

Durkheim's Sociology of Religion

(Durkheim's Sociology of Religion)

Emile Durkheim has made a very important contribution to the sociology of religion. He analyzed the origin of religion and explained its role in human society. These are the functions of religion in the society according to Durkheim. In this regard, the book titled 'The Elementary Forms of Religious Life' published in the year 1912 by Emile Durkheim is notable. This book is considered an original work on religion. In this book, Durkheim analyzed totemist religion in the Aboriginal Arunta tribe of Australia. On the basis of this analysis he has developed a sociological theory of religion. He refuted the explanations given by other scholars about the origin of religion. They interpret religion as an integrated explanation of beliefs and practices related to sacred things. Holy things they are which are set apart by religious activities.

Meaning and definitions of religion

Durkheim has tried to throw light on the nature and nature of religion in his book. In this regard he has criticized the prevailing concepts of religion. He has accepted that belief in supernatural power is called religion. Generally this supernatural power is known as God. He considered religion as a social phenomenon. That is why its discussion has been presented on the sociological basis. The definition of religion by Durkheim is as follows, "A religion is a compiled system of beliefs and actions related to sacred things, that is, that which is separate and forbidden – those beliefs.

and practices that are accepted by all, which are organized as a moral community and which we call the Church. The second element which thus has a place in our attribute, from the first

No less necessary, than to show that the idea of religion is inseparable from the Church, it

Makes it clear that religion must primarily be a collective object."

It is clear from the above definition that Durkheim considers religion as a social object. This social object is formed by the sum of the beliefs, actions and behaviors of the individual. On the basis of religion, all the members of the group are held together by certain moral ideals.

(Concept of Sacred and Profane)

The concept of holy and profane propounded by him is also very important in the interpretation of Durkheim's theory of religion. He considered religion as a social phenomenon. From this point of view, he divided social events and things into two parts sacred and profane.

is. Religion is concerned with things, events and behaviors that are considered sacred. Sacred things are symbols of society or collective representation and that is why human beings. They consider themselves inferior to them and depend on them. "Holy things are those whose prohibitions protect and separate. Unholy things are those to which these prohibitions are applied so that these distances may be kept from the first things."

"The sacred and the profane are opposite to each other. These grain parts of social phenomena should never be allowed to meet. To mix these two is sin or religious corruption. The social beliefs, laws and regulations which protect sacred objects or ideas. They are called dharma. Thus dharma originates from those social thoughts and beliefs which the society considers sacred.)

- Origin of religion and its social interpretation

Before Durkheim it was believed that religion originated from the fear of natural calamities, storms, storms, earthquakes and floods etc. A person tries to achieve success in his work, but sometimes he does not get success in his work even after doing the right thing. At that time a person thinks that there must be an invisible force making his efforts unsuccessful. The person has also considered natural calamities as a form of invisible power. The person tried to please that power with worship, devotion and worship etc. Thus faith in some invisible power is the name of religion. But Durkheim has criticized all these ideas. According to him, these theories explain only one aspect of religious events. Durkheim has considered the origin of religion by social power in place of natural power. When individuals participate in group work, courage and enthusiasm increase in them. The power of the group lies in the belief in the individual. This belief gave birth to religion. The work which the group approves is considered as religion. In other words, according to Durkheim, collective power is the supernatural force that takes the form of religion. Durkheim, while explaining his religion, has said that - "The source of religion is society itself, religious concepts are nothing but symbols of the characteristics of society, holy or God is only embodied society and the social function of religion is social unity." Origin, Preservation and Sustainability.

According to Durkheim, man has equal morale towards both society and God. Society is very busy in awakening the consciousness of divinity in the minds of its members. Because it has a right on them. Like God, the individual also has a feeling of constant dependence on the society. Society, like God itself, has moral authority from which it can awaken selfless devotion and self-sacrifice in people. It has the power to give extraordinary power to the individual and is the original source of all that is the best and supreme for the human personality. The kingdom of heaven is a glorified society. So the religious man who believes in some external moral force is not under any kind of illusion because the existence of such power or being is 'power and society'.

Criticism of ancient theories of the origin of religion

(Difference between Religion and Magic)

After setting the definition of religion, Durkheim refuted the personal and psychological theories of religion, which are mainly Tylor's Animism and Max Müller's Naturalism.

(i) **Tylor's subjectivism** - According to Tylor, the concept of self is the basis of the philosophy of religion from primitive humans to civilized humans. This animism is divided into two big beliefs - (a) the existence of the human soul continues even after death or destruction of the body and (b) apart from the souls of humans, other souls of powerful gods also There are. According to Tylor, man in spirits arose exclusively because of two types of experiences related to everyday life. These two experiences were death and dreams. On the basis of the first experience the concept of body soul and on the basis of the second the concept of free soul arose. Souls are immortal and beyond the control of man. That is how

the tradition of ancestors started. This is where the religion started. Durkheim says that Tyler conceived of the primitive as a philosopher, but he was largely unintelligent.

(ii) **Max Müller's Naturalism**- According to this view, seeing the vastness of nature, man has experienced infinite power. That is the religion. Seeing the different forms of nature, it was natural for a person to have fear, hope and wonder etc. Due to this, a feeling of reverence and fear arose in the mind of the person. It was from this spirit that religion arose. Durkheim does not consider this naturalist, nature worshiper to be right. The form of religion is not only worshiping nature, religion is also a unique force influencing human life.

Durkheim has raised mainly three objections to all these theories.

1. These theories consider only one part of the whole body of religious phenomena.
2. They do not throw any light on the difference between the holy and the profane, which is the main feature of religion.
3. They interpret religion as an illusion that has no relation to the real world.

origin of religion

Regarding the explanation of the origin of religion, Durkheim has refuted the animism of Tyler and Spencer and the naturalism of Max Muller. Durkheim says that both these principles do not explain the difference between the holy and the profane. Religion is not a secret. who is he does not believe in God. He is not an illusion. In history, human beings have never worshiped anything other than the collective social order, and only this one was adorned with faith and called God.

Explaining the origin of religion in the context of the totem, he analyzed it in the Australian tribes. He wrote, "Totemism is a religion, not of some animals or some human beings or some images, but of an unnamed and impersonal force which is found in these beings, but which is not identified with any of them. No one possesses it completely and everyone participates in it. She is so free in particular matters that it precedes them and is sufficient for them. Individuals die, generations pass away and are replaced by other generations, but This power is always present, alive and true to itself. It inspires the present generation as it gave yesterday and as it will give tomorrow."

Taking the word religion in a very broad sense, it can be said that it is the God who is worshiped in every totemist sect; But He is an impersonal God, nameless, without any history, present in the world and pervading innumerable things. On the basis of this analysis, Durkheim defines religion as an interdependent system of beliefs and laws regarding things which are sacred and which bind them all together through beliefs and rituals and make the followers Together they form a moral community called a church.

Comparing the true science of religion with his theory, he calls animism and naturalism as semi-scientific theories. He has shown that religion cannot be called an illusion because it has always been given an important place in human history and in all ages humans have drawn inspiration from it. It is well known that law, morality and scientific thought itself have also originated from religion, they were part of religion for a long time and religious spirit has always reigned in them. on this The pervasive force that

constitutes the kind of human consciousness may be called a hallucination. Every science is related to the natural world. The set. For the science of religions it must be the principle that religion is in nature.

Criticism

Criticizing the team's concept of religion, Raymond Aron has said, "I doubt this can be said of any sophisticated interpretation of religion;

Even in the case, in a purely humanistic concept, moral values are a type of human being's immanent animal race that progressively ascends to humanity. The feeling that there is something that has intrinsic value is to distort the meaning of religion itself or to disturb the meaning of human morality." Durkheim held that society and the elements of the day can be compared and directly objects can be considered.

The flaw in this concept is that maintaining national unity in the name of God can lead to nation worship, which can result in the development of dictatorships in Germany and Italy, in the form of Nazism and Fascism, respectively. In fact, miseries forget the difference between science and religion. Despite the external similarities between these two, science is concerned with facts, whereas religion is concerned with values, not facts. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that mile Durkheim has attempted to present a more rational conception of religion in line with modern human consciousness.

Origin of Religion and Totemism

The essence of Totemism is the worship of an impersonal anonymous force that is at the same time pervasive and transcendent. Durkheim says that this power is the society itself. Durkheim wrote, "There is no doubt that in a society everything is necessary to stimulate the minds of men, which it produces only by the effect on them, the sensation of being divine, For he is to his members what God is to the person who believes in him. God is first of all a vote for the person who considers him superior in many things and whom he believes to be Depends, whether we are speaking of persons like Jacob, Zeus or Jehovah, or of the intangible forces that play in totemism. In any case, the believer feels that the sacred doctrine by which he communicates. - the person feels obliged to accept certain forms of behavior imposed on him by his nature."

But society maintains in us a sense of perpetual dependence, because for it it has a special nature, which is different from our individual nature and pursues the same specific ends as it, but because it can achieve them only through us. That's why she essentially considers our cooperation. For this it is necessary that we forget personal interests and become his servants. It leads us to all kinds of inconveniences, hardships and sacrifices without which social life is impossible. Therefore, it compels us every moment to submit to rules in conduct and thought which we have neither formulated nor resolved and which sometimes go against even our most basic inclinations and basic tendencies. . "Society awakens the feeling of the divine in us. At the same time he is a preceptor who imposes himself and is qualitatively a saint from individuals who seeks devotion and worship within."

Social Contribution of Totemism

Different societies produced different gods and religions in the past. this. About the present societies. Totemism helps in social gathering. In times of emergency, the group gets consolidated due to

participation in common law, rituals and children. In times of crisis, new gods and new religions are born.

Viviplava Durkheim says that the source and goal of religion is collective life. The concept of the sacred is the individual form of the whole. The function of religion is to create, maintain and maintain social complexity. Dharma arises in the separation of the pure and the impure. Religion is not a social creation but a society in divine form. Human beings worship many gods together, which are unconscious projections of the power of society. Religion is the ultimate representative of the power of the society, as the forces change, so does the religion. Modern man has to feel his dependence on society. For this he can express directly to the sacred symbols in the society.

Durkheim wrote, "We have to find intellectual substitutes for those religious concepts which have long served as the vehicle of the most essential moral ideas." In short, according to Durkheim, religion is a social institution that supports the human mind. For this one has to conform to the transcendental values imposed in the society beyond the individual. A person who feels that he is dependent on some external moral force, can be secular because he has to be a responsible member of the society. There is no confusion required to be a member.

___ Well, Durkheim made religion for all especially for modern man has not been held necessary. Religion was absolutely essential for primitive man. Since sociology has now discovered the reasons behind necessity, we can replace religion with more rational forms. One of these forms is the rise of nationalism in almost all the societies of the world. A higher stage may be the establishment of humanity in divine form in place of religion.

(Religion and Morality)

The text has shown closeness in religion and morality. He says that morality and religion are both social elements like language. All of these inevitably have a social initiative. In fact all human facts are social facts. The text has shown that both religion and morality can be based on scientific attitude. He tried to establish the science of finding a moral substitute for religion. They regard all morality as relative. Both religion and morality vary with the diversity of social organization. In fact Durkheim has said that we have to choose between God or society as the basis of morality. Morality in primitive societies was based on God.

But in modern rational societies, morality should be secular and society should be established in place of God.

Durkheim was not particularly conscious of the moral crisis in the modern world. Seeing that economic work ethic is taking the place of work, he suggested that professional groups should develop business ethics. A nation can be formed by combining these business groups. This type of thought is known by the name of syndicalism. to business groups

Must be international.

.. Major Functions of Religion

According to Durkheim, the following are the functions of religion -

1. Religion divides human life into two sides - holy and impure.
2. Religion instructs its members to keep these two aspects separate because to turn away from the holy life is religious corruption.
3. Religion teaches people that the place of religion should be separate from the place of normal unholy activities and religious places should not be used for daily use.
4. Religion orders to do religious purification on doing unholy acts. "
5. Religion organizes and controls the society.

- Criticism of Durkheim's religious views

1. Durkheim has considered the Arunta tribe as the most primitive tribe, but some scholars do not agree with this.
2. Durkheim's statement is also wrong that totemism is the first and foremost basis of religion.
3. Durkheim's claim that we have the same attitude towards God and society, especially when we differentiate between society and culture, does not seem right. Even if equality is proved between the two, then it cannot be proved that God and society are one.
4. This principle of Durkheim hurts the sentiments of religious persons. Religious people never believe in society as God or worship it.
5. Durkheim's statement that social factors in rituals and festivals make religious sentiments clear and intensified.
6. Social factors are not the only factor in the progress of religion.