



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF RURAL PEOPLE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SUJANSINGHPUR VILLAGE OF BHADRAK DISTRICT, ODISHA

*Snigdha Samadarsani

Ph. D Scholar, Department of Sociology, Central University of Odisha, Koraput, India

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ABSTRACT

Religion and God make the life blood of Hindu social organization. As religion and religiosity are the rudimentary characters of Hindu community, the vitality of studying the religious beliefs and practices of rural people has its own justification. The aim of the study was the rural populace because the rural people are more religious than the urban people. In order to know the perception of rural people towards God and Goddess, the present paper has an attempt to study the religious beliefs and practices of rural people. For this a survey was conducted in Sujansinghpur village comes under Karada Gram Panchayat of Bhadrak district, was covered 50 both male and female respondents. Research design was based on descriptive and qualitative in nature, followed both primary and secondary sources of data. The processing of data was classification and tabulation of data. The study found that as regards to practicing and observing the rituals and ceremonies there is no significant change among rural people.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion and God make the life blood of Hindu social organization. As religion and religiosity are the rudimentary characters of Hindu community, the vitality of studying the religious beliefs and practices of rural people has its own justification. The thrust of the study is the rural populace because the rural people are more religious than the urban people. Religion has been from the very beginning the bearer of human culture. It is the supreme achievement of man's profound experience, the deepest kind of life reflecting the different phases, complex and conflicting of human living. Millions of minds, their thoughts and dreams, go to make a religion. In sociology, "Religion is the human response to the apprehension of something or power which is supernatural and supersensible". It is the expression of manner and the type of adjustment effected by a people with their conception of "supernatural". Swami Vivekananda said, "Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man". According to Durkheim, "Religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden".

*Corresponding author: Snigdha Samadarsani, Ph. D Scholar
Department of Sociology, Central University of Odisha, Koraput

Statement of the Problems

On the inauguration of the modern industrial society, God had has not been dead but Godly thinking has died. India develops in the line of science and technology, but still religion plays an important role in the social life in general and rural social life in particular. Though science developed every sphere, but it affect very little in the religious belief and practices of rural people. In rural area, there is a strong religious belief and practices among rural people. In every step the rural people believe more in the religion. This guides the day to day activities of the rural people. They belief that a super natural power that has created this universe and control it.

Review of Literature

Srinivas (1952) "Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India" connects various social groups like the family, the caste, the village with certain deities specific to each and mentions the public ceremonials associated with them in the nature of festival.

Nayak (2000) in his study "The Religious Beliefs and Practices of College Teachers", of 100 college teachers

indicate that majority has faith in god and other beliefs in pundit.

Panda (2015) in her study, "Graduate Women in an Urban Setting" states that in Odisha the various rites, fasting (bratas) performed by women or girl for the husband, son and their brothers and their well-being. None of these are for women, daughters or for the welfare of the mother, sister etc.

Lalita (July, 2016) "Beliefs & Practices of Women related to Maternal Care & New born Care in Selected Areas of rural Bangaluru" found women were strongly traditional believed and practices maternal care and new born care.

Research Questions

- What is the Socio- economic Condition of the Respondent?
- What are the Religious Beliefs of Rural People?
- What are the Rituals Practices by Rural People?

Objectives

- To find out the Socio- economic Condition of the Respondent.
- To find out the Religious Beliefs of Rural People.
- To identify the Rituals Practices by Rural People.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is based on the descriptive research designed by interview scheduled to extract information from the respondents. The universe of the present study at Sujansinghpur village which comes under Dhamnagar block at Bhadrak district of Odisha was selected for the field work. For the purpose of the present study researcher have adopted stratified random sampling. This stratified random sampling used for selection of village as well as the household. 50 respondents both male and female chosen with the help of lottery methods. Here sample size 50. For the present research Interview scheduled, Observation method, Documents and literature and internet tools and techniques are used. The researcher has collected information from both the sources I. e. primary data and secondary data. The collection of primary data was Interview schedule method and Observation method. Secondary sources of data related to the subjects are collected from journals, magazines, newspaper, references books and internet sites. Data collected through interview scheduled and questionnaires were analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Findings of the Study

Socio- economic Condition of the Respondent (N=50)

The analysis of the socio-economic profile of the respondents is the most basic in any social science research. Socio-economic profile presents a picture of the social and economic status of the clients. An individual background plays a significant role in the formation of their attitude, belief, commitments to their work and it makes up their personality. In fact it is the socio-economic background of the people which determine their status, occupation and particular in economy.

Table 1. Socio- economic Condition of the Respondent (N=50)

Socio- economic Condition	Category	f(%)
Age	30-40	11 (22)
	41-50	27 (54)
	Above 50	12 (24)
Sex	Male	20 (40)
	Female	30 (60)
	Illiterate	8 (16)
Education	Literate	15 (30)
	Up to Primary	19 (38)
	10 th	6 (12)
	Above 10 th	2 (4)
Occupation	Job	4 (8)
	Business	6 (12)
	Labourer	10 (20)
	Worker	4 (8)
	Housewife	26 (52)
Monthly Income	1000-5000	12 (24)
	5001-10000	33 (66)
	Above 10000	5 (10)

Source: Field Survey Report

From the above table, it is shows that socio- economic conditions of the respondents. Maximum 54% of respondents were belonging to the age group of 41- 50 years. Among the respondents 40% were male and 60% were female. 38% of respondents were educated up to primary level. 52% respondents were housewife and 20% were daily labourer. 66% respondents' monthly income lies in 5001-10000.

The Religious Beliefs of Rural People

Religious belief is the belief in the reality of the mythological, supernatural, or spiritual aspects of a religion. Religious belief is distinct from religious practice or religious behaviors with some believers not practicing religion and some practitioners not believing religion. In this objective, it highlights the attitude of the respondents towards the feeling of Hindu God and Goddesses, their attitude to reading religious scriptures and great epics. Their feelings towards karmaphala, moksha, re-birth, luck, auspicious and inauspicious days, dreams, bad & good omen and God man etc. So it is very important on the part of their researcher to make a data analysis of the present study conducted by the researcher.

Table 2. Religious Beliefs of the Respondents (N=50)

Religious Beliefs	Some extent	Great Extent
	f (%)	f (%)
God/ Goddesses	5 (10)	45 (90)
Religious Scriptures	12 (24)	38 (76)
Karmaphala	8 (16)	42 (84)
Rebirth	17 (34)	33 (66)
Luck	14 (28)	36 (72)
Good Souls	22 (44)	28 (56)
Ghosts/ Winches	20 (40)	30 (60)
God Man	15 (30)	35 (70)
Dreams	18 (36)	32 (64)
Auspicious & Inauspicious Days	22 (44)	28 (56)
Good & Bad Omens	17 (34)	33 (66)

Source: Field Survey Report

Table No. 2 shows that the religious beliefs of the respondents, 90% of the respondents believed god/ goddess in great extent. 76% of respondents are believed in religious scriptures in great extent. 84% believed in karmaphala, 66% believed in rebirth, 72% believed in luck, 56% believed in good souls, 60% believed in ghosts, 70% believed in god man in great extent. 66% respondents believed in omen both good

omen (Good omen means the high quality of sign like washer man, dead body, live fish, and filled water vessel) and bad omen (means sign for full of problems like sneezing, cat crossing road, widow and empty vessel). 56% of respondents greatly believe in auspicious and inauspicious days. 64% respondents were believed in dreams great extent.

The Ritual Practices by Rural People

This Objective explains ritual practices performed by rural respondents. Practices mean action rather than thoughts or ideas. When religious beliefs are usually or regularly done then we say religious practices. Their attitude towards God worship, temple worship, animal worship, time devoted towards worship, practices different types of fasting and festivals, practices ancestor worship etc. so it is very important on the part of their researcher to make a data analysis of the present study conducted by her.

Table 3. The Ritual Practices by Rural People (N=50)

Religious Practice	Some extent	Great Extent
	f(%)	f(%)
Worship God/ Goddesses	12 (24)	38 (76)
Temple Worship	19 (38)	31 (62)
Worship Trees & Cow	35 (70)	15 (30)
Worship Materials	40 (80)	10 (20)
Practices Fasting	20 (40)	30 (60)
Rituals Performing for Illness	19 (38)	31 (62)
Festivals	2 (4)	46 (92)

Source: Field Survey Report

Table No. 3 shows the ritual practices by rural people, found that 76% respondents were worship god/ goddess and 62% respondents were practices temple worship

in great extent. 70% and 80% respondents were worship trees & cows and material in some extent. 60% respondents were practices fasting, 62% were practices rituals for illness and 92% respondents were practices festivals in great extent in the study area.

Conclusion

Thus in the present study, as regards practicing and observing the rituals and ceremonies there is no significant change among rural people. Some rituals are decline, ceremonies are still in practice. In case of God beliefs and superstition are change especially in case of male. The gender aspects of religious beliefs and practices, rituals, customs and beliefs of Hindu religion are gradually replaced by modern attitude and life styles.

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