that number (48.00%) categorically denied having faith in it. 26.00% have not given any categorical answer while 10.00% did not reply the question. It is obvious that the believers are in a very meagre number. Once the belief in omen is known it is very natural to have the curiosity to know the types of omen people believe in. There are both good and evil omen. Two separate questions were asked about enlisting the good and evil omen. Though 16 respondents expressed faith in omen those who gave some good or evil omen are only 12.

(*b*) *Good Omen :* Our respondents have recorded 29 good omen. See the table below :

Table No. 66

GOOD OMEN

GOOD OMEN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Smile on wife's face	*2*
Pot full of water at the time of departure	*5*
Seeing a sweeper while stepping out of home	*3*
Fluttering of right eye/right arm of man	*2*
Fluttering of left eye/left arm of woman	*2*
Itiching on the right palm of male	*1*
Sneezing—a sign of somebody remembering elsewhere	*1*

GOOD OMEN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Seeing a corpse when you set out	3
Itiching of the sole of foot	1
Fixing of the auspicious day for marriage	1
Falling of Ink-blot on Examination answer book.	1
Five persons going on an important errend	1
Seeing the Bhangis basket full of refuse	1
My own mood at the moment	1
Atmosphere in the family	1
Crowing of the Crow	1
Winking of the left eye	1
Cow or beautiful woman seen in the morning	1
Basket full of fruits, vegetables or garbage at the time of departure.	1
Blue bird seen	1
Sneezing at the back	1
A beautiful dream	1
Seeing father wearing beautiful clothes	1
Mother with child	1
Cow with Calf	2
Taking curd before going to examination	1
Syame bird on right hand	1
Mangoes	1
Snake	1

It may be seen from the table that the most popular good omen is seeing a pitcher or vessel full of water. At second place are two. (i) Seeing a sweeper while stepping out of home (andii) seeing a corpse or dead body being taken. Fluttering of right eye of male and that of left eye of female or other limbs of males and females' and 'cow with a calf' have been mentioned as a good omen by more than one person. The rest of 22 good omen have been mentioned separately by the respondents.

(*c*) *Evil Omen* : Life is a dichotomy. It is always full of opposites. Obviously after having asked the good omen, the interest in evil omen is quite natural. The respondents were asked to enlist evil omen also. The details are recorded in the table.

Question was asked if the respondents believed in the existence of evil omen. The respondents reply is recorded below :

Table No. 67

BELIEF IN EVIL OMEN

EVIL OMEN EXISTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*14*	*14*
No	*45*	*45*
Cant say	*25*	*25*
No response	*16*	*16*
Total	*100*	*100*

The table indicates that mere 14.00% of the total respondents believe in the existence of evil omen. The majority (45.00%) does not believe in it. More than those who believe (25.00%) are not in a position to express their views explicitly. 16% respondents did not reply this question. The evil omen as expressed are given below :

Table No. 68

OBSERVED EVIL OMEN

EVIL OMEN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Seeing ones own face in the mirror	*1*
One eyed man	*3*
Sneezing	*9*
Hooting of an owl	*1*
Seeing a Brahman when you set out	*2*
One slipper on the other	*1*
Black cat crossing our way	*5*
Crowing of the Crow	*1*
Falling of the dough out of the kneeding trough	*1*
Weeping of the Dog and Cat	*3*
Breaking of mirror	*1*
Finding gold suddenly	*1*
Somebody enquiring about the purpose	*2*
Ill humour in the family	*2*
Natural winking of the right eye	*1*
Ugly man	*1*
Oil pressure	*1*

EVIL OMEN	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Fire	*1*
Empty Vessel	*1*
Jerking of the dog ears	*1*
Loss of anything without reason or rhym	*1*

It is obvious that sneezing is supposed to be observed as an evil omen by maximum number of people. It is followed by black cats crossing the path. Any one eyed man and weeping of dog and cat come next. Seeing a Brahman while coming out of home for some important task has also been reported as an evil omen. Apart from these shared evil omen there are 13 more such indicators.

(*d*) *Taboos* : Omen and taboos are the reflection of some psychological state of mind. One who believes that certain indicators express the signs of success and failure also takes precautions that any lapse should not be committed that might annoy the powers that are or be. Hence taboos become significant.

Woman's power of procreation has been a great mystery to man. The vital role played by them in the drama of life has compelled man to visualize the great 'Sakti', in her. This is why women have been identified with 'Sakti', 'Kali', 'Durga', 'Luxmi', and 'Saraswati'. Theyare all the expression of some such feelings.

Three situations in which taboos are usually observed have been placed before the respondents. The responses of the respondents in the three situations are recorded below :

Table No. 69

SITUATIONS FOR TABOOS

	RESPONSES				
SITUATIONS	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL
Women in menses	*16*	*22.22*	*56*	*77.78*	*78*
Detivery	*18*	*24.65*	*55*	*75.35*	*73*
Death of a person in the family	*25*	*32.46*	*52*	*67.54*	*77*

The table indicates that only 22.22% respondents observe taboos with menstruating women. 24.65% observe them with women in delivery and 32.46% in the situation of death in a

family. In fact the changing circumstances have made it compulsory now to change ones ethical and social values. The stigmas attached with menstruation of women and keeping them completely isolated after delivery, or for that matter treating a family as defiled where some death has occurred, could continue well only in a society with joint family where the number of men and women is quite large and if some people are discarded on some pretexts others are there to substitute them. In a modern urban nuclear family setting if these old traditional values continue, life would need greater adjust ments.

(*e*) *Women in Menses :* These taboos being observed popularly have become now a tale of history. Further enquiries were made regarding the three conditions cited above. Since a sizable number does not observe the taboos there is no need to critically and elaborately examine the issue. It may be of interest to know the types of interactions with women in menses.

Table No. 70

TABOOS OBSERVED WITH WOMEN IN MENSES

TABOOS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Isolate the person	5
Cooking not allowed	7
Reading scriptures and participation in worship prohibited.	9

It is obvious that from among those who observe some taboos maximim number prohibits reading of religious literature or other activities associated with religion. Isolation of individual is least favoured. In between are those who do not allow cooking. The menses taboos generally continues for 3 days. In case of delivery the mother and the child are (isolated not in strict sense) kept away, only so long as they are in the maternity hospital. After they are releasedfrom there they become part and parcel of the family. The restrictions (whatever are imposed) are mostly based on medical advise rather than they are a part of social practice.

(*f*) *Taboos and Death :* In case of death of a person in any family there are two possible patterns of taboos. The

entire family may be regarded as polluted or the person performing the last rites of the dead is treated polluted. Very few people have replied this question and of them majority is of those (17) who treat the person performing the rites as polluted. People in smaller number (12) consider the entire family as polluted.

There are norms laid down for the observation of pollution caused due to death. Among Hindus there are two popular systems of pollution and purification. They are orthodox Sanatanist's system and the Arya Samaj system. According to the Sanatani system the pollution is lifted on the expiry of Terahi that is done on the 13th day of the death. Usually this is the practised norm of our respondents (26). A negligibly small group (3) continues it only upto Santi Yagya which is done on the third or the fourth day. It is the Arya Samaj system.

None has given other taboos in observation.

10

Inter-Religious Interactions

Religion is an in-group. All in-groups have some norms of interacting with out-groups. In this context followers of other religions in India, Christians, Muslims etc. become out-groups for Hindus. In the larger interest of national development and secular pattern of life it is desirable that there should be inter-religious interactions among people of diverse religious communities.

The respondents were asked if they had friends and cont tacts with the people of other religions. Except 8 respondens- in the entire sample all had relations with members of otheg religions. Family relations are a great cementing force. Whenever relations between two persons do not confine themselves to the individuals alone, and are extended to other member of the family also, they provide opportunity for closeness. In our sample only 14 people deny having family relations with the people of other religions. It is obvious that from amonr those who have friends from other religious groups 6 persons confine their relations to themselves only.

(a) Family relations : To know the extent of family relations between Hindus and others some patterns of relationships were put forward. It is really heartening to know that mostly people observe several such patterns of mutual relationships that speak of intimacy.

A question with six points was asked to judge the intimacy and level of contact. The results are recorded in the table.

Table No. 71

PATTERNS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

RELATION PATTERNS	%
Ladies of two families meeting frequently	*68.00*
Children play together	*65.00*
Inter–dinning	*62.00*
Exchange of visits on festivities	*64.00*
Entry into each others kitchen	*52.00*
Exchange of presents	*63.00*

It is obvious that 68.00% respondeats interact on the level of ladies of the two families meeting frequently. In 65.00% cases children play together. On festivities 64.00% people exchange visits on inter-religious contact level. There are exchange of presents in 63.00% cases and 62.00% people dine together. Entry into each others kitchen is restricted only to 52 00% cases. The results, as they are, are quite encouraging. It may be hoped that if the things go as they are indicated there is no reason why a secular society would not come up in India soon.

(b) Inter-religious marriages: The climax of inter-religious contacts culminate in inter-religious marriage. A question was asked about such marriage having taken place in the respondents family. The reaction is recorded below :

Table No. 72

INTER RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE PERFORMED IN THE FAMILY

INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE HAPPENED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	*18*	*18.00*
No	*73*	*73.00*
No response	*09*	*09 00*
Total	100	100.*00*

It is obvious that in majority of cases (73.00%) inter-religious marriage did not happen, It took place only in meagre 18.00 % cases. It indicates clearly that though people are keen to have inter-religious social contacts yet they do not like to enter in matrimonial alliance with the persons of other religions.

An hypothetical question was posed before the respondents about their reaction in a situation if a family boy or

girl married inter-religiously. The responses in these situations are very significant, Though persons appreciating such unions are quite few in number yet those not giving undue negative resistence are in majority. If such attitudes develop several of the unhealthy socio-religious practices will automatically vanish from the social scene. The reactions can be known from the table.

Table No. 73

PROPOSED INTER RELIGIOUS MARIAGE IN THE FAMILY

INTER RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE	REACTION						
	LIKE	%	DISLIKE	%	WONT MIND	%	TOTAL
A family boy marrying out	*21*	*23.33*	*14*	*15.56*	*55*	*61.11*	*90*
A family girl marrying out	*18*	*20.00*	*17*	*18.89*	*55*	*61.11*	*90*

Note : 10 Respondents did not reply this question.

It is obvious that majority of people would not mind such a situation in their family (61.11%). Those who have given positive response are more in favour of a boy marrying outside theirreligion rather than the girl of the family (23.33%, 15.56%). In case of those liking the boys marrying outside the number of such people liking such unions is small (20.00%). Whereas those liking girls marrying outside religion (18.89%) are very close in strength to those who are equally vehemently opposed to it.

(c) *Visit to the places of worship of other religions* : One of the indicators of inter-religious interaction is visit to the places of worship of other religions. It also speaks of tolerance among the people of those religions that interact in such situations. At least they allow followers of other religions to visit their places of worship. The responses regarding visit to such places are given below ;

Table No. 74

VISIT TO PLACES OF WORSHIP OF OTHER RELIGIONS

VISITED	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	%
Yes	81	81 00
No	13	13.00
No response	06	06.00
Total	100	100

It is obvious from the table that a vast majority of people (81.00%) have visited the places of worship of other religionists. A meagre number 13.00% has not visited. May be they did not wish to ? Remaining 6.00% respondents did not reply this question.

(d) Purpose of visit : Once it is known that respondents have visited the places of worship of the people of other religions, the curiosity is genuine to know the purpose of their visit to these places. It is mentioned in the table below :

Table No. 75

PURPOSE OF VISIT TO THE PLACES OF WORSHIP

PURPOSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Know how they worship	*40*
Accompany Some one	*46*

It is obvious that majority of people went only to accompany some one to his/her place of worship. It is therefore more due to social necessity of accompanying anybody than with some other purpose. 40 people want to know the patterns of worship of the group the place of worship of which they visited. Very few persons had both the purposes in mind.

11
Conclusions

Careful study of the preceding sections would make any reader easily conclude the following things about religious beliefs and practices of the middle class Hindu University teachers of Meerut City. Though the area of study is small yet one may apply these conclusions safely on this community else-where also. It is likely that similar results might be achieved even if this project is extended to other educated groups among Hindus. The results are classified into various sub-sections.

Religious Beliefs :—

A great majority believes in the existence of God.

On the question of the form of God, the educated Hindu University teachers have either rejected the idea or with equal emphasis they are under confusion to make any commitments. Only very few accept that God has a form.

Very large majority feels that God is everywhere.

Heaven, temples and Idols have been rejected unanimously as Gods abode. Though majority of them reject the proposition a very large number is in a state of confusion.

The idea of some people having realized God has also not found favour with this middle class. Those who think that this might be possible are slightly out-numbered by those who are in a fix to say something.

Majority of the middle class rejects the proposition that there is heaven and hell. Those who are for it are slightly out-numbered by those who find it difficult to give a response.

Majority of the teachers believe in soul. Only a small number does not believe in it and very few feel confused about it.

The majority believes in rebirth and Karma. A small number does not believe in it and a few are not clear on the issue.

Hindu faith of 84,00,000 yonies (species) in nature has not found favour with educated middle class. Quite a large number is in a fix to give definite reply, only few people favour it.

Very much like good and bad men there might be good and bad souls. They are angels and ghosts. Good majority of middle class people reject the idea of angels and ghosts. Considerable number is not certain about the existence of these. Only small number believes in them.

The belief in good and evil omen is rejected by half of the lot. Among the other half in a ratio of 3 : 2 they believe that good and evil omen exist, and that there is no surity of their existence.

Belief in incarnation is almost shared equally between believers, non-believers and people in a fix about the issue. (The non-believers are a little more than the other two groups.

Comfortable majority believes that religion is essential for all. Only one fourth feel that it is not so and about half of the non-believers have not been able to give any definite response.

Majority feels that religion and morality go together. Whereas about one third of the total lot is opposed to this thinking. A small number is uncertain.

People in great numbers believe in secularism. Those not believing in it are almost negligible. Although double the number of non-believers, yet not very significant in proportion are the people who have not been able to clearly mention their stand.

Though respondents in very large number are secular but the opinion is divided on the issus of Hinduism being secular. Secularity of Hinduism is though believed in by a majority, the non-believers or indefinite in their views on this

issue are by no means small in proportion. The strength of those not clear in their views is considerable.

On the question of change in Hinduism it was believed by the majority that Hinduism has changed. Those who thought that it has not changed are very few. Those who feel difficulty in neither finding change in Hinduism nor rigidity are considerably large.

The major changes that the respondents suggest to have occured are that Hinduism has become liberal. It is no more orthodox, rigid or dogmatic. There is now less emphasis on rituals. Hindus are not freely mixing with the people of other religions. There is decline in varna and caste system and emphasis on secularization.

Majority does not suggest any change in the practice of religion. But those who suggest changes in Hinduism are that it should become more liberal, unorthodox and secular. It is suggested by some that religion be blasted off, done away with, and go lock, stock and barrels. Arya Smaj way of following Hinduism has also been suggested.

Worshipping :—

Most of the people are worshippers. Majority of worshippers have Gods/Goddesses of their own. Only few people worship family Gods. The popular Hindu Gods are Shanker, Ram, Krishna, Hanuman, Durga and Saraswati. Apart from these traditional Gods there are some people who worship other objects also. Other popular objects of nature are Tulasi and Peepal among trees and plants, cow among the animals, and Ganga and Sun among the rivers and planets.

Most of the worshippers worship daily. Some worship only on festivities but those worshipping on some one's illness are very few. Most of the people worship anywhere in the house while some have specific place of worship. The rest go to public temples. The majority thinks that individual worship is a better form than the group worship.

Only few people are interested in organising Katha/Kirtan. The most popular Katha is Satyanarain Katha. Apart from it Durga Path, Srimad Bhagwat Katha and Akhand Ramayan are also being organised by some people.

Though not in majority yet quite a large number of people pay happily for organising religious activities. About one third of the population pays for such organisations only reluctently. They pay only to get rid off. Only a small number does not pay at all for these things.

Only few respondents have accepted disciplehood of any religious Gurus. Those Panths and Sampradayas having been embrassed are very few.

Religious Knowledge :

The primary source of religious knowledge of the teachers is reading of the literature. Only very few credit listening to religious stories and discourses as the source of religious knowledge. Important legend tellers are the people of the older generation, preachers from the religious plat forms and religious priests visiting the house of the individuals.

Very few people are members of religious organisations. Equal number of respondents have joined the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma Sabha and other religious organisations. Most of these members attend annual conventions of these bodies. Weekly meetings are being attended by few. Some attend both.

Of the huge literature available to Hindus, most popularly read are Ramayan followed by Gita. Ramayan for that matter is more than a book. It is being worshipped by old ladies all most as a god in itself. Mahabharata is next to Geeta. Vedas and Upanishads are also read by some but only few have read Puranas and Smrities. Those claiming to have read the text in original and in translation are almost equal in number. Only Ramayan is claimed to have been read more than once.

Kalyan is the only religious journal that is subscribed by those who wish to subscribe some such journal.

Pilgrimage :

Majority of Hindus of the middle class have been on pilgrimage. People of older generation are more keen to go and have visited pilgrims more than their younger counterparts. Caste is directly related to this activity. Higher the caste greater is the possibility of such visits. Joint families prefer

this activity as compared to nuclear families. Urban people are less enthusiastic about it.

Visit to a place of pilgrimage is associated with the dwelling of the pilgrim. People usually visit places closer to them. In the present study, as it is conducted in northern India mostly the places visited are Hardwar, Rishikesh, Mathura, Brindaban, Gokul, Barsana and Varanasi. Little less visited are Prayag and Ayodhya.

People prefer pilgrimage either with their family members or alone. Conducted tours with pilgrimage parties are not very common.

Though bathing on Kumbha is a cherished activity still very few people in the sample have had that achievement.

Festivities :—

Most significant festivals of Hindu middle class are Deepawali, Holi, Dusehra, Raksha Bandhan. Janmasthmi and Bhaidooj are also popular but not to the extent of the earlier four.

The festivals are celebrated for children and also because they are taken to be a religious duty. Only few people celebrate them for reasons of imitation or insistence by anybody. People are not interested in worshipping on festivities. They treat them more as social functions than religious ones.

Mostly people perform Arati on festivals followed by distribution of some 'Prasad'. Few people do elaborate pooja by enchanting Mantras and reciting Slokas etc. Still fewer people do Havan. Havan is common with 'Arya Samajists'.

Major purchase for festivities is sweets for the childern. Clothes for family members are not common. Some secular minded people make purchases for charity purposes.

Fasts :

Majority of people believe in fasts, though a large number of them believe in them for physiological reasons. Those who observe fast, observe it either on Tuesday or on Friday. Tuesday is more popular. Two important festivals on which people keep fast are Janmasthmi and Shiva Ratri. Shiva Ratri is equally relevant to Sanatanists and Arya Samajists. Married ladies invariably observe Karwa Chauth.

Most important purpose of keeping fast is purification of body. Next comes purification of soul. Very few people observe them to honour the traditional practice.

On fast days people mostly take fruits. Some take milk and juices. There are some fasts which do not permit anything. These fasts are observed only by few traditionalists.

Only those fasts are popular that persist from morning till evening. The longer the duration of fast the more is its unpopularity.

Mostly people feel just so so after the fast. Only some feel spiritually elevated.

Religious Rites :

The significance of observence of traditional Samskaras is vanishing from the lives of Hindu middle class. In fact the modern educated people are less initiated into their traditional Indian culture.

Only few persons are aware of Samskaras, and those who can recall them all are still rare.

Rites de passage are not observed among these middle class people. None has mentioned any observation of ceremony on the first menses of girls in the family.

The majority is silent over the performance of Yagyopavita. It is largely done at the time of marriage now. Only in few cases this ceremony is performed at young age.

Mostly people do not wear the sacred thread. The majority has categorically denied it.

It has been a practice in the past to look into the planetory position at the time of the birth of a child. This helps predict the impact of new addition on the family kith and kin and also are known the future prospects of the child. The birth of a child in "Mool Nakshstra' is believed to be inauspicious. In order to cast the evil impact of Mool, propitiation of the same is done. Mostly people do not observe it now. Very few persons are for it.

In case of a death in any family it is treated as defiled. The family is taken back into social fold after it has performed some religious purifying ceremony. Among Hindus mainly there are two popular ways of it. The Daswan and Terhi and

the Shanti Yagya. The middle class in this respect is still conservative as it is in favour of the older practice. Only few people have adopted 'Shanti Yagya'.

People now do not have faith in the cherished Hindu practice of 'Pinda Dan' for the dead. Only few people believe in it. Similarly 'Shraddha' too is not common though still people perform it. While organising 'Shraddha' people feast Brahmans. Some of them give them charity also. A fresh practice to avoid Brahmans and making a better social use of expenditure on 'Shraddha' has been devised. It is giving food, clothes or other useful presents to charitable institutions or destitutes. It is observed by few people only.

Religious Taboos :

Very few people profess to have faith in omen. Mostly they categorically deny it. Though a large number of good omen have been recorded but those shared are very few. 'Pot full of water at the time of departure from home', 'Seeing a Sweeper', 'fluttering of left eye/limbs of women and those of the right side of men' are taken as good omen.

Same thing holds good for evil omen, though shared evil omen are prominent than the good omen. Most popular evil omen are 'sneezing', Black cat crossing on way'. "Weeping of dog and cats', 'One eyed man', 'seeing a Brahman when you set out', 'somebody enquiring about the purpose of journey', and 'ill humour at the family'.

Most of the people do not believe in observing taboos, Still some taboos are observed on 'death in any family', 'delivery' and 'women in menses'. Whoever people observe taboos with menstruating women they do not permit reading of scriptures or participation in worship', 'do not allow cooking' and very few people 'isolate them'.

Inter-religious interactions

Mostly the Hindu middle class claims to have inter-religious interaction by way of having friends in other religious groups. Most of those having inter-religious friendship maintain family relations also.

The indicators of family relation are frequent 'meeting of the ladies of the two families', 'playing together of the children'

'exchange of visits on festivities', 'exchange of presents', and 'inter-dinning'. So much so that many of them have access to 'each others kitchen also'.

Inter-religious marriages have taken place in very few families. Majority of the people would not mind such unions, but those liking them are quite few and from among them also more would appreciate of a family boy's marriage outside rather than the girl in the family marrying inter-religiously.

Majority of people have visited places of worship of other religious groups. Most of them went only in order to accompany some one. Others want to know how other groups worship.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

APPEAL

From : K. GOPAL
Ph.D.
Dept. of Sociology
Meerut University, MEERUT.

Dear Friend,

You are aware of the urbanisation undergone by our country. It is generally felt that religious beliefs and practices have been largely affected by this process. The Urban Hindu has lost faith in traditional religious beliefs and practices. This study is being undertaken to make a probe into the state of affairs in this field. Since Hinduism is a gigantic religion it would be rather difficult for any single study to cover all of it. As such, it is proposed to enquire into some of the basic things at the macro-level.

I am highly grateful to you for cooperating in the study by filling the questionnaire.

With regards.

Yours Sincerely
K. GOPAL

THE RELIGION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Note :—(i) All information shall be kept strictly confidential.
(ii) Please mark √ the relevant group.

(1) IDENTIFICATION DATA

1. Name (if no objection)
2. Age : (i) upto 25 yrs. (iv) 45—55 yrs.
   (ii) 25—35 yrs. (v) 55 yrs. and above.
   (iii) 35—45 yrs.
3 Sex : (i) Male
   (ii) Female
4. Caste : (i) Brahman (iii) Vaishya
   (ii) Kshatriya/Kayastha (iv) Sudra
5. Profession : Business/Govt. Service/Private Service/Teaching/Medicine/Law practice/any other.
6. Family pattern : Joint/nuclear.
7. Family background : Rural/urban/sub-urban.
8. For how long is the family living in city :
   (i) for the last 5 years
   (ii) 5—10 yrs.
   (iii) more than 10 yrs.
9. You judge your family as : (i) Traditional
   (ii) Modern
   (iii) Midway
10. Marital Status : Unmarried/Married/Widower/Divorced/Remarried.
11. Your own property : (i) No where
   (ii) In the ancestral village
   (iii) In a city
12. Do some members of your family live in some village. ?
   If yes, Yes/No
13. Do you visit them ?
   If yes, Yes/No
14. You visit them (i) frequently
   (ii) on festivals
   (iii) on marriages or deaths.
15. Do some members of the village family also live with you ?
   Yes/No

16. You treat your family financially as belonging to
    (i) Lower class
    (ii) Middle class
    (iii) Upper class.

(2) GENERAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

(Mark √ your response about the following statements)

1. You believe in God Yes/No/Can't say
2. God has a form Yes/No/Can't say
3. God is everywhere Yes/No/Can't say
4. God lives in (a) Heaven Yes/No/Can't say
   (b) Temples Yes/No/Can't say
   (c) Idols Yes/No/Can't say
5. You believe that some people might have seen God Yes/No/Can't say
6. There is Heaven and Hell Yes/No/Can't say
7. You believe in soul Yes/No/Can't say
8. You believe in Rebirth and Karma Yes/No/Can't say
9. Do you believe in 8400000 Yonies Yes/No/Can't say
10. You believe in Ghosts Yes/No/Can't say
11. You believe in angels Yes/No/Can't say
12. You believe in good and evil omen Yes/No/Can't say
13. You believe in incarnations Yes/No/Can't say
14. Do you think that religion is essential for all Yes/No/Can't say
15. Do you think that religion and morality go together Yes/No/Can't say
16. Do you believe is secularism Yes/No/Can't say
17. Do you think that Hinduism in secular Yes/No/Can't say
18. Do y ou think that Hinduism has changed Yes/No/Can't say

    If yes.
19. What changes has Hinduism undergone.
20. Do you suggest some changes in the practice of religion Yes/No

    If yes.

21. What are these ?

(3) WORSHIPPING

1. Do you worship Yes/No
   If yes.
2. Whom do you worship
   (i) The family God or Goddess
   (ii) Your own God
3. You are a devotee of (Pl. mark √)
   (i) Shanker
   (ii) Hanuman
   (iii) Durga
   (iv) Kali
   (v) Brahma
   (vi) Rama
   (vii) Krishna
   (viii) Saraswati
   (ix) Ganesh
   (x) Sheetla Mata
   (xi) Sai Baba.
   (xii) Maharshi Mahesh Yogi
   (xiii) Bal Yogeshwar
   (xiv) Santoshi Maa
   (xv) Vaishnav Devi
   (xvi) Mahavat Baba
   (xvii) Bhairon Baba
   (xviii) Nag Devata
   (xix) Acharya Rajneesh
   (xx) Sachcha Baba
   (xxi) Any other (Mention)
4. Do you worship some other objects also ? Yes/No
   If Yes.
5. Your other objects of worship are
   (a) Trees and Plants
      (i) Banyan
      (ii) Peepal
      (iii) Neem
      (iv) Tulsi
      (v) Any other (Mention)
   (b) Animals and birds
      (i) Horse
      (ii) Lion
      (iii) Cow
      (iv) Buffalo
      (v) Sheep.
      (vi) Parrot
      (vii) Peacock
      (viii) Snake
      (ix) Any other (Mention)
   (c) Rivers and Planets
      (i) Ganga
      (ii) Yamuna
      (iii) Gomti
      (iv) Sun
      (v) Saturn
      (vi) Any other (Mention)
6. When do you worship
   (i) Daily
   (ii) On festivities
   (iii) On somebody's illness

7. Where do you worship
   (i) A public temple
   (ii) There is a temple/place of worship in your house.
   (iii) Anywhere in the house.
8. How do you worship ? Please give detailed account.
9. In your opinion should worship be followed by bathing ?
   Yes/No/Can't say
10. Give your opinion on the following statements.
    (i) Worshipping should be done all alone
    Yes/No/Can't say
    (ii) Group worship is a better form Yes/No/Can't say
11. Do you organise Katha/Kirtan at your place. Yes/No
    If Yes.
12. Which of the following do you organise at your place ?
    (i) Satyanarayan Katha Yes/No
    (ii) Durga Path Yes/No
    (iii) Shrimad Bhagwat Katha Yes/No
    (iv) Akhand Ramayan Yes/No
    (v) Any other Path (Pl. mention)
13. If some one asks to contribute something for organising such activities what is your reaction ? (Please mark √)
    (i) You pay happily
    (ii) You pay only to get rid off
    (iii) You do not pay at all.
14. Are you a disciplie of some.
    (i) Religious Guru Yes/No
    (ii) Panth Yes/No
    (iii) Sampradaya Yes/No
15. If yes, please mention the name of your Guru/Panth/Sampradaya.

(4) SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

1. What is your source of religious knowledge ?
   (i) Listening to religious stories and discourses
   (ii) Reading of literature

   In case of (i)
2. From whom did you listen the stories (legends)
   (i) some old person in the family

(ii) religious priests visiting the family
(iii) religious preachers on various platforms

3. Are you a regular member of any of the following religious organisations.
   (i) Arya Samaj
   (ii) Ram Krishan Society
   (iii) Sanatan Dharam Sabha
   (iv) Theosophical Society
   (v) Any other (Pl. mention)

4. You attend (i) Weekly meetings
   (ii) Annual conventions
   (iii) both

   If you are fond of reading religious literature.

5. What of the following you have read.
   1. Vedas
   2. Puranas
   3. Upanishads
   4. Epics (i) Ramayana
      (ii) Mahabharata
   5. Geeta
   6. Smrities

6 What ever religious literature you have read ? Have you read it in original or in translation through English.
   Original/Translation

7. Which of the above you have read more than once. (Pl. mention)

8. Which of these texts you keep in your house. (Please mention)

9. Do you subscribe any of the religious journals.
   (i) Kalyan
   (ii) Adhyatm
   (iii) Adhyatm Jyoti
   (iv) Any other

(5) PILGRIMAGE

1. Have you ever been on pilgrimage. Yes/No

2. Which of the places you have visited.
   (i) Vaishnava Devi
   (ii) Badri Nath
   (iii) Rishikesh
   (iv) Hardwar
   (v) Ayodhya
   (vi) Prayag
   (vii) Puri
   (viii) Rameshwaram
   (ix) Mathura, Brindaban, Gokul, Barsana.
   (x) Varanasi
   (xi) Any other.

3. You went.
   (i) of your own (iii) with Pilgrimage party
   (ii) with family members
4. What was the duration of the trip.
5. Do you go for Kumbha Ashnan. Yes/No

(6) FESTIVITIES

1. Pl. mark √ the festivals you celebrate.
   (i) Raksha Bandhan (vii) Anant Chaturdashi
   (ii) Dusehra (viii) Nag Panchmi
   (iii) Deepawali (ix) Lorhi
   (iv) Holi (x) Bhai Dooj
   (v) Ram Naumi (xi) Any other.
   (vi) Janamasthami
2. You celebrate the festival because it is
   (i) celebrated by others
   (ii) a religious duty
   (iii) insisted upon by other members of the family
   (iv) for children
3. Do you perform some Pooja on festivals. Yes/No
   If yes,
4. Do you worship on the following festivals.
   If yes, please fill in the following table.

FESTIVALS	NAME OF THE GOD/GODDESS	OTHER OBJECTS
(i) Rakshabandhan		
(ii) Dusehra		
(iii) Deepawali		
(iv) Holi		
(v) Bhai dooj		
(vi) Goverdhan		
(vii) Karwa chauth		
(viii) Anant Chaturdashi		
(ix) Nag Panchami		
(x) Dhan Terash		
(xi) Any other.		

5. What do you do while worshipping. Please mark √ the following.
   (i) Do some Havan (iv) Perform Arati
   (ii) Enchanting of 'Mantras' (v) Distribute 'Prasad'

(iii) Reciting 'Slokas' or 'Padas' of some book
(vi) Any other

6. Is worshipping followed by some Kirtan also. Yes/No
If yes.
Usually/sometimes/seldom.

7. On festivities you purchase.
(i) Sweets for the children
(ii) Clothes for family members
(iii) Give charity
(iv) Any other (Pl. mention)

(7) FASTS

1. Do you believe in keeping fasts. Yes/No
If yes,

2. You keep fasts on
(i) One day in a week
Please name the day.....
(ii) More than one day (Pl. mention).....
.....

3. Do you keep fast on (Pl. mark √)
(i) Janmasthmi (v) Karva Chauth
(ii) Ekadasi (vi) Har Talika Teej
(iii) Amavashya (vii) Lalari Chhath
(iv) Ram Navmi (viii) Any other

4. You keep fast for
(i) Purification of soul (iv) Traditional practice
(ii) Purification of body (v) Any other reason (Pl. mention)
(iii) On some ones request

5. On fast days you take.
(i) Only water (iii) Milk and Juices
(ii) Fruits (iv) Any other thing

6. Your fasts last from.
(i) Morning till evening (iii) More than one day
(ii) Morning to morning

7. How do you feel after fast.
(i) You feel spiritually elevated
(ii) Just so so (iii) Any other reaction

(8) RELIGIOUS RITES

1. Do you know the Samskaras of Hindus. Yes/No
Pl. give them below.

2. What are the main Samskaras that you follow. Please give them.
3. Do you perform some ceremony at the first menses of a girl. Yes/No
4. When is 'Yagyopavita' done in your family.
   (i) at young age
   (ii) at the time of marriage
5. After Yaguopavita does the person use the 'sacred thread' (Janeoo) regularly with sanctity. Yes/No
6. After the death of a person the purifying ceremony is done after.
   (i) Daswan and Terahi (iii) Both are performed
   (ii) Shanti Yagya
7. Do you observe 'Sharddha' during 'Pitra Paksha'. Yes/No
8. If yes.
   You (i) feast Brahmans
   (ii) Given them charity
   (iii) Send some food and money to some charitable institution for the help of the destitute.
   (iv) Any other way.
9. Do you go to Brahman (Purohita) for knowing the Nakshatra at the birth of a child. Yes/No
   If yes.
10. In case the child is born in 'Mool' do you observe its propitiation. Yes/No
11. Do you believe in 'Pinda Dan' for the dead. Yes/No
    If yes.
12. Have you performed it for the ancestors. Yes/No

(9) RELIGIOUS TABOOS

1. Do you believe in omen. Yes/No/Can't say
   If yes.
2. Mention ten good omen you believe in

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

3. You think that there are evil omen. Yes/No/Can't say
   If yes.

4. Mention ten evil omen.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

5. Do you observe some taboo's on the following occassions.
   (i) Women in menses Yes/No
   (ii) Delivery Yes/No
   (iii) Death of person Yes/No
6. If yes in 5 (i)
   You do the following
   (i) Isolate the person Yes/No
   (ii) do not allow cooking Yes/No
   (iii) do not allow reading scriptures or participating in any worship. Yes/No
   (iv) Any other thing (mention)
7. For how long does this taboo continue...
8. In case of delivery you isolate the mother and the new born. Yes/No
   If yes.
9. For how long this isolation continues.
10. In case of death you observe the following. (Please mark √).
    (i) Pollution from the person performing last rites.
    (ii) Pollution from the entire family.
11. The pollution continues for
    (i) 9 days in case of the death of a woman
    (ii) 10 days in case of the death of a man
    (iii) 13 days in each case
    (iv) till Shanti Yagya
12. Please give any other taboos you observe.

(10) INTER—RELIGOIUS INTERACTIONS

1. Do you have friends belonging to other religions. Yes/No
2. Do you maintain family relations with them. Yes/No
   If yes.
3. Does the following happen. (Please mark.)
   (i) The ladies of two families meet frequently
   (ii) Children play together

(iii) Inter-dinning
(iv) Exchange of visits on festivities
(v) Entry into each other's kitchen
(vi) Exchange of presents

4. Is there any instance of inter-religious marriage in your family. Yes/No
5. How would you react in following circumstances.
   (i) A family boy marrying inter-religiously. like/dislike/wont' mind.
   (ii) A girl marries inter-religiously. like/dislike/won't mind.
6. Have you visited the places of worship of other religions. If yes. Yes/No
7. You went there to
   (i) Know how they worship
   (ii) Accompany someone

Thank You,
K. GOPAL