

ABSTRACT – RC 6

Religion, Faith and the Craft: Social Practices in Dealing with Life Crisis

Dr. Anannya Gogoi

Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology

Dibrugarh University

Phone: 9435057396

Email: anannyagogoi19@gmail.com

LMI - 3198

Abstract: Social Anthropology and Social Psychology have fruitfully attempted to observe and interpret the relationship and interdependency between religion on the one hand and the community and society on the other. Emile Durkheim, James Frazer, Bronislaw Malinowski and Carl Jung are the few names that have contributed immensely to the study of the role of religion in shaping the belief systems of people in a given society. In different social context the definition and the significance of religion have varied. Nevertheless religion as a system of belief has always been an important social institution. However science and rationality are often considered polar opposite of a few of these belief systems and faith in the modern society. The rising visibility of incidences of witchcraft and ‘black magic’ in the North Eastern states of India as well as other societies has posed a challenge in bringing social order and spreading modern education and literacy. The current discussion is a narrative of certain practices such as magic, witchcraft, faith healing and counseling in religious tenets that are followed by the people during crisis. The paper tries to look at these practices from a socio- psychological approach. I would

like to do this by narrating and interpreting the practices and their significance as a system of belief and faith.

The Changing Gender roles in early Christianity

Melissa. C. Remedios

M.Phil

Christ University

Bangalore

Email: melissachriselle@gmail.com

Membership: Awaited

Abstract: The paper intends to study how religion influences women in their gender makeup and the roles they played in the larger society. Conflict between genders leads to oppression of women in the religious domain of the church. Culture sets boundaries engulfing them in chains of misery which make women subjugated. Particularly from 1st century when men of the Christian faith were writing the scriptures of the Bible, various religious constraints were imposed on women so that they play the role of a wife, mother and daughter. Women in the early church history were the silenced lot; they played their role alongside men in the ministry and church life wherever given a chance. The paper intends to look at women's participation in the church, their equation with men folk, cultural influences of the mindset during the church cultures in the early ages. The paper further intends to have a feminist understanding and an interpretive approach of spirituality and sexuality of women in the Christianity from an academic lens (Stark Rodney, 2011).

**Negotiating the Body and Self in Satras: Everyday Life of the Bhakats in the Uttar
Kamalabari Satra of Majuli, Assam, India**

Gayatri Borah

Research Scholar

Dept of Sociology

Tezpur University

Tezpur, Assam

Email: gayatriborah27@gmail.com

LMI-4205

Abstract:

This paper tries to bring about aspects of body, self and identity of the Bhakats residing in the Satras. They normally join the Satras at a very early age whereby they adopt a new life abstaining from the otherwise regular way of life. This paper brings out the representation of the body and identity of the Bhakats or inmates of the Satras, their way of portraying their self and the changes emerging therein with the gradual influence from 'mainstream society'. It would also try to look into the everyday interaction of the Bhakats. The paper also argues that religious practices have a great bearing in the way one constructs and controls their idea of the body, self and identity. Satra is a monastic institution with rigid structures. However this is not impervious to the changes happening outside. Further the fluidity of a sacred space with that of the secular space determines the extent of influence of such constructions of identity, which can have a universal implication. The study will make use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data will be collected from the bhakats, the satradhikars, community leaders, officials, and commoners using interviews, observation, oral history, case study. The size of the sample of each Satra will depend on the number of inmates residing in the respective Satras. Secondary

sources would include pre-existing research works on the problem and related works, books, government documents, journals, newspapers, e-resources and other relevant sources.

Socio-Psychological Aspects of Religious Conversion: A Study of the Mishings of Dhemaji District in Assam

Dr. Jyoti Prasad Saikia
Associate Professor,
Dept. of Sociology,
Dibrugarh University,
Dibrugarh, Assam
LMI 2466
And

Sri Rideep Phukon
Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Sociology,
Dhemaji College,
Dhemaji, Assam

Email: phukanrideep@rediffmail.com

Abstract: Religious conversion is a complicated and multi-layered process of religious change, which involves a total reorientation and transformation of one's life. The term *religious conversion* has to do with the complex and multi-dimensional process of religious change that brings about the total reorientation and transformation of one's life, influenced by the interplay of personal, social, cultural, and religious components. This paper is an attempt to understand the process of religious conversion among the Mishings, a mongoloid tribe belonging to the Indo-

Tibetan group and settled mainly in the districts of Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Lakhimpur and Sivasagar of Assam. The Mishings followed their distinctive cultural pattern along with their traditional religious beliefs and practices austerely until they came into contact with Hinduism and at a later stage with Christianity. Of late, a good number of Mishing people have been embracing Christianity in different parts of Assam. The Roman Catholics have started their activities in remote villages of the Mishing inhabited areas of Majuli, Sadiya, Telam, Silapathar, Akajan, Jonai etc. The process of conversion of the Mishing population has been going on in spite of objection of certain section of people from among the Mishing society. As such the primary objective of this paper is to discover the socio-psychological aspect of decision making with regard to religious conversion.

Religious Life: A Buddhist Tribal Group (The Tai- Khamyangs) of Assam

Dr. Probhat Sarmah

Digboi Mahila Mahavidyalaya

Email: probhat389@gmail.com

Membership No: 2076

Abstract: Religion plays an important role in the society creating a bond that binds the individuals together. The Tai-khamyang (Man Tai-speaking group) is a tribal group in Assam whose population at present is 3000 and they are distributed in 10 villages in upper Assam. The Khamyangs are Buddhists of Theravada form. This group of Buddhism, also called Hinayana is the most orthodox one. The present study was conducted in two homogenous Tai-Khamyang villages, namely Powai Mukh (Tinsukia District) and Disangpani (Sibsagar District) in upper Assam. Using field experiences, the present paper tries to deal with some important aspects of their religious life. The paper tries to bring out how the Buddha Vihar (Monastery) and the Bhikkus (Monks) alongwith the precepts of Buddha and major festivals play a very significant

role in the religious life of the people. Particularly Powai Mukh of Tinsukia district in Assam where the traditional dialect ‘Tai’ has been retained, the inhabitants are relatively more conservative with regard to their culture, beliefs and practices. The Khamyang people follow all the Buddhist principles and celebrate all the religious functions at family, community and international levels. But at the same time it is found that many of them, particularly those belonging to the younger generation do participate in the Hindu festivals like Phakuwa (Holi), Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja, Siva-Ratri and Bihu etc.

Triple Talaq in Islam: A Critical Appraisal

Dr. Pirzada Athar Hussain,
Postdoc-fellow ICSSR, New-Delhi,
Department of Sociology,
University of Jammu J&K
Email: atharsociology@gmail.com
Membership: LMI-3085

Abstract: Triple Talaq, an intendment, among Muslims, mostly women become cautious if there is a pronouncement of it. The Holy Quranic revelation buttress here as “*Talaq*” most disliked by Allah. Islam is a religion based upon the eternity of one almighty and the Quran is the entire linkage of solutions. Simultaneously, a proper mechanism is mentioned which explains the methods of “*Talaq*”. This issue of “*Triple Talaq*” is becoming a very sensitive issue among the Muslims, not only in India but other countries as well. This article has been designed to capture an overview of this debate on “*Talaq*” and the insistence on reformation of Islamic Jurisprudence (Muslim Personal Law Board, India). Some historically based arguments about the formation of Talaq system has been also mentioned to justify its notion of contemporary vision. However, this paper has been divided into six different sections (i) *Introduction*, (ii) *Preferences of Talaq*

Occasion: A Scriptural Perspective, (iii) Talaq According to Muslim Personal Law: Islamic Jurisprudence, (iv) Talaq and its Manifestation: A historical Background, (v) the contemporary prevalence: utterances of Immediate Triple Talaq, and (vi) Conclusion. The paper critically acquaints the innovative or irregular “*Triple Talaq*” by examining that whether it is sanctified by the Holy Quran and the Sunnah (Teachings of Prophet SAW) and if there is a consensus of opinion (ijma) of the effectiveness of Triple Talaq.

Comparative Analysis of Selected Socio-economic Indicators among Hindu and Muslim Women of Sapatgram Town

Rubayet Hasan

Baharul Islam Laskar

Dept of Sociology, USTM

Email: blaskar69@gmail.com

Membership No: LMI-1979

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are two sides of the same coin. Both have multiple dimensions that together yield a wide variety of indicators. Over the past decades, gender equality and women’s empowerment have been explicitly recognized as crucial not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development. Further as the status of women vary from community to community, a comparative study among Hindus and Muslims was designed in the context of Sapatgram Town of Dhubri District in Assam. The paper tries to focus on i) the educational status of women among Hindus and Muslims of the town; ii) the economic

and health status of women of both the communities; and iii) the age at marriage of women in the study area.

Reframing the ‘Religious’: Methodological and Conceptual Challenges

Aditya Ranjan Kapoor,
Assistant Professor,
Centre for Sociology
Central University of Punjab
Email: aditya.kapoor.2k@gmail.com
LMI-2508

Abstract: In recent times, there has been a renewed interest among scholars towards understanding piety and religiosity in the pretext of everyday life. This interest is largely influenced by the post-secular debate concerning the role of religion in our public life and considering religion as a source of everyday ethics. The paper attempts to contextualize this debate and highlights the relational aspects of piety and religiosity in our everyday life. The social settings of South Asia, demands a different methodology to understand the religious aspects of our everyday life. Drawing on my ethnographic data and engaging with some of the scholarly works in this field of study, I argue that aspects of our religious life should account for the embedded character of religious tradition in a wider socio-historic setting. This necessitates us to understand the historical background in which any religious traditions evolves and undergoes shifts. The paper argues for a different approach to understand the multifarious engagement of common people with their religious tradition, which acknowledges the socio-cultural and historical sensibilities of people in this region and explores the various ways through which they make sense of being religious.

**Women and Spirituality in Modern Hindu Sect: An Ethnography Study of the Brahma
Kumaris**

Ms. Synem Hrangkhawl
Research Scholar,
Department of Sociology,
Tripura University,
Mobile no. 9436179916
Email:nemmy16@gmail.com
ID: 73. (Membership Awaited)

Abstract:

Women's presence in new religious movements raises important questions about gender equality, exploitation of women and the future of their families (Palmer 1993). It is worth examining how far have these neo-Hindu movements provided an alternative to the traditional organised religions in terms of providing an egalitarian space to women in the religious sphere. How and to what extent participation of women in these new religious movements alter their traditional gender roles? This research will focus on the need for understanding the role of women in new religious movements with special reference to the Brahma Kumaris. It will deal with issues such as: whether the new religious movements are competing with and challenging mainstream religions and secular society? Do they offer genuinely empowering alternatives to women or rather regressions into patriarchy? In this context do women exercise religious authority in distinctly different ways from men? Are women drawn to one kind of religious worldview than another? Do female, androgynous, or non-personal images of the sacred necessarily ensure equal access of women to authority? How different world religions co-exist in Brahma Kumaris? These are some of the questions that we would be dealing with in the paper.

Madhab, Maslak: Framing ‘Barelwi’ Identity in the Indian Subcontinent

Fakhruzzaman

PhD Candidate

Centre for Political Studies,

School of Social Sciences,

Jawaharlal Nehru University,

New Delhi

Email: fakhrufaiz@gmail.com

Membership:

The paper seeks to understand the origin of the term Barelwi and tries to link them with Madhab and Maslak. Many social scientists had written about Barelwis and Ahle-Sunnat, but none of them have been defined the term, origin and development of the Maslak of Barelwis. Usha Sanyal defines, the Barelwis call themselves the “people of the [Prophet] sunna and the majority community” *Ahle-Sunnat wa Jammat* and reject the name of Barelwi as derogatory, because of its implication that their belief are local and deviant rather than universalistic and mainstream(Sanyal,p,201). Ron Geaves in his project defines the Barelwis, as a conscious reaction to the Deobandi reformers. Obviously every Muslim from the subcontinent who does not follow the structures of the revivalist message can be described as Barelwi, but Ahmed Raza Khan and Barelwi Ulama used their status and legal scholarship consciously to justify a mediatory, custom-laden Islam that was closely linked to the intercession of shrine-based Pirs. The paper will dwell on the debate on Maslak-e Ahle Sunnat vs. Maslak-e Ala- Hazrat has taken place in the last twenty years. Whether Barelwi is the right word to call them or Ahmed Raza Khan to be considered as a prophetic figure in Barelwi Islam. The paper will highlight the concept of Sunni Muslim and origin and development of Ahle-Sunnat wa- Jammat. It also highlights how the Barelwi Ulama have given their consensus on Maslak-e Ala-Hazrat vs.

Maslak Ahle-Sunnat. The question that remains unanswered is, who are the Barewli? How to relate with Maslak Ala-Hazrat. What does mean to be Barelwis?

**Ritualisation of the Fear of Serpents in Thought and Practice — A Critical Study on
'*Manasha Puja*' from Faith to Folklore**

Ankita Chakrabarty

M.phil Scholar

Jadavpur University

Email: ankita.chak01@gmail.com

ID: 105 (Membership awaited)

Abstract: Understanding religion as an encompassing order demands a thorough and critical interpretation of beliefs, practices and rituals as a lived reality. In the context of this argument, the paper proposes to understand the role and significance of *Manasha Devi* as the Goddess of snakes and the generation of consequent fear of snakes or in other way round the fear of the snakes as propagating reverence for the Goddess. The worshipping of the Goddess is seen predominantly across the eastern parts of India like Bengal, Assam, Orissa. The significance of this non Aryan Goddess is not only confined to the realm of ritual worship but has been adorned in the form of folk literature known as *Manasa Mangal*, which portray altogether a different dimension of a folklore culture of certain geographical areas. The paper takes up a detailed study of the fear of snakes and relevance of the saviour from snake bites *Manasha Devi* in the present urbanised settings of Kolkata and its surrounding suburbs. However, the prime focus would be to locate whether it is the religiosity attached to the phobia of snake or the fear as a result of the religious ignorance or adherence towards the Goddess.

Lived Religion and Cultural Capital: A Study Based on Bhuyiaan Baba Temple

Vivek Kumar

Research Scholar,

Department of Sociology, Banaras Hindu University

Mobile No. : 9695893110;

Email Id: vivek6596@gmail.com

Membership No: 4096 (Life membership)

India is a multicultural, diverse society evolving over four thousand years of continuous history. It has encounters with Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity and a secular, plural, representative nation state. The paper is based on a temple known as Bhuiya Baba which has a long history of over four hundred years. It emerged after the advent of Bhakti movement: a formation of inter-mingling and blending of great and little traditions. The temple is situated in Vaishali district of Bihar. The paper tries to understand the phenomena of lived religion at a time of social transition. Furthermore, LPG process has made society more divisive. The paper tries to explore the accumulative, social and cultural capital of this temple in a form of symbolic representation to forge the bonding of society. The paper will also explore the significance of different events held at this temple. The question that will be explored is: how far this accumulative capital and symbolic representation have ramifications on inter-faith accommodation?

Babasaheb Ambedkar's Ideas on Religion: An Analysis in Sociology of Religion

Dr. Joseph M.T.

Assistant Professor,

Department of Sociology,

University of Mumbai.

Email: mtjoseph@live.in

Membership No: LMI3209

Abstract: The critical views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar with regard to Hinduism with specific emphasis on the way ingrained casteism denies the formation of unified communities in the Hindu fold, coupled with his scathing attack on the Hindu sastras forms the most fundamental block of annihilation of caste. The critique of the prominent Hindu deities in *Riddles in Hinduism* are fairly well known and constantly commented upon by scholars as well as other commentators. The paper is an attempt to apply the classical as well as modern ideas and concepts in sociology of religion to the understanding Babasaheb's idea of religion. One of the very interesting contributions that he makes is of the way he divides religions into two broad categories, as religion of principles and religion of rules. The theoretical rendering of a religion or principles enable Babasaheb to find a curious mix of religion and politics wherein the former becomes the moral axis of principles on which the latter would turn. It can also be argued that this project has in a way received a setback in the way Neo Buddhism turned out to be an identity religion after the death of Babasaheb.

Vaccination Programme: Debates among the Mappila Muslim Religious Groups of Malabar, Kerala

Name: Hashim T

Guest Faculty

Department of Sociology

Pondicherry University

Email ID: hashimthadathil@gmail.com

Membership No: LMI 3292

Muslim religious groups in Malabar have been opposing the Kerala government vaccination programmes for children. As a result, children from the Muslim community remain vulnerable to dangerous diseases like tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, meningitis, whooping cough, tetanus, hepatitis-B, and poliomyelitis since they are denied vaccination. People who oppose the vaccination programmes, especially the alternative medical practitioners (Unani, homeopathy, naturopathy and Prophetopathy) and religious groups, argue that the modern medicine may contain microbes, chemicals, and animal derived products that are essentially Haram and they also hold the view that vaccination as a preventive medicine is not complaint with Sharia. In addition, a rumor had been spread that there is a conspiracy to control or even harm the Muslim population growth. The 'progressive' people within the Muslim community, on the other, criticise the ulama for their anti-modernist stance. Ulama use the text and various interpretations to support or oppose the vaccination programmes in the community. Scholarship on Muslim religious groups often divides them as orthodox (Sunni A.P) and reformist (Mujahid group and Jamaat-e-Islami). There is an emerging convergence among the orthodox and the reformist Muslim groups in opposing the government's initiative on vaccination. The paper attempts to map the contestations among the Muslim religious groups on the issue of vaccination. I argue that we need to move beyond the understanding of Muslim religious groups as reformists vs.

revivalists, traditionalists vs. orthodoxy etc. to examine how each group negotiates with modernity beyond these binaries.

Gender and Clothing in Islam: Liberation or Oppression

Rameez Ahmad Lone

Dept. of Sociology, AMU Aligarh

Email : rameezln777@gmail.com

C. No: 7217520554/9837163952

Submitted to: RC 6 Religion and Religious Communities &

RC 10 Gender Studies

Membership No: M - 2384

Abstract

The hijab is seen as a tool of gender oppression. I would like to ask whether it really a sign of women's enslavement a 'degrading prison'? Or is it a sign of women's modesty and liberation? One needs to ask the women who choose to wear it. Many people argue that Islam oppresses and discriminates women by making them wear veils or hijab, while few people view it as a sign of women's protection or even liberation. Yet some people view body-revealing clothing – tight, transparent and half nude as a positive correlation with gender violence, while few others maintain hijab creates a barrier in sexual attraction thus having negative correlation with gender violence. Thus it would be quite improper and unfair to say that Islam oppresses women unless we study it, and understand it in the light of Islamic perspective. In this paper an effort has been made to throw light on hijab and its relevance with gender oppression or liberation in the light of Islamic perspective.

***Zaagra* of Machail Mata: A Folk Tradition of Sanskritising Goddess Chandi in Padar
Region of Kishtwar District**

Shamsher Singh

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Department of Sociology

University of Jammu

Shamsherrana84@gmail.com

Ph. +919906323996

LMI- 4161

ABSTRACT: *Zaagra* is an ancient tradition in which the members of a particular community (Padri) congregate at some sacred space, arrange bonfire and dance together the whole night to reveal their devotion for the deity. *Zaagra* in the Himalayan region of northwest India is a familiar phenomenon which depicts the cultural history of the area. When someone examines such phenomenon from close quarters, it can be located within the domain of folk Hinduism. When we try to categorize similar religious practice in pan-Indian Hinduism we come nearer to the tradition of *Jagrata*, though both the concepts have distinction in terms of their ritual performances. *Jagrata* is not a homogenous congregation where as in *Zaagra* people share the same faith towards the deity. In northern India *Jagratas* are performed following the Brahmanic mode, practicing vegetarian offering. *Zaagra* is a folk concept and can be grasped within the realm of folk Hinduism. However, in the recent years, one finds the elements of Sanskritic Hinduism penetrating *Zaagra* tradition. This paper examines the tradition of *Zaagra* as a folk festival and its transformation from folk to Sanskritic form of Hinduism in the context of Machail Mata, the Goddess Chandi of Padar region in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Mourning Rituals among Kashmiri Shia Muslims: An Ethnographic Account

Shahnawaz Hussain Bhat

Research scholars,

Department of Sociology;

Aligarh Muslim University; Aligarh

E-mail: shahnawazsociology@gmail.com

Mob: 7417746083

LMI-4196

Abstract: The culture of lamentation over the sufferings of *Ahl e bayt e Rasool* - the members of the house of the prophet of Islam in general and the tragic death of *Hussain*- the grandson of Prophet in particular, has become an inalienable and identifying aspect of the Shia community both at the macro as well as at micro levels. The martyrdom of infallible Hussain, the scion of the Prophet's lineage, who was slain along with other 71 men, including his closest family members and followers, has held an existential importance in a wide variety of cultural spheres in which Shia Muslims around the world and Shias of the Kashmir valley participate. Kashmiri Shias observe and practice these rituals with passion and fervour, thus identifying themselves with the macro Shi'i unity. An ethnographic prism of these rituals which are presented as the living symbol of the massacre that took place in 680 A.D, offers a hands-on panorama of symbolism. This paper endeavors to explore these symbolic rituals among Kashmiri Shia Muslims through an ethnographic prism.

**History, Memory and the Oral Tradition: Narratives from Toki-Parab Festival in
Kalahandi, Odisha**

Shankar Narayan Bagh,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Sociology
Sikkim University, Gangtok.
Email- snbagh@gmail.com,
Mobile-9910589730
LMI No-3631

Abstract: This paper is an attempt to understand the complex relationship between history and memory with oral tradition. By locating in a proper socio-historical context, this paper tries to examine the role of oral tradition in giving meaning to the everyday lives of the people. From an ethnographic account of the Toki-Parab festival in Kalahandi, Odisha, this paper tries to map the orality and performative aspects of the various rituals during this festival to understand the way memory and history interplay in shaping and reshaping the society and culture. Secondly, the way collective memory plays an important role in the construction, reconstruction and dissemination of the history and the various knowledge practices. Thirdly, as against the popular understanding of oral tradition and its openness, availability and democratic nature; this paper tries to examine the issue of accessibility and the ways people engage with it at multiple levels through interpretations and reinterpretations. Further, by using the various oral narratives, myths, folklores and legends, this paper will try to map the representation of the society and culture at the popular religious practices.

Scholarly Studies of Mappila Revolt of Malabar: Different Perspectives and Problems

Mohammed Shanid M & Neena Wilson

Post Graduate Students

Department of Sociology

Pondicherry University

Email: shanidkhalid452@gmail.com

Membership No: Awaited

Abstract: Scholarship on Mappila revolt in Malabar offers a variety of arguments regarding the emergence of the revolt. Scholars are divided as regards the real factors of the uprisings. The available literature gives us mainly two perspectives: first, the scholars who use the Marxian perspective argue that the factors for uprisings are primarily agrarian, and it was against British colonialists. According to the second perspective, mainly western scholars and right-wing historians argue that the illiterate Muslim Mappila fanatics were the primary factor for the outburst of the revolt and hence it had no scope in the nationalist movement. Rather than categorising the reasons of Mappila revolt into any of the above-mentioned ideologies, the paper would like to draw the diversities in the responses among the Mappila Muslims of Malabar, towards the Mappila revolt, and hence towards colonialism. We argue that the reasons for the Mappila revolt are both agrarian and religious, thereby crucially contributing to the nationalist cause. Therefore, the study would bring to fore the fragmented positions of the Mappilas towards Mappila revolt.

The Realm of Spirituality: A Sociological Conundrum

Shomit Chowdhury,

PhD Research Scholar,

Sikkim University

[Email: cshomit1@gmail.com](mailto:cshomit1@gmail.com)

Membership No: LMI-4206

Abstract: The way religion is being practiced and perceived today reflects a shift in consciousness especially with regard to the idea of the sacred. The domain of the sacred is no longer confined to the world outside of men rather it is also pervasive in the domain of individual subjectivity. Such a gradual process of shift is characterized by a “subjective turn of modernity”, wherein an individualized idea of the sacred is gaining momentum. Indeed, the traditional idea and practice linked to the term ‘religion’ is no longer in a position to capture this ‘subjective turn’. Thus, in turn the concept of ‘spirituality’ is gaining popularity in the contemporary era. The term ‘spirituality’ itself implies a sociological conundrum with its multiple interpretations depicting its abstract and immaterial nature. Moreover, people belonging to different religions participate in spiritual practices like meditation and other breathing techniques, etc. Thereby, one can also now witness a trend toward the assertion, “I am spiritual but not religious” questioning the very relevance of religion in contrast to the contemporary extremist religious uprisings. This paper intends to sociologically contextualize and interpret the complex domain of contemporary spirituality in India in relation to re-thinking the idea of religion within the broader context of ‘modernity’ or ‘post-modernity’.

Sikhism: A Case Study of Religion in India

Amritpal Kaur

Research Scholar (M.Phil)

Center for the Study of Social Systems

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi

Mobile no. 9971644758

Email address: amrtpkr.123@gmail.com

Membership No: Awaited

Punjab is a unique region in India in the sense of invasions, cultural intricacies and an alternative model of caste system. Its geopolitical location ensured the fluidity of religious boundaries and syncretism. Sikhism due to its challenge to religious orthodoxy and complexity demands special attention. The absence of a religious definition to Sikhs leads to the presence of diverse identities and varied practices. The defiance of secularist model due to mixture of religion and politics in Sikhism highlights the complexity of religions in India. The borrowing of the concept of 'religion' from the West which has attributes explaining Christianity, also fails to explain the Indian reality. A 'church' is absent in Sikh religion. Also, the culture and tradition of syncretism, fluidity of religious boundaries entail the enquiry into the question of 'boundary' and 'community' in Sikh religion. Presence of Sikh religion in its diversity, vast religiosity and varied authority stipulate an investigation into this particular religion. The paper aims to provide an enquiry into the particularities of Sikhism as an instance of complex of Indian reality through critiquing the textual analysis, uncritical borrowing of western concepts and categories through the use of historical sociology as a research method.

Christianity's Views on the Third Gender

Gloria Babu

Email: <gloriababu08@gmail.com>

Membership: Awaited

Transgender people are those who cannot be exclusively categorized as masculine or feminine and as a consequence labelled "Third Gender". In this paper, I would like to address the views on homosexuality in Christianity. The religion does not support transgenders: either the people or their politics. Maleness and femaleness are God's choice determined at conception. Following from this, Christians support and believe only in two gender. Besides, homosexuality is taken to be a sin in the religion. While the 'text' seems to consider it sin, the views of Christians on the issue suggests a stand-off between positioning of those who accept the normative and those who contest. Based on interviews of Christian priests as well as the laity, conducted in Puducherry, South India, I would like discuss the issue of homosexuality among Christians. The paper thus, first, attempts to map the changing views of Christians on the issue of homosexuality. Second, it attempts to foreground the manner of conceptualising implicated in the defense of norms and standards in the strategies adopted towards bridging the hiatus between the text and context. Finally, I attempt to show that this dichotomous characterization - 'reception' or 'denunciation' of homosexuality, is based on a language of religiousness and a certain conception of what is religion.

The Relevance of Religious Institutions in Social Control with Special Focus on Religion of Islam

Abdul Salam PP
M.A. Sociology
Pondicherry University

Nihal Bin Riyas A.K
M.A. Sociology
Pondicherry University
Membership: Awaited

Email: abdulsalamppoorakam@gmail.com

Abstract: Social control is an influence exerted through public opinion, coercion, social suggestion as well as religion. Religion is an important component of social control that helps to control individuals from deviating or committing crime, socialization of an individual and maintaining social order by creating harmonious relationship and unity. The religious customs and procedures become a part of man's life and man gets adjusted to the society. As Karl Marx viewed: religion as a social control used to maintain the status quo in a given society. In certain contexts religion in general and Islam in particular can play a positive role in reviving common values and uniting people for justice and equality, particularly the weaker sections. The paper discusses the relevance of religious institutions in social control, especially Islam. The primary objective of this study is to look into the importance of religious institutions in maintaining

social stability. This paper critically analyzes the concepts of constraints and freedom in this context.

Spatiotemporal Analysis of Hindu Religiosity in Kerala

Vishnu Priya R Y

Int. M.A. Sociology (Vth year).

Department of Sociology

Pondicherry University

vishnupriyary@gmail.com

Membership: Awaited

‘Hindu’ identity is growing in Kerala under the leadership of Hindu Aikya Vedi which comes under the Sangh Parivar. The recent political interventions in the social milieu of the state in particular has Hindu sentiments at its centre, which has showcased in the upcoming of third party. The paper aims to analyse the rising Hindu religiosity among the people, taking into account the activities they are involved in. In this paper, I trace how the call for Hindu nationalism has shaped the concept of ‘Hindu’ with reference to the organizational propagations and their impacts. The variety of Hindu nationalist demonstrations has affected the religious pluralism and the secular environment which needs to be looked into. The Indian nation which represents the Indian society in order to maintain harmony has to adhere to its Constitution. Thus, it is to be investigated if the agents of religious assertion will have an impact on the wider societal mores. The paper attempts to analyze the question in the context of Kerala from 2001 onwards. The rise of the right wing politics will be analyzed through content analysis.

Religious Identity and the Crisis of Cultural Assimilation among Indian Muslims

Sayyad Mohammad Afzal

PhD. Scholar,

Department of Sociology

Jamia Millia Islamia,

New Delhi

Membership No: 4000

Email: 22sayyad@gmail.com

Abstract: According to Anthony Giddens, the structure of society (such as Islam) has human agency. As sociologists we study Muslim behaviour within the structure of the religion. The article examines the potentials of the concept of othering to describe the identity formation among the followers of Islam. The chief objective of the research is to develop a holistic documentation of the understanding and practices of sectarian identity as well as the dispute, disagreement and their resolution on major issues between the two sects of Muslims Shia's and Sunnis. The methodology of the present study is secondary methods of data collection. The article examines a sociological understanding of otherness and how it works in everyday life.

