

IMPACT OF RELIGION AND TEMPLE ON SOCIETY

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Abstract

It is a matter of fact that we may say that man cannot live apart from society and religion. Today the goal of religion is not only liberation, but it is more concerned with social welfare, social relation, social concession and national integration. Religion is for the betterment of human beings. Social welfare and service of humanity is the call of all religions. And hence religion must be viewed as a part of culture through society. In this paper our aim is to highlight the impact of religion and temple on society.

Keywords: Temple-Lord Shiva- Society-Religion- Shrine- Land- Cave temple

Introduction

Religions as Emotion

The emotion of fear, awe, reverence, and the sense of freedom felt by the worshippers often received the attention of psychologists. Weiser stresses emotional thrill as the core of religion¹. Even though Kirkpatrick disagrees his view he asserts that "an emotional element of some kind has probably been the most constant factor in the religious complex since it first came into existence"². The emotional experience awakened during the religious life of man depends on time and situation. The emotion of fear has been a source of religious behaviour in the life of civilized man also. While justifying this view, Bright man says, that fear gets religious value when applied to goodness and justice³.

Religion as Sentiment

A sentiment may be defined as a permanent tendency to emotion and action crystallized about some central idea⁴. According to McDougall, a sentiment is a system in which a cognitive disposition is linked with one or more emotional or effective co native disposition to form a structural unit that functions as one whole system⁵. There are five factors that create the religious sentiment⁶.

1. Bodily needs
2. Temperament
3. Pursuit of meaning
4. Culture and Conformity
5. Four wishes

Hinduism

Roughly, the history of Hinduism can be divided into three main periods, the ancient, the medieval and the modern. The ancient period extends from 2,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D. It starts with the Vedic age and ends with Advaita system of Sankara, a profound thinker of the period. Hinduism in the ancient period had to face two great faiths, Buddhism and Jainism. In the medieval period we have the devotional movement in South and North India. This period extends from 1000 A.D. to the beginning of nineteenth century. The devotional movement in South was purely a Vaishnavite movement. During this period, Hinduism steadily rose to supremacy and Buddhism lost its hold all over country. The modern period of Hinduism had its beginning round about nineteenth century when the devotional movement had begun to decline. This period is marked by several changes both in Hindu ideals and in the Hindu way of life⁷. The first is Aryasamaj. It was started by Dayananda Saraswarathi in Punjab. The second is the Theosophical Society. It was founded by Madam Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in 1875 in Newyork and the Head Quarters was shifted to Madras in 1878 and started functioning under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant. The third is the Ramakrishna Mission. It is named after the renowned visionary, Saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Impact of Hinduism on Art

The art of India is the image and vehicle of her thought and civilization. It cannot be rightly understood and interpreted without an appreciation of the inner life and vision of the Indian people⁸. The pioneer in the study of Indian art, Havell, Ananda Coomarasamy and O.C Ganguly attributed the significance and glory of Indian art mainly to Indian idealism, relatively neglecting its intrinsic qualities.⁹ The spread of Indian art was a continuous process covering over two millennia. It may be defined, however by certain successive waves of influences corresponding to the major renaissance of Indian culture.

The Definition of Temple

The word "temple" from the Latin word "templum" originally signified any holy enclosure or building that is screened from the eyes of the profane. It is the dwelling place of God; it serves the purpose of housing his image; and it is the architectural frame of the liturgy and cult of the God. "A temple in the original sense of the Latin word templum meant for a rectangular place marked out by the angur for the purpose of his observations which were taken within a rectangular text"¹⁰.

Temple as Aparton of Music and Arts

During the festivals musicians rendered classical songs in front of the deity, both inside the temple and at Car Street at procession playing on the Nadaswaram with its

accompaniments is considered to be especially auspicious. So it is played in the early morning as also during other day to day pujas functions and festivals.

Temple as an Agent of Poor Relief

Feeding of poor and the deserving persons on the occasion of feast and festivals was occurred in temple. Marriages and other ceremonies were considered an act of piety. For a rest house for the travelers and visitors form acts a side in a piety. In early days the temple itself served as the agency to carry on the charity on account of the sanctity attached to it was easy for arranging to distribute a portion of the offered food freely among the devotees and also local people who took part in some service. Daily for two persons meals were provided now.

The Temple as a Land of Owner

Land the immovable property appeals to the primary wealth of the temples. The accumulation of land was mostly by donations from the rules and private individuals. The land donations made over to the temple was lauded as the best Dana (gift) greater than another gift.¹¹

Temple as a Consumer

As an institution requiring a variety of commodities and services for its day to day conduct as well as on special festival occasions, the temple was the biggest consumer of the locality. In the early stage, the requirements of the temples were probably few some rice for offerings, flowers Sandal, milk, Ghee, and oil for lamp etc. all that were required. The steady increase in the offering, festivals and rituals from about 13th century A.D resulted in the increase of the articles required by the temple manifold. The items constantly required by the temple are: rice, Gram, pulse, turmeric, pepper, mustard, jiggery, salt, betel, camphor, kumkum, coconut, fruits, thulasi, milk, ghee, butter, curd, oil, honey. Not only in the food article but in other articles like cloth, wooden objects, jewels, gold, silver and brass, metal lamps, decorative articles and the like is required. The temple still continues to be the biggest consumer in the locality. In this way, the temple stimulated and encourages local trade and industry.

Notes

1. Weiser. G.A, "Early Civilisation", P.101
2. Kirkpatrick. C, Op.Cit., P.109
3. Brichtman. E.A," A Philosophy of Religion"P.109
4. Shand. A.F, "Character and Emotion",P.P.203-226
5. Mc Dougall, Op.Cit.,P.119
6. Allport.G.W, "The Individual and His Religion",P.201
7. Farquhar. J.N, "A premier of Hinduism", P.122

8. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, "The Flowering of Indian Art",P.111
9. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, Op.Cit.,P.VII
10. Encyclopaedia of religion and Ethics. Vol. 12, P.236.
11. Ei Vol XXXII , p. 91,92