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Q8(c)

Elaborate on various types of religious practices prevalent in India society

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Religion and Society

Religion and Society: Sociological theories of religion; Types of religious practices: animism, monism, pluralism, sects, cults; Religion in modern society: religion and science, secularization, religious revivalism, fundamentalism.

Core demand of the question

- Elaborate on various types of religious practices prevalent in Indian society
- Keep the elaboration within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

- **Indian practice is plural:** home rites, congregations, pilgrimage, sects, and tribal forms.

Srinivas tied practice to caste and village.

Durkheim names festival solidarity; **Weber** names sect and conduct.

Gendered votive rites are a major everyday type.

Census labels do not exhaust syncretic practice.

Introduction

Indian religious practice is plural in community and in form. People worship, fast, pilgrimage, and keep household rites beside congregational and reformist styles. Types overlap in one biography.

Body

Household and life-cycle rites

- Domestic puja, shraddha, and samskaras organise kinship. M. N. **Srinivas** noted how such practice marks caste and village.
- Women's votive fasts are a gendered everyday religion that temple sociology can miss.

Temple, mosque, gurdwara, church

- Congregational prayer, dana, **langar**, and parish life produce Durkheimian moral communities of different theologies.
- Bhakti and Sufi shrine practice cut across some elite textual lines.

Pilgrimage and festival

- Tirthas, urs, and public festivals make sacred calendars and local economies.
- Collective effervescence is easy to see; so is commerce.

Reform, sect, and political religion

- Reformist associations, new gurus, and sects, in **Max Weber's** and Ernst Troeltsch's sense, discipline conduct.
- Civil-religious national ritual sits beside community practice.

Tribal and syncretic forms

- Sacred grove and clan rites persist, sometimes renamed as Hindu or as separate faith in **Census** cells.

Flow diagram

Practices -> Household rites
Practices -> Congregation
Practices -> Pilgrimage festival
Practices -> Sect reform
Practices -> Tribal syncretic

Conclusion

Indian religious practices include domestic rites, congregational worship, pilgrimage, reformist sects, and tribal-syncretic cults. **Durkheim** helps with ritual; **Weber** helps with sect and meaning. No single temple model covers the map.

Facts & figures

Srinivas

Village and caste as frames in which ritual practice is lived.

Bhakti and Sufi shrines

Devotional practices that often cross strict textual borders.

Langar

Sikh congregational feeding as a public religious practice.

Census religion

Official types that both record and simplify living practice.