

Full Length Research Paper

Christian religion and social development: A sociological study of Meerut

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This paper is based on the primary data collected from the respondents of Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh a State situated in India. All these respondents were randomly selected. The data was collected through an interview schedule in an unbiased manner. The sample included 150 respondents which were randomly drawn from Meerut city, which has a concentration of both religious sects respectively. Primary data was collected through above stated statistical method and religion affiliation has been measured in terms of degree of religiosity, social development and the level of achievement. The data of objective and subjective variables are formulated. The main purpose of the study was to know the social development of two sects of Christian religion residing in Meerut City of Uttar Pradesh in order to know that where is lacuna/drawback and where it can be removed and how it can be removed by taking various steps either by social organizations or by the government in this respect so that this religion could fully uplifted in the Indian society of today.

Key words: Religion, level of education, occupation mobility, social development, education, political participation.

INTRODUCTION

India being a democratic, secular and socialist republic having plural society with number of religious groups. Some religious groups form the majority (e.g. Hinduism) while others form minority groupings (Buddhism, Jainism etc.) (Loomis and Loomis, 1969) some religious groups are more privileged in terms of social and economic opportunities than others (Eisentadt, 1968). Social stratification and inequality manifested in various forms is also exhibited within various religious groups and among different religion of a religious group. Social change has been defined by taking into account major indicators such as level of education, type of occupation, per month income, health, property and assets owned, office held, political participation and value attitudinal modernity measured in term of religiosity of a person, their attitude towards women's education and their participation in jobs, type of education preferred for children, basis of occupation selection etc (Andreski, 1983). The present

paper is a part of wider study conducted in Meerut City which consisted of three religious groups' viz. Christian, Jain and Sikh (Gupta, 1978). This paper however, is confined to the social development of two sects of Christian religion that is Roman Catholics and Protestants. Before, focusing on their social development it is better to know what religion is?

The English word "religion" is derived from the Middle English "religioun" which came from the old French "religion". It may have been originally derived from the Latin word "religo" which mean "good faith", "ritual," and other similar meanings (Bellah, 1963), the word religion has been defined academically by different philosophers. One of the definitions given by Karl marks are as follows: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (Bellah, 1964). Religiosity is also defined as religious orthodoxy: For operational purpose it has been defined as the intensity of feeling about one's religion, frequency of visits of religious places, church attendance, and time spent in a religious center, monetary contributions made to religious

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Table 1. District population of Meerut city.

District population			
District	Male	Female	Totals
Urban	681,209	595,348	1,276,557
Rural	1,180,533	990,822	2,171,355
Total	1,861,742	1,586,170	3,447,812

Table 2. Level of education of respondents.

Education	Up to basic level		Up to matriculate		Up to intermediate		Up to graduate		< Post graduate		GT
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R
Roman Catholics	3	(4)	9	(12)	21	(28)	24	(32)	18	(24)	75 (100%)
Protestants	9	(12)	6	(8)	9	(12)	12	(16)	39	(52)	75 (100%)
	12		15		30		36		57		150

R = Respondents.

organization, participation in religious activities including fund raising for religious organization, etc (Kariyil, 1988).

Objective of the study

The present study explores the following objective:

- i. What are the differences in the level of achievements of Roman Catholic and Protestant religion?
- ii. Is there any difference in the degree of religiosity among Roman Catholic and Protestant religion?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Meerut City is also the headquarters of Meerut district which consists of 1,025 villages with a population of around (3.44million) according to the 1991 census. Census commission of India. Retrieved on 2007 - 09-03. </ref>, Meerut had a population of 1,074,229. Males constitute 53% of the population and females 47% (Table 1). Meerut has an average literacy rate of 58%, lower than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 64%, and female literacy is 52%. In Meerut, 14% of the population is under 6 years of age. Meerut has one of the largest Muslim populations among the major cities of India (close to 45%). There is also a significant Christian population. A random sample of 150 respondents was drawn from Meerut city through interview schedule on an unbiased manner, which has a concentration of both religious sects respectively. Primary data was collected through above stated statistical method and religion affiliation has been measured in terms of degree of religiosity, social development and the level of achievement. The data of objective and subjective variables are formulated (Sigh, 1989).

Level of education

A significant development in the level of education and higher level

of education will be the degree of development. Our observations (Table 2) indicate that 4% of the Roman Catholics are educated up to a basic level or below (that is uneducated), 12% are matriculates, 28% are educated up to Intermediate level, 32% are educated up to Graduate level and 24% are educated up to Post Graduate (a higher level). Among Protestants 12% are educated up to basic level or below, 8% are matriculates, 12% are up to Intermediate level, 16% are graduates and 52% are educated up to Post Graduate and above. It may be concluded that on the basis of education the Protestants are more developed than Roman Catholics.

Type of occupation

On the basis of type of occupation we can assess an individual level of development. On the basis of Table 3 we observe that 12% Protestants as compared to 8% Roman Catholics are engaged in business: 44% Roman Catholics as compared to 28% Protestants are engaged in Government jobs, 32% Protestants as compared to 28% Roman Catholics have taken to the teaching occupation, 8% Protestants as compared to 16% Roman Catholics are engaged in Engineering, 4% Protestants as compared to 4% Roman Catholics are engaged in preaching, 16% among Protestants and none among Roman Catholics are engaged in private administration service and none of the Roman Catholics and Protestants are engaged in other jobs. On the basis of the above observation (Table 3) we may infer that more Protestants are engaged (12 - 4%) in profit making business and technical occupations as compared to Roman Catholics (8 - 4%). This indicates that religion affiliation effects choice of occupation.

Intergenerational occupational mobility

Sticking to one's traditional occupation (that is similar to that of father) is considered as the barrier to development. With this view intergenerational occupational mobility among both the religions has been studied (Poggic, 1983). Our data (Table 4) indicates that 44% Protestants as compared to 20% Roman Catholics have taken up occupation other than those of their fathers. Occupational mobility

Table 3. Type of occupation of respondents.

Occupation → ↓	Business		Govt. Job		Teaching		Engg.		Preach	Pvt. Admn.		Other		GT		
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	R	%	R	%	R	%	
Roman Catholics	6	8	33	44	21	28	3	4	12	16	0	0	0	0	75	100
Protestants	9	12	21	28	24	32	3	4	6	8	12	16	0	0	75	100
Total	15		54		45		6		15		12		0		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 4. Intergenerational occupational mobility of respondents.

Occupation →	Similar to Father		Different from Father		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	60	80	15	20	75	100
Protestants	42	56	33	44	75	100
Total	102		48		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 5. Property owned by respondents.

Property →	House		Ag. Land		Plot		Shop		Factory		Car		Nil	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	54	72	9	12	9	12	12	16	6	8	6	8	21	28
Protestants	51	68	9	12	9	12	9	12	6	8	3	4	21	28
Total	105		24		18		21		12		9		42	

R = Respondents.

is seen more among the Protestants than the Roman Catholics.

Property owned

Table 5 shows that 72% Catholics have own houses, 12% have own agricultural lands, 12% have own plots, 16% have own shops 8% own factory, 8% have own cars and 28% do not own any property. Similarly, 68% urban Protestants have own houses, 12% agricultural land, 12% have own plots, 12% have own shops, 8% have own factory, 4% have own cars and 28% do not have any property.

It is evident that on the basis of property both sects are enjoying more or less similar status.

Office held

It has been observed that important offices of a religion have been monopolized by the elites of the respective religions. We can conclude that the higher economic status of a person in a religion is conducive for getting offices. Table 6 shows that 44% Roman Catholics and 20% Protestants have held office. This indicates that Roman Catholics are holding favorable positions than the

Protestants and therefore, more developed than the latter.

Per month income

Income is major indicator of development. At a cursory glance, Table 7 reveals that the 48% of Roman Catholics in the income group of Rs. ≤ 2000 per month is fairly high as compared to 32% of the Protestants. In income group between Rs. 2000 - 5000/- per month 48% in each sect have similar income. But in the income group of Rs. 5000-10000/- per month we find a major difference; there are only 4% among the Roman Catholics and 20% among the Protestants in this range.

Children's line of education

An individual's rationality can also be judged by his choice in selecting a line of education for his children. It is observed from Table 8 that 20% Protestants as against 16% Roman Catholics preferred technical education, 12% Protestants and 12% Roman Catholics preferred Medical Education, 8% Roman Catholics and 8% Protestants preferred Commerce and 64% Roman Catholics and 60% Protestants did not show any special choice for their

Table 6. Office held by respondents.

Favour →	Yes		No		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	33	44	42	56	75	100
Protestants	15	20	60	80	75	100
Total	48		102		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 7. Per month income of respondents.

Monthly Income (Rs.) →	< 2000		2000 - 5000		5000 - 10000		Total	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	36	48	36	48	3	4	75	100
Protestants	24	32	36	48	15	20	75	100
Total	60		72		18		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 8. Type of education preferred for children.

Education →	Technical		Medical		Commerce		No preference		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	12	16	9	12	6	8	48	64	75	100
Protestants	15	20	9	12	6	8	45	60	75	100
Total	27		18		12		93		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 9. Favouring women's education.

Favour →	Yes		No		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	72	96	3	4	75	100
Protestants	75	100	0	0	75	100
Total	147		3		150	

R = Respondents.

children's education because they felt that in present days, children take their own decisions in such matters.

Attitude towards women's education

At a glance Table 9 shows that both sects favored Women's education.

Basis of occupation selection

Our observation (Table 10) shows that 20% both in Roman Catholics and Protestants sects have selected their occupation because of the profit motive, 12% Roman Catholics and 4% Protestants have selected their present occupation due to a

religious motive, 20% Roman Catholics and 12% Protestants have selected their occupation through inheritance and 64% Protestants and 48% Roman Catholics have selected their occupation due to some other reasons. From our data, Table 11 reveals that 96% among the Protestants and 92% among the Roman Catholics favored women's participation in Jobs. Christian women are also educated to the maximum extent. Hence both religions are equally developed in their attitude towards women's employment.

Political participation

Participation in politics (Table 12) is favored by 84% Protestants which is slightly higher than Roman Catholics (80%). Political participation is a major indicator of development. It is closely associated with the level of education. Since both the religions of

Table 10. Basis of occupation selections of respondents.

Basis →	Profit		Religion		Inheritance		Other		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	15	20	9	12	15	20	36	48	75	100
Protestants	15	20	3	4	9	12	48	64	75	100
Total	30		12		24		84		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 11. Attitude towards women's participation in jobs.

Favour ↓	Yes		No		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	69	92	6	8	75	100
Protestants	72	96	3	4	75	100
Total	141		9		150	

R = Respondents.

Table 12. Respondents favouring political participation.

Favour →	Yes		No		GT	
	R	%	R	%	R	%
Roman Catholics	60	80	15	20	75	100
Protestants	63	84	12	16	75	100
Total	123		27		150	

R = Respondents.

Christianity have scored high points on education, their score on political participation is also high. The high proportion of interest shown both by Protestants and Roman Catholics in political participation is due to the fact that they want to possess political power in order to safeguard the interests of their minority groups.

Occupation

12% Protestants and 8% Roman Catholics are engaged in business, 28 and 44% in government services, 32 and 28% in teaching. 4% and non in other jobs, 4 and 4% in Engineering, 16% Protestants and none among the Roman Catholics are engaged in Administrative Services (Private or Public) and 8 and 16% are engaged in Preaching. Intergenerational mobility which is a variable of change is more (44%) among the Protestants than among Roman Catholics (20%). Monthly income shows differences between the two 48% Roman Catholics and 32% Protestants earns less than or equal to Rs. 2000 per month, 48% Roman Catholics and 48% Protestants have income between Rs. 2000 - 5000, and 5000 - 10000, 4 and 20% have a minimum income.

Conclusion

Most of the Christians except those in government jobs are generally permanent residents of Meerut. More or less equal percentage of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants have (72 and 68%) own house, 12% have own plot in an urban area, 16% and 12% have own shop, 8% have own factory, 8% and 4% have own car and 4% Roman Catholics and 12% Protestants are educated up to basic level or below, 12 and 8% are matric. levels, 28 and 12% educated up to Intermediate level, 32 and 16% are graduates, and 24 and 52% are educated up to PG and higher levels.

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