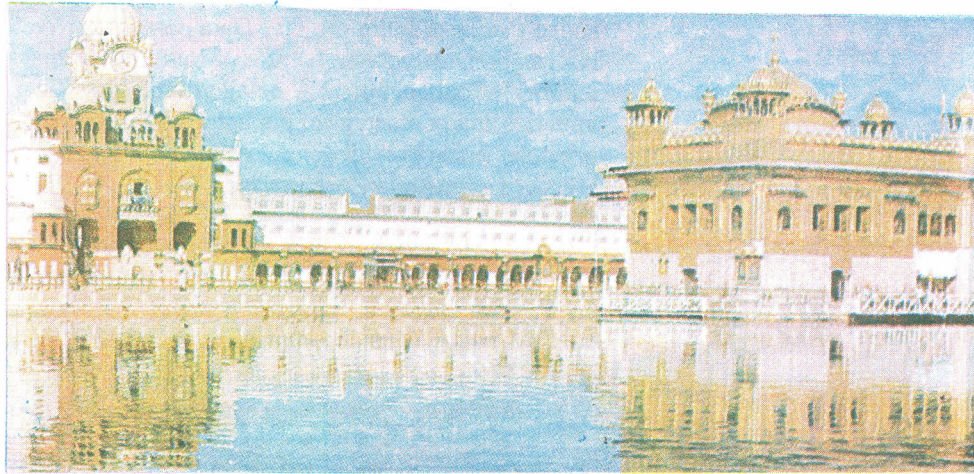


UNIT 28 RELIGIONS OF INDIA

Structure

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28.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we will discuss the main religions currently practiced in India. The religions selected for this study are Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Sikhism. After going through this Unit you will:

- be able to appreciate the pluralistic character of Indian society,
- know the basic belief systems of the religions listed above, and
- be able to acquaint yourself, with main customs and practices of various religions.

28.1 INTRODUCTION

India has a large number of belief systems, religions and sects. Some of these are quite organised with well defined theoretical framework and philosophy while a large number of these lack such features. Nevertheless all these have their own religious practices, ways of worship and customs.

It may not be feasible to go into the details of such a large number of belief systems. We have therefore, decided to confine our discussion to some of the important religions. For this Unit we have selected Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity for a detailed treatment. Our selection has been guided primarily by the popularity and geographic spread of these religions. Barring Islam and Christianity all the others from this list had their origins in India. The Islam and Christianity originated outside but have come to stay here and in the process, have been influenced by Indian culture and philosophy. They have also in turn influenced in a big way the religions prevalent in India.

We feel that as a student of tourism you should be familiar with the rich religious tradition in India. Here we will not be going into the details of philosophical complexities as also the intricacies of comparative merits of these belief systems. Our purpose is to focus our discussion on a description of the basic features of these religions.

We propose to discuss each of the above mentioned religions in a separate Section. Under each of these we will first discuss the basic belief systems. This will be followed by their social organisations and institutions. We will also highlight some specific features from the tourism perspective wherever required.

We feel that as a person involved with tourism and travel you will come across people belonging to different faiths and religious beliefs from India and abroad. We hope that the study of this Unit will enrich your basic knowledge of the multi-religions Indian society and equip you as a tourism personnel.

28.2 RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN INDIA

As indicated in the introduction India has a number of religions spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Anthropological Survey of India has undertaken a major study called **People of India** project. Data pertaining to religion from the project gives interesting information. A notable feature of this study is that each of the religions is practiced by a number of communities. A detailed table providing religionwise spread, number of communities and percentage of population subscribing to each religion based on **People of India** project is being provided here. Apart from six major religions figures are available for many others like Jews and Zoroastrians.

Religious Communities

Sl. No.	State/UT	All	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Jain	Buddhist	Christian	Jew	Parsi	Other
1.	Andhra Pradesh	386	340 (88.1)	28 (7.3)	3 (0.9)	1 (0.3)	3 (0.8)	29 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	20 (5.2)
2.	Assam	115	84 (73.0)	7 (6.1)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.9)	11 (9.6)	23 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (20.0)
3.	Bihar	261	197 (75.5)	41 (15.7)	1 (0.4)	3 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	46 (17.6)
4.	Gujarat	289	186 (64.4)	87 (30.1)	1 (0.3)	13 (4.5)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	9 (3.1)
5.	Haryana	82	70 (85.4)	7 (8.5)	17 (20.7)	1 (1.2)	2 (2.4)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)
6.	Himachal Pradesh	116	91 (78.4)	19 (16.4)	8 (6.9)	2 (1.7)	6 (5.2)	3 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.7)
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	111	41 (36.9)	59 (53.2)	5 (4.5)	1 (0.9)	6 (5.4)	2 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.9)
8.	Karnataka	300	247 (82.3)	27 (9.0)	1 (0.3)	3 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	22 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
9.	Kerala	225	199 (88.4)	10 (4.4)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (5.8)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	7 (3.1)
10.	Madhya Pradesh	342	285 (83.3)	26 (7.6)	0 (0.0)	18 (5.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (4.7)
11.	Maharashtra	305	239 (78.4)	25 (8.2)	3 (1.0)	17 (5.6)	1 (0.3)	14 (4.6)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	25 (2.8)
12.	Manipur	29	4 (20.7)	1 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (79.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (62.1)
13.	Meghalaya	27	16 (59.3)	6 (22.2)	1 (3.7)	1 (3.7)	2 (7.4)	15 (55.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (33.3)
14.	Nagaland	25	7 (28.0)	2 (8.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.0)	1 (4.0)	19 (76.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (76.0)
15.	Orissa	279	259 (92.8)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	7 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	58 (20.8)
16.	Punjab	95	71 (74.7)	13 (13.7)	38 (40.0)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.1)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
17.	Rajasthan	228	166 (72.8)	44 (19.3)	4 (1.8)	17 (7.5)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.8)
18.	Sikkim	25	18 (72.0)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (28.0)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (8.0)
19.	Tamil Nadu	364	299 (82.1)	23 (6.3)	1 (0.3)	3 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	65 (17.9)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	13 (3.6)
20.	Tripura	78	64 (82.1)	3 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.8)	12 (15.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (24.4)
21.	Uttar Pradesh	307	231 (75.2)	70 (22.8)	4 (1.6)	2 (0.7)	9 (2.9)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	8 (2.6)
22.	West Bengal	203	161 (79.3)	21 (10.3)	2 (1.0)	1 (0.7)	7 (3.4)	10 (4.9)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	39 (19.2)
23.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	20	11 (55.0)	3 (15.0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.0)	9 (45.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (30.0)
24.	Arunachal Pradesh	66	4 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (27.3)	23 (34.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	49 (74.2)
25.	Chandigarh	42	30 (71.4)	7 (16.7)	15 (35.7)	1 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
26.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	14	6 (42.9)	1 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.1)	6 (42.9)
27.	Delhi	147	111 (75.5)	30 (20.4)	20 (13.6)	8 (5.4)	4 (2.7)	4 (2.7)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)
28.	Goa	35	27 (77.1)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (17.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)
29.	Lakshadweep	7	0 (0.0)	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
30.	Mizoram	17	2 (11.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (17.6)	15 (88.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (23.5)
31.	Pondicherry	67	49 (73.1)	10 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.5)	2 (3.0)	5 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.0)
32.	Daman	28	22 (78.6)	3 (10.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.1)
	Total	4635	3539 (76.4)	584 (12.6)	130 (2.8)	100 (2.2)	93 (2.0)	339 (7.3)	7 (0.2)	9 (0.2)	411 (8.9)

Note: The figures in parentheses represent percentage of population practicing that religion.

A very interesting aspect brought to light through this study is that there are a number of communities who follow more than one religion. According to the study "there are 27 communities who follow both Hinduism and Sikhism, 116 both Hinduism and Christianity, 35 Hinduism and Islam, 21 Hinduism and Jainism and 29 communities who are both Hindu and Buddhist." (K.S. Singh, **People of India: An Introduction**, pp.82-83)

Apart from established religions there are a number of local forms of religion. As an instance may be cited the **Pony Polo** (religion of Sun and Moon in Arunachal Pradesh) **Sarna Dharma** or **Jahera** (followed by Munda and Santal tribes), **Sanamali** cult among the Meitei in Manipur.

The existence of a large number of religions and their spread in the country has given rise to various forms of social organisations, institutions, rituals etc. Since most of these diverse religions and communities regularly interact with each other, some unique social institutions

customs and practices have emerged. A number of new socio-religious movements have also taken place.

A number of rituals related to birth, marriage and death are common in most of these religions. Similarly, observance of festivals has a lot in common in specific regions. Dress and lifestyle too have common features in most of the regions.

It is an interesting feature of Indian society that it permits conversions from one religion to another. According to **People of India** study change of religion is reported in the case of around 15 percent of communities. Even here preconversion practices are maintained by the converts in many cases. All this provides a great diversity to Indian society.

In the following Sections we will study the salient features of the major religions of India.

28.3 HINDUISM

It is very difficult to describe a single belief system as comprising Hinduism. The term Hindu was not applied to the followers of religion from the beginning. The word 'Hindu' was used by the foreigners coming to India and meant the people inhabiting Indus valley. Later on Hindu was used to describe the people following a particular faith. In historical -religious literature the terms used to signify the faith were **Vaidikadharma** (the religion of the Vedas) and **Sanatanadharma** (the eternal faith)

As such it is very difficult to identify a single concept of God, holy book, or even religious practice to define Hinduism. There are a set of belief systems that seem to constitute Hinduism. Innumeralbe cults and deities are there in Hinduism. It is flexible enough to absorb various belief systems within its fold. In spite of this diversity there does exist common threads binding a large number of people following Hinduism.

The religion is followed by the majority of the people of India. Large number of its followers are spread even in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Indonesia, Guyana, Fiji, Mauritius, Pakistan and other parts of the world.

Belief Systems

It is one of the oldest belief systems of the world. Saivism dates back to pre-vedic period. Through its development over ages a number of sects and sub - sects kept emerging from it. Similarly, a number of belief systems kept entering its folds.

We will discuss here characteristics that majority of Hindus share as common.

Brahman and Atman

Hindus believe in an eternal, infinite and all embracing ultimate force called **Brahman**. The **Brahman** is present in all forms of life. The relationship between the **Brahman** (the universal soul) and **Atman** (the individual soul) has been the main concern in Hinduism. There are diverse views on this relationship. One view is that there is no existence of God and the **Brahma** is absolute. However, most other views recognise the existence of God.

The **Atman** is considered indestructible and passes through an endless migration or incarnations of human, animal or super human forms. The nature of its incarnation depends on good and bad **karma** (deeds) in previous births. Good or bad is defined according to **Dharma**.

Dharma

Dharma has many meanings. In the religious context, it includes cosmological, ethical, social and legal principles that provide the notion of an ordered universe. In the social context **Dharma** refers to the rules of social intercourse laid down for all the categories of people. It prescribes a code of conduct considered appropriate for various categories of people.

Purusartha

A complete life according to Hinduism pertains to four pursuits: i) **Dharma** ii) **Artha** (material pursuits) iii) **Kama** (love desires) and iv) **Moksha** (salvation). A successful life should be able to integrate these four pursuits.

A Hindu has certain obligations in life - to God, to sages, to ancestors and to fellow human beings.

Karma, Rebirth and Moksha

Karma in simple terms is spending life according to the code laid down by **dharma**. One is expected to lead a life where good deeds are performed. It is believed that after death the body perishes but **atman** (soul) survives to take rebirth in another human or animal form.

This rebirth depends on one's **Karma**. If deeds are good rebirth is in a superior form otherwise one is reborn in some inferior form. The ultimate success of life is in attaining **Moksha** or salvation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

Scriptures

There are a number of religious texts and books which are considered holy scriptures in Hinduism. Here we will provide a brief sketch of these in chronological order.

Vedas are the earliest texts. There are four Vedas - **Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda** and **Atharva Veda**. These are in the form of verses.

Brahmanas are theological treatises. They are written in prose form and they explain the religious significance of rituals.

Aryanakas or the forest treatises were written by sages who retired to forests. They deal with matters of meditation.

The **Upanishads** form a part of **Aranyakas** and contain the themes of Indian Philosophy. There are around 200 **Upanishads**. Some important ones are : **Isa, Kena, Prasna, Mundaka, Taittiriya, Aitoraya, Chandogya, Snetasyatara** and **Maitreyi**.

The **Vedas**, including the **Brahmanas, Aranyakas** and **Upanishads** are called **Sruti** or revelation.

The second category of texts is called **smṛti**. These works derive their authority from the **srutis**. These are considered as of human origin. The period of their composition is from 600 B.C. to A.D. 1200. (Some **Puranas** are later). In this category we can include **Vedangas, Puranas, Epics,** and **Sutras**.

The **Vedangas** comprise **Kalpa** ceremonials **siksha** (phonetic), **chandas** (prosody), **vyakaran** (grammar), **nirukta** (etymology) and **gyotisa** (astrology). **Kalpasutra** is an important **Sutra**. **Manusmṛiti** appeared in a codified form much later.

The epics such as **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata** belong to the early **smṛti** period (600 B.C. to A.D. 200). The teachings of **Upanishads** were brought to common masses through epics. The **Ramayana** is considered an earlier work than **Mahabharata**.

The **Bhagwad Gita** forms a part of the 6th book of the **Mahabharata**. It contains the nature of self, perishable nature of the body, the state of **samsara** (embodiment) and the means for liberation explained by **Srikrishna** to **Arjun** in the battle field of **Kurukshetra**. It emphasises on doing the duty without the expectation of fruits.

Bhagwad Gita is one of the most popular text among Hindus for centuries. It has been the source of inspiration for the development of many schools of philosophy.

To the period of **smṛtis** also belong **Puranas**. They deal with creation, dissolution, re-creation, divine genealogies etc. Traditionally 18 **Puranas** are considered important and are called **Maha Puranas**. Some **Puranas** represent devotional sects and are classified as **Vaishnava, Saiva** and **Sakta Puranas**.

A number of scriptures and texts have their regional variations and attachments to a number of sects etc.

The followers of Islam trace their faith from the origin of the world, and claim that it was preached from time to time by a large number of the messengers of God.

The Islam as it is practiced today originated around fourteen hundred years ago in Saudi Arabia. Prophet Muhammad is considered the last prophet who preached the present faith of Islam. The followers of Islam are called Muslims. The earliest contact of Muslims with India dates back to 8th century, with Arab sea merchants arriving at the southern sea coast. The second contact was after the Muslim invasions on the North-West frontier region. In early 8th century the Arabs under Muhammad Bin Qasim invaded Sind. From 10th century onwards a number of invasions from Central Asia followed. Towards the beginning of the 13th century the Turks under Muhammed Ghori established themselves as rulers of Delhi. This was followed by a wave of sufisaints from Central Asia who came to India and many of them settled here. Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti is one of the earliest to come and settle here in Ajmer. His mausoleum at Ajmer is visited by lakhs of people belonging to different faiths from India and abroad.

According to the tenets of Islam a Muslim must have faith in:

- 1) One God who has no partner and who is omnipotent and omnipresent.
- 2) The books of God revealed to different prophets from time to time of which the **Quran** is the last.
- 3) All the prophets including Moses and Christ were sent as messengers by God. Most crucial is the belief that prophet Mohammad was the last messenger of God sent on earth.
- 4) The day of Judgement when the world will come to an end and the people would be rewarded or punished for the deeds done in their life. This includes the concept of heaven and hell.
- 5) Angels of God - that the angels are not the partner of God but worship God and perform the tasks assigned by God.

Apart from the above stated tenets of Islam, its followers have certain religious duties.

The Religious Duties of Muslims

- 1) **Prayers:** A muslim must pray five times a day as per prescribed procedure. (at dawn, mid-day, mid-afternoon, after sunset and one and a half hour after sunset). A special prayer at mid-day in the mosques on Fridays where the congregation of the community takes place is also compulsory.
- 2) **Paying Zakat:** A muslim must pay 2 & 1/2 percent of his assets for prescribed religious and charitable purposes.
- 3) **Fasting:** Fasting for one month during **Ramzan** (month of Arabic calendar).
- 4) **Pilgrimage (Haj):** Every muslim of substantial means must pay a visit to **kaaba** in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) to perform **Haj** atleast once in the life time.

Main Sects

There are a number of sects and sub-sects among Muslims. Here we will not go into the details of all these sects but confine ourselves to two major well defined sects i.e., the **Sunnis** and the **shias**.

- i) The **Sunnis:** They believe that after Prophet the succession by Caliphs (Khalifas) was as per the tenets of Islam and traditions layed down by the Prophet. (The Prophet was succeeded by Caliphs - Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali in this order). They believe in the authority of **Quran** and the **sunna** (tradition) of Prophet only. They recognise no other authority as legitimate and above these two.

ii) **The Shias:** While accepting the supremacy of Quran and the traditions of Prophet, the **shias** differ with the **sunnis** in the matter of succession after Prophet. They believe that the Prophet should have been succeeded by Ali (who was also the cousin and son-in law of the Prophet). The other three Caliphs the **shias** believe held their position against the spirit of Islam. In due course a number of minor differences arose giving rise to a well defined separate sect. The **shias** consider Ali and his heirs as the **Imams** (leader of community). A total of 12 **Imams** are recognised. The **shias** also believe that the post of Imam is a special favour given by God to the chosen few.

A number of sects among both the **sunnis** and the **shias** emerged in and outside India with minor and major differences during the last fourteen hundred years. We will not go into the details of these sects here.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1) Describe the concept of **Brahma** and **Karma** in 50 words.

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2) Write a 50 word note on the main scriptures of Hinduism.

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3) Describe the five basic tenets in which a Muslim must keep faith.

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4) Write 50 words on the main sects in Islam.

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Five Precepts

The ordinary members have to follow five precepts. These relate to abstinence from:

- i) taking life
- ii) stealing
- iii) adultery
- iv) telling lies or untruthfulness and
- v) taking intoxicants

Ten precepts

The mendicant members or monks have to forsake family, occupation and society and lead a solitary life. They have to follow ten Precepts. These are abstinence from:

- i) taking life
- ii) stealing
- iii) sexual intercourse in any form
- iv) telling lies
- v) taking intoxicants
- vi) eating at wrong hours
- vii) enjoying dancing, singing and instrumental music
- viii) using jewellery and ornaments
- ix) sleeping on high luxurious beds
- x) taking money

Major Sects

The Hinayana

After the death of Buddha a number of councils were held to decide the questions of faith and religious order. One group claimed to adhere to the original traditions. This group came to be called as **Hinayan** (lesser vehicle). This group had a fixed canonical literature and was an orthodox body. Their main literature was limited to **tripitaka** (three baskets). These are **Vinay Pitaka** (Basket of Discipline), **Sutta Pitaka** (Basket of Discourses) and **Abhidhamma Pitaka** (Basket of Scholasticism). Its followers are mainly spread in East Asia, Srilanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and various parts of India.

Mahayana

The other group claimed their own doctrines and practices as belonging to **Bodhisatva** (Enlightenment being). They called themselves as **Mahayana** (greater vehicle) **Bodhisatva** according to them was potential **Buddha** and everybody could achieve it. But all of them stop at the **bodhisatva** state and could not achieve the status of Buddha. They believed that accumulated merit of **bodhisatva** could be transferred to help those who were struggling to escape from their various states of miseries. This way it could take larger numbers towards salvation. The followers of **Mahayana** are spread in Nepal, Sikkim, China, Korea, Japan and in India.

The Hinayana do not recognise deity worship and doctrine of God. The **Mahayana** introduced the idea of deity into their religion. **Bodhisatva** intervenes and saves from danger and death and protects the weak and helpless.

Vajrayana or Tantrayana

The followers of **Vajrayana** incorporate a magical and mystic dimension. The followers of this stream believed that salvation could be achieved through acquiring magical powers. They focussed on feminine divinities who were considered the source of **sakti** (power) behind the male divinities. Its followers are spread in Tibet, Mongolia parts of Bihar and Bengal in India.

28.5 BUDDHISM

Buddhism developed in India around 2500 years ago. Gautam Buddha was the founder of this religion. Its followers are spread in various parts of India, Ceylon, South East Asia etc. **Puranas** claimed Buddha as an **avatara** or incarnation of Vishnu. This led many scholars to view Buddhism as a reform movement within Hinduism and not a separate religion. However, now it is generally accepted as a separate religion different from Hinduism.

The Teachings of Buddha

Gautam Buddha did not recognise the authority of gods, scriptures, and priests and rejected rituals. He criticised the system of caste and creed. He emphasised the equality of high and low, men and women in matters of **dharma** (religion)

The fact of human misery or **dukha** was accepted as universal and Buddha showed a way out of it. The ideas of **karma**, rebirth and **moksha** (salvation) were central to his teachings. After Buddha's death his followers elaborated and interpreted his basic teachings. In due course a number of sects and sub-sects developed. We will discuss all these in this section.

THE ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM

Concept of Dukha

According to Buddhism **dukha** or pain or human misery is an integral part of life and nobody can escape from it. This is evident in sickness, old age, death, reparation, non fulfilment of one's desires. Buddha noticed these suffering as existing all around.

Reason for Dukha

Buddha said that the reason for misery or pain is the desire for wealth, power, pleasure and continued existence etc.

Ending Desire

To put an end to disappointment and suffering one must stop desiring. Buddha said that a person keeps taking new births to fulfill unsatisfied desires in one's life. To achieve **nirvana** or salvation from the cycles of birth one should put an end to desires.

Way to Stop Desires - Eight fold Path

Buddha suggested **Ashtang marg** or eight fold path to put an end to desires. These paths are right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

If a person follows these and other precepts he/she can be free from the cycle of births and deaths and attain **nirvana** or salvation.

Code of Conduct for Buddhists

Buddhism divides its followers into two categories - i) ordinary followers and ii) monk mendicant members. There are strict rules for the latter. Every person entering the Buddhist fold is to be initiated through a simple ceremony and has to stop subscribing to any other creed. They have to take a sort of vow by declaring.

I go for refuge to the Buddha

I go for the refuge to the **dharma**

I go for refuge to the order

Buddhism, to begin with had opposed the Brahminical social order or caste hierarchies. In contemporary India it is being used as an instrument for ending social inequality. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led the mass revival of Buddhism (he himself converted to Buddhism). He interpreted Buddhism as the ideology to bring social justice and equality for the oppressed. As a result large number of people belonging to scheduled caste got converted to Buddhism.

28.6 JAINISM

According to Jain Philosophy there are twenty four great circles of time. In each of these circles one great thinker has come to the world. These thinkers are called **Tirthankaras** or teachers or "ford-makers" by the followers of Jainism.

Bhagwan Mahavira is considered as the 24th **Tirthankara**.

The Belief System

The central doctrine of the Jainism is that there is life in the whole of nature. Even the non-living things have **jiva** (soul). No person should therefore indulge in injuring the **jiva**. One can achieve **nirvana** or eternal peace by not injuring the living things. Thus **ahimsa** (non-violence) occupies the centre stage in Jainism.

Teachings of Jainism

The 23rd **Tirthankara Parsvanantha** gave four vows of restraint. Lord Mahavira added the fifth and these became the teachings in Jainism. These are:

- i) **ahimsa** - non-injury to any living being
- ii) **sunrta** - not to speak untruth
- iii) **arteya** - not to take what is not given
- iv) **aparigraha** - not to be attached to worldly possessions
- v) **brahmacharya** - chastity

According to Jainism **karma** or action binds the self to the body. Ignorance of truth (**mithyatva** or **avidya**) causes the rise of passions (**kasaya**). The passions which are anger (**krodha**), greed (**lobha**), pride (**mana**), and deceitfulness (**maya**) are harmful to the **karma**. By the practice of right knowledge (**samyag-jnana**), right faiths (**samyag-darshan**) and right conduct (**samyag-carita**) one can liberate from bondage and **nirvana** can be achieved.

The Way of Life Prescribed for Jains

The adherents of Jainism are categorised into two - the ordinary followers and the **yatis** or monks. The ordinary followers are allowed certain practices which are forbidden for **yati** as ascetics.

The adherence to **triratva** - right faith, right knowledge and right conduct - is expected from both. The **yatis** are to take the vow not to inflict injury on life, not to marry and not to take food or drink at night. The general code of conduct includes:

- i) non-violence
- ii) truthfulness
- iii) charity
- iv) cultivating right state of mind
- v) regularly practicing meditation
- vi) fasting on the eighth and fourteenth days of moon's waxing and waning period
- vii) not to touch intoxicants
- viii) recitation of scriptures and mantra.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

1) Discuss briefly the essence of Buddhism.

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2) Describe the main sects of Buddhism.

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3) Discuss the main teachings of Jainism.

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28.7 CHRISTIANITY

According to tradition Christianity entered India after 50 years of its inception through Thomas one of the apostles of Christ. Thomas landed on the coast of Kerala around 52 A.D. and established seven churches in that area. These early christians were generally confined to Kerala. With the advent of European missionaries in early 16th century Christianity spread to all parts of India. The Portuguese were the first followed by the Dutch, the French, the British and other European and American missionaries. According to 1991 census christians in India number 16.77 million or 2.43 percent of the total population and are spread throughout the country. Their main concentration is in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura.

The Beliefs

Christianity is also considered as a revealed or divine religion (like Islam and Judaism). The religious precepts of Christianity are contained in their holy book called the Bible.

The Christ

Jesus christ is considered the central figure in christian faith. He was born around two thousand years ago. During his life he performed miracles, healed the sick and even gave life to the dead. He was crucified by his enemies at the young age of 33 years. According to christian belief he rose again on the 3rd day of his burial and ascended into heaven. He is

considered as a true man and true God by his disciples. He commanded his followers to spread his mission to all parts of the world.

Concept of God

According to Christian faith God is one but has revealed himself as three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This concept of God is described as Unity in Trinity. Jesus is God, the Son, born of the Virgin Mary who conceived the Holy Spirit. According to the Christian belief the incarnation of Christ as a human being is a part of the divine plan for the atonement of the sins of mankind.

The Bible

The Bible is the holy book followed by the Christians. It consists of two collections of books: i) the Old Testament and ii) the New Testament.

The Old Testament contains the sacred scriptures of the Jews as well as the early Christian scriptures. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.

The New Testament was written in the 2nd half of the first century A.D. By the end of the second century the greater part of the New Testament was accepted as authoritative. It consists of 27 books and was originally written in Greek. It contains the life and deeds of Christ, the works of his companions and other saints and covers a wide range of things.

Sin and Evil

According to the Bible the God created heaven and earth and the first human beings Adam and Eve as the ancestors of the human race. Adam and Eve were disobedient to their creator and brought sin and evil into this world. All mankind became heirs to the sin and lost the privilege of being the children of God. The suffering and death of the sinless man Jesus could atone the sins of mankind. God had sent his beloved only son to save the mankind from eternal damnation. Jesus is therefore called the saviour of mankind. God punishes the evil and rewards the good. The biggest good deed is to forgive the persons who sin against other persons.

Body, Soul and Salvation

According to the Christian belief man has a body and a soul. The former perishes while the latter survives eternally. Salvation means the continued existence of the individual into heaven after death. The Christianity does not believe in the transmigration of souls. Individual's salvation is possible only if he/she accepts Jesus as saviour.

Communion

Sunday is considered 'Lord's day' and worship service is organised in the churches. The worship service consists of religious instruction, preaching, prayer and the breaking of bread. The last practice follows from what Jesus did at his last supper on the night before his death. The symbol of a cross reminds the Christians of the crucifixion of Christ to save mankind.

Baptism

According to Christian faith nobody is considered a born Christian. One has to enter into the faith through a religious ceremony called baptism. This applies to the children born to Christians as well as the followers of other religions who become Christians. Spreading the message of Jesus and enrolling people from other faiths into Christianity is considered a religious duty. The act of spreading the gospel of Christ is termed evangelisation.

Major Sects and Divisions

Christians in India have two major denominations - Catholics and Protestants. The Protestants emerged as a separate denomination during the 16th century. They claimed that the church and society was in a state of crisis. They demanded reforms in such a situation and came to be called as Protestants. The Catholics on the other hand felt that there was no crisis and ascribe the rise of Protestantism to the interplay of certain complex and powerful forces. The Protestants do not believe in the authority of the Pope which Catholics consider him as the main authority. The main Protestant sects in India are Calvinist, Anglican and Anabaptist. The main Catholic sects in India are Syrian Church, Latin Church and Malankara.

28.8 SIKHISM

Sikhism as a religion developed gradually over a period of around 200 years. The origin of Sikh faith is traced to Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539). He is considered the founder and the first Guru (teacher) of the faith. Guru Nanak was followed by a chain of **gurus** ending at Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) the tenth **guru**. The way Sikhism is practiced to-day evolved according to the teachings of these ten **gurus**.

Beliefs and Religious Practices

The Sikhs follow a well defined belief system and prescribed religious practices. These are as follows:

- i) Belief in one God, Ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib.
- ii) They are supposed to recite the **Guru-Mantra - Waheguru** (God you are wonderful)
- iii) No plunder, gambling or exploitation of the poor.
- iv) Use of intoxicants like alcohol, tobacco, drugs, opium etc., is forbidden.
- v) Every Sikh is to be initiated into the faith through Amrit ceremony.
- vi) Sikh ceremonies are to be followed on occasions of birth, marriage or death in the family.
- vii) Worship of Idols, graves, tombs, or monasteries is forbidden.
- viii) Sikhs should follow five symbols or **Panj Kakars**
- ix) In case of violation of religions code, like removal of hairs, use of tobacco, adultery etc., a Sikh has to take Amrit again.

Amrit Ceremony (Baptism)

Guru Gobind Singh initiated this practice in 1699. The ceremony is generally performed when the boys and girls are old enough to understand the obligations of religion. Five baptised sikhs (**Panj Piare**) are chosen to perform the ceremony in a congregation.

Amrit (nectar) is prepared by mixing sugar in water by stirring it with a **khanda** (double edge sword) and recitation of selected passages of the scriptures. The persons to be baptised take the vow of the faith by reciting loudly. Amrit is splashed in their faces. After baptism they are supposed to adhere to five symbols.

Five Symbols

All baptised Sikhs have to follow the following five symbols of sikhism.

- i) **Kesh** (hair): Sikhs are not to trim, shave or cut any hair on any part of their body.
- ii) **Kara**(iron bangle): The iron bangle is to be worn in right hand. It is supposed to remind Sikhs to follow the code of conduct.
- iii) **Kirpan**(sword): This is to be worn by Sikhs as a weapon for self defence and protect the weak and helpless.
- iv) **Kangha**(comb): to keep long hair neat and clean. This is to be kept in the hair-knot.
- v) **Kachcha** (drawer / underwear): It is a sign of chastity and strict morals. It also symbolises that **Kachcha** wearer is always ready for struggle.

Method of Worship

Sikhs believe in the worship of **Akal** (time less God) and are opposed to idol worship. Their place of worship is called **Gurudwara**. The doors of **Gurudwaras** are open to people belonging to all religions and faiths. It is considered not only a religious place but also a refuge and shelter for the needy. One has to enter the Gurudwara after washing feet and covering the head. Inside Gurudwaras 'Guru Granth'- the holy book-is installed on a hi

pedestal. here the recitation of Guru Granth Sahib is done. A common kitchen or langar serves food and prasad to the devotees and visitors.

Various Streams of Thought

In due course there developed various streams in Sikhism like any other religion:

- i) The Nirankari Baba Dayal was the founder of Nirankari movement. He opposed the innovations like idol worship, grave worship and other rituals and asked his followers to worship only one Nirankar (God).
- ii) **Namdharis:** Namdhari movement was started by Bhagat Jawarhermal and Baba Balak Singh. However, it was popularised by one of the later disciples Baba Ram Singh. They taught worship of one God and opposed the social evils like caste system, infanticide, early marriage and barter of girls in marriage. It developed into a sect later on.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

1) Write a 50 word note on the Bible.

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2) Discuss the main beliefs and religious practices followed in Sikhism.

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3) Describe the variant streams of Sikhism.

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28.9 LET US SUM UP

We have seen the veritable character of India as a land of many religions in the sections described above. The diversity so acquired by India has also proved to be one of its mainstays over the developments and growth of civilisation here over the last several millenia.

28.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress - 1

- 1) The **Brahma** is an infinite all embracing force present in all forms of life.
Karma is spending life in accordance with the code of **dharm**a. For details see Sec. 28.3.
- 2) Some of the main scriptures are: **Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads** etc. For details see Sec. 28.3.
- 3) These are: a) Omnipotent God, b) **Quran**, c) Prophet Muhammad, d) The day of judgement, and e) Angels of God. See Sec. 28.4
- 3) See Sec. 28.4.

Check Your Progress - 2

- 1) It is composed of the concept of **dukha**, and the eight fold path. See Sec. 28.5.
- 2) The three sects are **Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana** See Sec. 28.5.
- 3) See Sec. 28.5.

Check Your Progress - 3

- 1) The Bible has two collections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. See Sec. 28.6.
- 2) The Sikhs have belief in one god, in **Gurumantra**, in prohibiting use of intoxicants etc. See Sec. 28.7.
- 3) They are: Nirankaris and Nalmdharis. See Sec. 28.7.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THIS BLOCK

- Aditi, The Living Arts of India.** Festival of India in America, 1985-86, Washington, 1986.
- Aspects of the Performing Arts of India**, ed. Saryu Doshi, Marg Publications, 1993.
- A.L. Basham: **The Wonder That Was India**, Rupa, 1990.
- B.D. Misra: **The Forts and Fortresses of Gwalior and its Hinterland**, New Delhi, 1993.
- Joan L Erdman (ed): **Arts Patronage in India, Methods, Motives and Markets**, new Delhi, 1992.
- H.H. Wilson, et.al.: **The Theatre of the Hindus**, Calcutta, 1955.
- IGNOU, BDP Electives, Sociology, ESO-5, Block-5, ESO-2, Block-2.
- J.C. Harle: **The Art and Architecture of the Indian Sub- continent**, Penguin, 1986
- Nemichandra Jain: **Indian Theatre**, New Delhi.
- Robert Baird (ed): **Religion in Modern India**, New Delhi, 1994
- Shobita Punja, **Museums of India**, Hong Kong, 1990
- Utpal K Banerjee: **The Performing Arts**, New Delhi, 1992

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BLOCK

Activity-1

Take a tour of your city/town and prepare a list of the following structures dating at least one hundred years or more:

- a. Temples
- b. Mosques
- c. Buildings of the following category:
 - i) Sarai
 - ii) Step-well
 - iii) Bridge

Activity-2

From the list made in Activity 1 above, prepare the following inventories:

- i) Structures which use trabeate style exclusively
- ii) Structures which use arcuate style exclusively
- iii) Structures which use a mixture of both trabeate and arcuate styles

Activity-3

Prepare a list of the handicrafts that are practised in your city/town. Write five line notes on each.

Activity-4

Write a 100 word note on the textile typically made in your state/city/town.



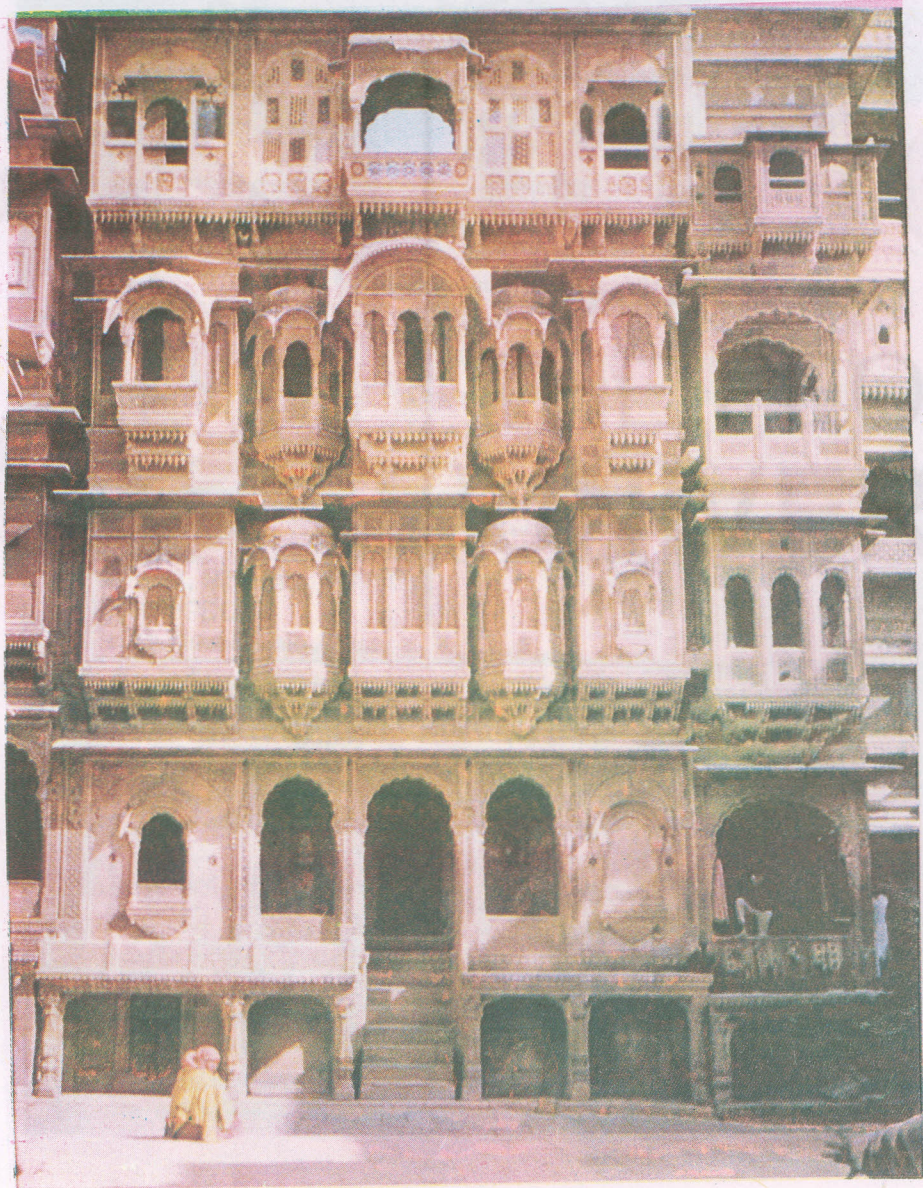
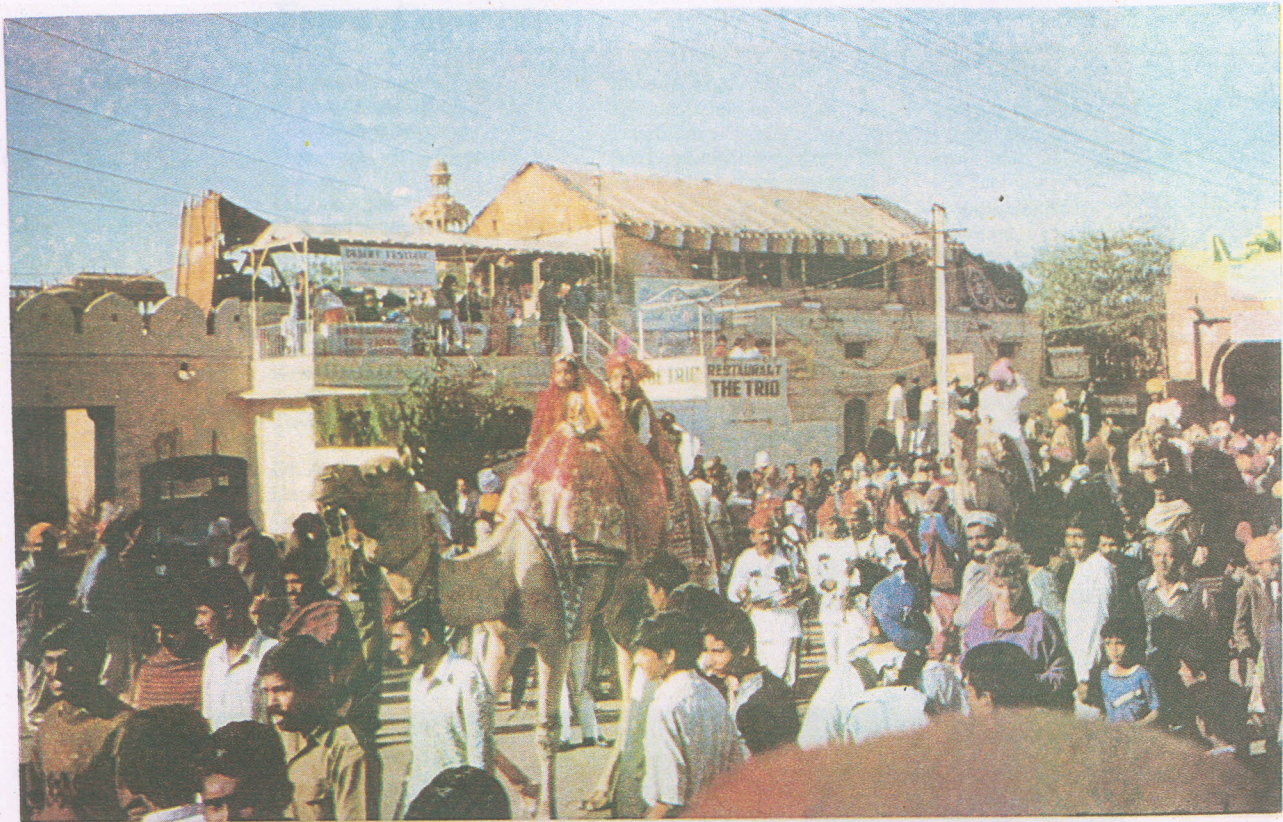


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