

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

#### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Durkheim, religion is the original source of all subsequently evolved moral, philosophical, scientific and juridical ideas. To him, religion is a regulatory force even in the modern society. Durkheim has developed the idea that religion has important functional roles in the society; primitive as well as modern one. According to him, religion leads to a clarification of the nature and the mechanical and organic solidarities are regulated by moral regulations of religion.

A religion is never simply a set of beliefs. It always involves prescribed ritual, practices and a definite institutional form it is a unified ( *solidare* ) system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. To Durkheim, society could not exist independently of religious forms of sentiment and action into any social event there will intrude religious forms of expression.

When we talk about Hindu society, we find that, the sources giving us ideological and valuational foundations of social institutions among Hindu conform the Durkheimian conception that, religion and society cannot be separated even in the technologically advanced society.

The Hindu social life and social institutions are not exactly the same, even generally. In accordance with the picture of human life, conditions and control presented by the original Hindu sastras. It is found that the religious and moral practices and rites are still in practice. It is another fundamental aspect of religion - the ritual practices which are found in all religions. Two closely intertwined and sorts of ritual exist, sacred phenomena are by definition separate from the profane. One set of rites function to maintain this separation, these are negative rites or taboos, which are prohibitions limiting contact between sacred and the profane. There are some positive rites, these are the rites which affect fuller communication with the religions and constitute the core of the religions ceremonial itself. It is the function of positive rites is to renew the commitment to religious ideals which are expressed in religious beliefs. They are the moral ideals upon which the unity of the society is founded, when individuals gather together in religious ceremonial they are hence reaffirming their faith in the moral order upon which the mechanical solidarity depends. The positive rites entailed in religious ceremonial thus provide for the regular moral reconsolidation of the group, necessary because in the activities of the day to day life in the profane world individuals pursue their own egoistic interests and are consequently liable to become detached from the moral values upon which societal solidarity depends.

Durkheim says, the only way of renewing the collective representations which relate to sacred things is to retemper them in the very source of religious life, that is to say, in assembled groups - Men are more confident because they feel themselves stronger and they really are stronger, because forces which were languishing are now re-awakened in the consciousness.

THE PROBLEM :

Ganesh-pujan is considered to be an important rite performed at ( individual ) family level and an average Hindu starts every new adventure and work with Ganesh Pooja.

B. G. Tilak known as Lokamanya started to utilize the Ganesh poojan in the form of common festival in 1894.

PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE FESTIVAL :

Lokamanya Tilak's views about Ganapati festival were more or less practical. In the words of Lokamanya - there are many ways and means to create thought of unity among people. One of them is to have one God or one language are also the principle features of one nationality. Religion includes worship. Worship purifies the mind. This is truth now as it was in the past. The most devoted worship on any god would the minds of worshipper, and creates a feeling of brotherhood among the co-worshippers. Once his mind and thought

( intellect ) are thus purified and cultured the worshipper finds no difficulty in using his mind and or thought; in other factions of life of a person is not proud of the greatness of his or her religion, how can he be a proud of the greatness of his nation. This progress in religion and pride for religion are strongly co-related with national progress.

Lokamanya brought into vogue public Ganesh festival since he found it to be of utmost utility for nations well-being. It can safely be presumed that if Lokamanya would not have been pulled luckily into the battle field of politics he would have surely been on the platform in front of Ganapati, singing and praying most devotedly. At least he would have turned the newly - English - educated society to the science of religion and God by his resourcefulness and by his research in the matters. His research in the matter would have been surely more powerful and more appealing than that of other research scholars. Though this is factually true, he did not do it or he could not do it as he was otherwise engrossed in other social and political engagements. In insisting upon Ganeshotsava he may have another practical purpose in his mind. And that was to strengthen the feeling of national unity in order to face the encroaching rudeness of christian missionaries and of Muslim fanatics.

PRESENT DAY SITUATION :

The festival of Ganesh, since its commencements passed through many phases of change in times prior to independence the festival was more or less religious, social and national. In those festivals achievement of freedom, unity of society, swadeshi these and many other topics were mainly insisted upon.

After independence the festival changed its outward from Religious programmes are minimized. Cultural programmes are also losing grounds. And other programmes like light decoration, amusement and variety entertainment programmes are going grounds. Ample money is spent over all these items melas and ballads are passing out and dances, songs, magics, mimics are parading forth on the new stage.

Now-a-days much amount is spent on Ganesh images, electricity decorations, the procession of immersion. In short, the main purpose of safe-guarding the religious and the cultural values of life is being ignored and the festival is becoming more pompous and is having light recreational norms.

It is presumed that, Ganesh festival plays an important role to bring the sense of collectiveness and solidarity among the Hindus. It is also presumed that, the said festival is not confined to Hindus only and members of there other religions like Muslim and Buddha take an active part in the performances of these festivals, which leads to integrate the members of the society from different religious groups.

As Durkheim says, religion is still important and it brings conscience collective in the Modern society.

In the present day Hindu society, thus Ganesh festival has gathered an important place in Hindu social structure.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The major objectives of the present study are listed below :

- 1) Performances of festivals in the rural areas, details about such performances to be taken into account.
- 2) In the rural areas the festivals are a part of village life and all the castes and religious groups co-operate each other and take active part in the performances of such festivals.
- 3) Ritual performances brings social cohesion. It is aimed at to find out whether in the present day rural society, it is true ?

#### METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION :

##### A) Area of study :

With the broad objectives given above, the study will be conducted in the Kolhapur district.

Kolhapur is known for the maintainance of the tradition of festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Dassara and Diwali being a former

Hindu state Kolhapur is composed of more than 80% of the rural area and it is found that at the village level all these festivals are performed by the villages jointly.

Some of the festivals are connected with the agricultural activities; which are prominent in Kolhapur district.

Kolhapur district is accessible for the detailed study as the researcher has been in the area since last fifteen years.

These are the major constraints for the selection of the area of the study. An attempt will be also made to trace the importance of festivals in the urban areas especially, in the Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji cities. However, this will be for the sake of comparative understanding only.

B) Data Collection :

Secondary sources regarding the festival performances at the societal level will be collected from the written records, books, magazines, daily papers and informants from elderly persons.

Primary data regarding the actual performances of these important festivals will be conducted by attending them by contacting the various organisers of such festivals.