

Indian Sociological Society
Research Committee (RC) 06 – Sociology of Religion

Research committee 06 (Sociology of Religion) is a platform of academicians, scholars and researchers engaged in teaching and research on the sociological and anthropological approaches to religion. As a research committee of the Indian sociological society, one of the major events of the committee is the annual conference of the society. In addition, the committee envisions itself as platform for all researchers on the question of religion in society/religion and society to collaborate on book projects, joint authorship of monographs, and the organization of seminars, conferences, and workshops.

The search for the glue that binds people in collectivities in the context of the cataclysmic developments generated in European modernity gave rise to the classical forays in the discipline of sociology. The domain of religion was pivotal to that search, exemplified in the work of Durkheim, Weber, and others of the classical tradition. The sociological approach to the study of religion in general and religions in particular emerged as distinct from the genre of religious studies and the theological approaches to religions.

The sociological lens offered the study of religion a critical approach to both the conceptual and philosophical discourses as well as to the empirical search for what constituted the category of religion in practice. Certain degree of Euro-American bias can be detected in the theorization and substantive analysis in sociology of religion, particularly in ideas related to secularization, church-sect-cult typology, invisible religion, civil religion, the return of religion, disenchantment, re-enchantment, rational choice theory and so on. Sociologists who have fixed their gaze on non-semitic religions have pointed out the need for sociology of religion to break new grounds in its analysis of diversity in both beliefs and practices worldwide. The notion of Indic religions and the search for commonalities that bind Indic religions in contrast to the semitic religions has been a topic of scholarly engagement in South Asia.

South Asia has forms of religion which cannot be termed as sectarian due to the specific semantics associated with the term. Further, the unique forms of religion in South Asia and elsewhere prompt the interrogation of the very term 'religion' due to its Judeo-Christian origins. It is fascinating to train the sociological gaze on religion not only as a medium of legitimizing extant power relations and hierarchies but also as projects of emancipation, resistance, and protest. The sociological lens gets further strengthened by an intersectional approach where we look at religion from the standpoints of gender, caste, class, sexuality, ethnicity, race and so on. One of the major transformations observed in religion in contemporary times has been the emphasis on selective appropriation, reclaiming and reimagining. In this context the study of religion in every day life takes on immense significance.

Research committee 06 - Sociology of Religion invites scholars who are engaged in searching for and researching on the issues named above and other allied themes to become members of the committee and contribute to its vibrancy and dynamism.