

Religion in everyday gopalpurian life

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Hindu religion can be regarded as being among the most complicated and broad religions in the world. It has been in practice for more than a thousand years and in these years it has played a major role in shaping the Indians everyday's life. India being a hierarchical society, its culture whether the south or north, urban or village, people or groups of people and virtually everything fall under ranks in accordance to the various essential quality. Hinduism as a religion places all beings onto a somehow vertical dimension, coming from the gods who are above everything, to the demons which are found below. The life of the people in societies which practice Hinduism is characterized by the falling and rising on the vertical dimension depending on the degree at which they are pure like the gods or impure like the demons.

One is pure when he observes the virtues in the society as expected by the gods while ungodly when he fails to meet the rules of ethics and conducts. It is this virtual dimension of the Hindu religious beliefs that are credited for shaping the structure of the Indians everyday's life. To justify the above statement, this paper takes a look at the Gopalpur village in trying to show how life in this village has been structured by the Hindu religion. This is true as the Hindu caste system determines the religious, economic and social set up in most regions in India with Gopalpur village being the best example. The Hindu religion concept of a pure society is responsible for the establishment of the caste system in most parts of India.

This is a complex and elaborate social system which puts together elements of tribal affiliation, culture, social class, endogamy, occupation and political power. In most cases, members of particular caste are expected to be of the

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same occupation, economic position or /and of the same rank. This cultural distinct and hierarchical system is evident in the Gopalpur village where it has been divided into four classes commonly referred to as varnas. The classes are arranged from the highest to the lowest varna; the highest being the priestly class known as the Brahmins, then the warriors and the rulers referred to as the Ksatriya, followed by the merchants and landholders termed as Vaisya, and lastly, the menial and cultivators known as the Sudra. The social groups found below the Sudra are considered as being impure by the religion beliefs. This is evident in this society as it is not easy for Hindus from the Gopalpur village to share basic things like a plate or spoon with the people from the lower caste.

This goes as far as commercial places like tea shops where it is common to find different cups meant for the different existing castes. It is as a result of this caste system that it is easy to identify an Indian's background, religion, community or caste basing on the basic things in the society such as what they eat, from where and how (Noss, p 67). This extends to determine the education levels and economic class one comes from. This is because of the many rules observed by the Hindu religion that determine the common practices in the societies. They restrict the believers from some activities while some rules encourage them to engage in others.

For example, Gopalpur marriages are not out of love but considered as economic alliances and unions for survival. Without these marriages, the maintenance of the religious and economic structures in this society would be close to impossible (Beals, 96). This means that the society would fail to exist both in its economic, social and religious structures. The religious rules

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graft values to the growing children, creating obedient societies. In most villages and towns, every member of these societies understands and respects the rankings represented by the caste.

Members of the society behaviors and activities are constantly shaped by their knowledge of these ranks. The Hindu rules prohibit things like sexual and eating contacts between the lower and higher castes. Such castes are ordered hierarchically to a fixed rank order mostly associated with traditional positions and occupations. The religious beliefs being very vital in the Gopalpur society, they dictate most of the activities in this community. They believe that it is this Hindu religion that lead to god's gracious and consolidates in the families determining everything that happens to them as a sign of the god's divine will. This means that they will at no time object the expectations of the religion as they consider that their fate is determined by the gods.

The economic structure of the Gopalpur society is divided into three groups namely; the landless, middle class and landlords (Beals, p 102). The economic status that results from the caste system is also taken into consideration while determining how a certain group is ranked in the ceremonial and social gatherings. Those who fall on the lower economic classes such as the leather workers are not considered as unfortunate but the many people in the society who don't abide by the teachings of the Hindu religion. These Hindu religious rules have defined the society's structure through the caste system marking a constant wall between different ranks and castes of people. Although many westerners regard the caste system as being ridiculous as they are used to social mobility, the <https://assignbuster.com/religion-in-everyday-gopalpurian-life/>

Hindu religious concept is accepted and respected by most of the Indians as it is deeply embedded into their lives from their early childhood. The Gopalpur village provides a good example of how the norms and rules of the Hindu religious beliefs control the Hindu society structuring their day to day life.