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# UNIT 10 RELIGION AND THE ECONOMIC ORDER

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## 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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On studying this unit you should be able to

- describe the relationship between religion and the economic order
- discuss the role played by religion in the development of capitalism
- ask if capitalism failed to originate in India, because of Hinduism
- infer if Hinduism stands as an obstacle in India's path of development.

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## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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As you know this course is about society and religion. You learn from these sets of units, the way in which sociologists understand religion—in terms of its origin, function, and organisation. Relationship between various social institutions, usually attracts the special attention of sociologists. Particularly in this Block 2, after learning about rituals, rites and practices, you are appraised of the relationship between religion and economic order, religion and politics.

Unit 10, draws your attention to the various aspects of relationship between religion and the economic order. After learning about the general aspects in section 10.3, relationship between religion and a specific model of economic order, namely, capitalism, is explained in detail in 10.4. Karl Marx and Max Weber have made significant contributions in this area.

The views of Karl Marx and Weber have special significance for India, hence we discuss their views with special reference to India, in section 10.5. You should be able to reflect, if there is any relationship between India's economic development (or underdevelopment) and Hinduism, after reading this unit.

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## 10.2 RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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Have you seen the film 'The Gods Must be Crazy'? It is an interesting film, which gives rich insights on the origin and development of religion. Broadly speaking,

religion is the result of man's attempt to understand the unknown. Religion involves fear of powerful supernatural forces.

As you know, our life is surrounded by mysteries. Death, birth, creation and life itself is a mystery. Religion tries to explain the mysteries which surround us. Religion helps human beings in facing the uncertainties of everyday life. From the beginning of sociology, sociologists have been interested in understanding man and religion.

Religion stands as a basis for our life and influences our words and deeds to a significant extent. It gives meaning to our life, through myths, rituals and ceremonies. It gives us a sense of the past and a goal for the future.

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### 10.3 RELIGION AND ECONOMY

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Economics is generally a matter of production and distribution of goods. Human beings are directly involved in both the processes of production and distribution. What is produced and distributed depends much on the general pattern of consumption characteristic of a society. In the previous section it was pointed out that religion influences one's deeds and actions. Understandably, religious beliefs and values affect one's work ethic, business ethic and consumption patterns.

A religion, which prescribes 'hard work' for salvation, naturally inspires its adherents to be dedicated and committed workers. On the other hand, if work is considered to be a punishment for one's sins by a particular religion, then it is less likely that the believer would be a dedicated and sincere worker. However, there is another way of looking at the above situation. If any religion emphasises more on honesty and sincerity in work, the believer might fail to notice or ignore the exploitation in the factory site.

Consumption patterns too may be conditioned by one's religious belief. Meat may not find a market in a region dominated by people, whose religion strictly advocates vegetarianism. If conch shells are of much religious value in a society, they may be preserved or saved. If religious beliefs go against consumption of all forms of liquor, then there is a possibility that liquor distilleries may have to be shut down. True, religion influences the economic activities of people. It is also true that, religions themselves may arise out of crisis situations. Among many tribal communities in India, because of land alienation and poverty new cults emerged. New messiahs or prophets began to institute new cults to meet the crisis situation.

So far it has been demonstrated that religious beliefs and values affect the processes of production, distribution and consumption. Classical thinkers like Karl Marx and Max Weber have pondered over this relationship, with special reference to capitalism. We will elaborate upon their views, in the next section.

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### 10.4 RELIGION AND CAPITALISM

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Economic order varies from age to age. Feudalism, capitalism and socialism are three examples of the economic order. Nature and organization of production, distribution and consumption differ widely in various economic orders.

Under the impact of science, philosophy and renaissance, feudalism was breaking down in Europe during 15th and 16th centuries. The catholic church had strong roots in many of the feudal countries. On the transformation of feudalism, there are changes in the religious sphere too. The doctrines of the catholic church were challenged by new streams of thought. Among these were the supremacy of the Pope and the interference of the church in the affairs of the state which came under heavy criticism. As capitalism developed, many protestant sects arose in many European countries.

Many scholars tried to understand the relationship between capitalism and religion and in particular protestantism. Karl Marx and Max Weber are two scholars who shed significant light on this relationship.

### **10.4.1 Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

Marx was concerned more with the understanding of capitalist order than with the understanding of religion per se. But in his general understanding of capitalism, Marx also developed a general theory of society extending over almost all social institutions, especially religion and politics. Marx's model of society had an economic base which constrains the superstructure constituted by religion, politics, arts etc. As a Jew from Germany, who had but long association with England, Marx owes much to his predecessors Hegel and Feuerbach, for his views on religion. In other words, Karl Marx's views on religion were largely a reaction to what Hegel and Feuerbach had written earlier on the subject.

#### **i) Hegel**

Hegel constructed the history of mankind as three stages in the development of the Absolute Spirit. What is this 'Absolute Spirit'? It is the force, which is the unity of the subjective (from within man) and the objective (that which exists outside man). To be simple, it is the dialectical unity of man with social and political order. In the first stage of historical development, the Absolute Spirit takes the 'art form', in the next stage it takes the form of 'religion' and in the third or final stage the form is 'absolute knowledge'. In the second stage, god appears to man. According to Hegel, during this stage, God's relationship with man is reflected in the relationship between man and man. It means two things : firstly, man's life is a material projection of the ideal realm (the divine); secondly, religion could be people's conception of themselves. Going by the first meaning, it can be understood that religion is the base on which many social institutions arise like superstructures. For example, Hegel opines that it was only due to the advent of christianity that a liberal political state became possible.

It seems there is a problem in Hegel's thought. It is true that Hegel dissolves the distinction between God and man. But, it also seems as though religious ideas are independent, as a superior guiding force which have an intrinsic value. This is questionable.

#### **ii) Feuerbach**

According to Feuerbach, religion is man's self-consciousness in an object form. God is a projection of purely human qualities in a distant beyond, which stands above and against the individual human reality. Knowledge of God is self-knowledge and consciousness of God is self-consciousness. Man's thoughts are his Gods. Through God, it is possible to understand man's god. Religion, in the thought of Feuerbach, reveals what a man thinks about himself. According to Feuerbach, the roots of religious ideas lie within individual psyche. Since man's capacity to attain what he wants is limited, he creates an omnipotent God, who is perfect and bears all superlatives. The misery of life impels man to seek for an after-life. Feuerbachian thesis, ultimately states that, man's consciousness has to be changed, so that the qualities he attributes to God can be restored back to him.

#### **iii) Critiquing Hegel and Feuerbach**

Karl Marx proceeded a step further than that of Feuerbach. He asks : "What are the social conditions which push the man to go in search of religion?". This question

is natural, considering the basic dictum of Marx's thought. As you know, according to Marx, society determines man's consciousness. Hence, the misery which necessitates religion comes not just from within the individual—but from specific exploitative social conditions. Thus religion is anchored in the society, in Marx's thought.

Broadly speaking, Marx's views on religion and its relationship with capitalism has three themes : Firstly, religion is an illusion which veils real exploitative conditions in society; Secondly, religion is a mode of protest albeit in a mild form and it is a form of alienation; Thirdly, religion can be discarded not through a critique of religion, but only changing the societal conditions which give rise to religion.

#### iv) **Marx : Religion is an ideology**

Religion has a double-function. It acts as an ideology (political ideas of a social class) of the ruling elite. It acts as an opiate of the masses. Much of Marx's understanding of religion seems to have arisen out of his experience of Protestantism of the Prussian state in the early nineteenth century. Marx was critical of the Prussian state which promoted Protestantism, because it helped the state to justify the economic inequalities. It can also be said that protestantism acted as an ideology of the new class which emerged at the break-down of feudalism.

#### v) **Marx : Religion is a Form of Alienation**

Marx also understood religion as a form of alienation characteristic of the commodity-producing, capitalist society. As you know, a commodity is a product of men's labour. In a commodity, the social character of labour appears as an object. Here, the relationship between producers and their own labour is presented as a relationship not between themselves, but between the **products** of their own labour. Commodities, then are social things whose qualities cannot be understood through the senses—the relationship between human beings become relations between things. Commodities thus become independent. In the same way, religion which is product of man's alienated labour, becomes independent and begins to reign over him. The social relations of man appear as relations of alien objects—both in the world of commodities and the in the world of religion. Thus out of man's alienation, relation arises.

#### **Box 10.01**

“Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against the real distress”, says Marx (1975 : 39). This protest does not aim at real conditions of exploitation in society—rather it is directed towards an imaginary construction. Thus men become slaves of what they themselves produce as religion. Religion, here acts as opium because it is an escape mechanism from the misery; it gives illusory happiness; it veils effectively the conditions of exploitation in the society.

When all forms of exploitation are destroyed, there is no need for religion. When men enter into relationships as free individuals—there is no misery—and hence there is no need for religion, says Marx, “The struggle against religion is... indirectly a fight against the world of which religion is the spiritual aroma” (1975 : 38).

### **10.4.2 Max Weber (1864-1920)**

Max Weber is another German scholar, who tried to understand the origins of capitalism, in Europe. Rationalization or Rationality is the unifying theme of Weberian scholarship. Rationalization indicates two almost simultaneous processes : firstly, the displacement of magical elements of thought and secondly, the process in which ideas attain systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency (Gerth & Mills 1952 : 51).

Weber applies his concept of rationalization to understand changes in religion, science, arts, administration and politics. For Weber, capitalism itself was born out of a highest degree of economic rationalization.

Weber argues and demonstrates that ideas can become motor forces in the development process. In the development of capitalism, the ideas supplied by the protestant sects played a major role. Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism' was published in German between 1904 and 1905. Since then it has been a subject of debate among social scientists all over the world. Especially, after the Second World War, the debate has earned the attention of third world scholars.

#### **i) West and the East**

When contrasted with the East, Weber finds that rationalization has reached a high degree only in the West. Take for example, science, Weber says that only in the Western civilization, science has reached a high stage of development. In his eyes, though India, China and Egypt had great traditions of knowledge, due to the lack of experimental method, they lagged behind in economic development. In various spheres such as music, architecture, legal system, printing system, bureaucracy and capitalism, the West has reached a higher degree of rationalization. Weber points to three aspects, which mark the emergence of rational capitalism : firstly, "rational capitalistic organization of free labour", secondly, "rational industrial organization tuned to regular market" and thirdly "technical utilization of scientific knowledge". Cost-benefit calculation, book-keeping, counting of balance are some indicators of capitalistic organization. Before the arrival of capitalism, there were many magical and religious forces. The protestantism gave rise to an economic spirit, which could overtake all the traditional magico-religious forces and thus paved the way for capitalism.

#### **ii) Catholics and Protestants**

Catholics and Protestants were deeply influenced by their religious beliefs in the choice of occupation and type of education. Citing data, Weber says that while protestants sent their children to technical institutions, industrial and commercial training institutes, the catholics sent their children only to humanities education. Protestants outnumber Catholics, among the skilled labourers and administrators.

#### **iii) Spirit of Capitalism**

Protestantism, especially Calvinism had an economic ethic conducive for the development of capitalism. "The term 'economic ethic' points to the practical impulses for action which are founded in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religion" (Weber 1952 : 267). The words of Benjamin Franklin such as "Time is Money", "Credit is Money" and "Money can beget money" capture the essence of ascetic protestantism. Earlier in a traditional set-up, people earned for living. But now after the arrival of protestantism, earning becomes a virtue; an end in itself; it shows one's proficiency in his "calling". The labour too becomes an end in itself. After Protestantism, people earned a lot but did not spend lavishly, people worked hard but did not consume luxuriously. This 'spirit of capitalism', had its roots in ascetic protestantism, whose adherents mainly were the rising strata of the lower industrial middle classes.

#### **iv) Sense of Calling**

There are major differences in understanding 'calling' as well as 'labour', between catholicism, lutheranism, and calvinism. For the catholic church, calling meant the renunciation of the world in favour of monastic asceticism, whereas for Luther,

'calling' meant the fulfillment of obligations attached to one's position. 'Labour' is the 'product of selfishness' according to catholicism, and it is an 'expression of brotherly love' according to Lutheranism. Luther said that the division of labour, forces every individual to work for others. Luther's concept of 'calling' only means that one has to accept his position in the world and hence its 'economic ethic' was not progressive. It was Calvin, whose interpretation of 'calling', coupled with the 'Doctrine of Predestination', generated intense drive for development of capitalism in countries like Holland, Netherlands, Switzerland etc.

#### v) Calvinism and Wordly Asceticism

The 'Doctrine of Predestination' holds the key, to the understanding of capitalist spirit generated by calvinist ethic. The doctrine of predestination states that God has already chosen some men for eternal life (salvation) and some men for eternal death (condemnation). Those who are chosen by God form the invisible church of God. According to Calvin, it is impossible to know God's plan and it is not good to know that. Because, God's grace will not be available to those who are not chosen by them for salvation, whatever they might do. Man has to believe that he is chosen by God and has to work for the glory of God, and thus prove his 'faith'.

The doctrine of predestination creates many social psychological impacts : firstly, the individual is left alone because there is nobody to mediate between him and the God, neither the priest nor the church; secondly, the individual has to find his ways himself, for there is no magical way to attain salvation, like sacraments, religious ceremonies, etc. Now, every Puritan has only one question, at his heart, "Am I one of the God's chosen people?" But, there is no answer for this question; not even through one's deeds can you guess whether he or she is chosen.

The only option left for the Puritan is to believe that he is chosen. Believing so, he has to avoid all sensuous pleasures and enjoyments and has to fight against all sorts of temptations with confidence. The only way to gain this confidence, is hard work for the glory of God. In doing so, it is established that God is acting through the hardworking, confident, ascetic puritan. A puritan has to create the conviction of salvation for himself, and behave carefully at every step in life, for if he commits mistakes there is no place for repentance and rectification. A puritan practices self-control, but works tirelessly to demonstrate his 'faith' that he is one among the chosen.

When a puritan works hard and earns a lot of money, but avoids luxury, naturally capital accumulates. This can be used for further productive investment. Weber cites Holland, as a typical example of a country in which this process took place. Weber could trace, similar stands of asceticism in other protestant sects like Pietism, Methodism, Baptist Sects etc. but when compared to Calvinism, the impulses generated by their ethic was very weak.

Thus the protestant sects had an economic ethic, which helped the growth of capitalism, particularly in Western European countries.

### 10.4.3 Comparison between Marx and Weber

Birnbaum (1953) points to many similarities between Marx and Weber. Some of them are important ones and worth citing : Firstly, both Marx and Weber agreed that capitalism is not a mere economic system, but it permeates and spreads throughout the society; secondly, both of them agreed that 'social values' which were necessary for the growth of capitalism were not 'natural' but the outcome of historical development; thirdly, both of them agreed that the "new capitalist entrepreneurial classes did not come from the pre-capitalist financial or merchant classes... (rather) the new capitalist class was a rising one..." Apart from these,

it also seems that both Weber and Marx were convinced of the 'end of religion' in the future.

The major difference is that, while Marx considered ideas to be simple reflections of social and economic realities, Weber considered ideas to be important for development. Weber did not establish a one-to-one relationship between religion and development. Weber's thesis allows us to say that, after a certain stage of development, religion may serve as the ideology of those who benefitted out of the development. Another difference between Marx and Weber is that, while Weber asserted the criticism of religion from within, Marx ruled that out. For Marx, the criticism of religion is possible from outside the religion. Moreover, Marx's view of religion as a veiling mechanism applies to all ages, societies and cultural systems, whereas Weber's view of religion as a bearer of ideas for potential development applies to specific historical-cultural systems. In Weber's thesis, we find the emphasis on 'individual', in Marx we do not find the same.



Karl Marx (L) and Max Weber (R)

Apart from the above specific differences between Weber and Marx on understanding religion, there are several general differences. For Marx, history is divided into many epochs, characteristic of particular way of the distribution of ownership of means of production. Capitalism is one such epoch in history. Whereas for Weber, capitalism is the specific stage one long drawn out historical process called 'rationalization'. Capitalism is not just an economic system or social system alone for Weber, for him capitalism is also a cultural system marked by rationalization in all walks of life—namely, administration, judiciary, science etc.

#### Activity 1

Try to meet some wealthy businessman or traders in your area and ask them about their views on religion. Also observe their religious practices.

#### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T or F against each statement :
  - a) Economics is generally a matter of production and distribution.
  - b) According to Feuerbach, religion is outside the individual psyche.
  - c) Marx said that religion is a reflex of the real world.
  - d) It is possible to know, whom God has selected for 'eternal life (or) salvation'.
- 2) Give answers for the following questions. Follow the instructions carefully :
  - i) answers are hidden in the unit itself
  - ii) answers must be brief and precise

a) What is the similarity between commodity and religion? Use five lines for your answer.

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b) What is Marx's view on the end of religion. Use five lines for your answer.

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c) What are the social impacts of the doctrine of predestination? Use five lines for your answer.

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d) How does the concept of 'calling' differ between Luther and Calvin? Use five lines for your answer.

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e) Define rationalization. Use five lines for your answer.

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## 10.5 HINDUISM AND DEVELOPMENT

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As you know, this unit appraises you about several strands of relationship between religion and the economic order. In the section 10.4, the ideas of Karl Marx and Marx Weber were presented to you. Karl Marx viewed religion as an effect of alienation and Marx Weber argued that the protestant sects were able to supply ideas to facilitate the growth of capitalism. India and Hinduism has earned considerable attention from both the scholars. Marx argued Hinduism as a natural consequence



of stagnant type of social organization and Weber postulated that Hinduism like many Eastern religions lacks an ethic, conducive for the development of capitalism. This section elaborates their views, and presents some of the reactions to their scholarship.

### 10.5.1 Marx on Hinduism

Karl Marx had a very limited access to knowledge about India. His sources were travelogues, diaries and reports written by British colonial administrators. From these sources, Marx understood Hinduism as Worship of nature and India as an aggregate of self-sufficient 'little communities'. What interested Marx, in Hinduism was its extreme sensualism on the one side and self-torturing asceticism on the other side. Marx explained these kind of extremes were a natural consequence of a stagnant type of social organization, characterized by community ownership of land—namely, 'village republics'. The type of social organization that India had, subordinated man to external forces and as a result there arose nature worship. He argued that the village republics were mainly responsible for committing Indian minds to superstition. Marx postulated that Hinduism might 'die' when the village republics will be dissolved under the impact of colonialism.

The 'bias' inherent in Marx's sources of data has been pointed out. Many studies have shown that India was not a 'stagnant society', or for that matter even the 'little communities'. The villages were never self sufficient and people had to move out of their village for marriage affiliations, market operations and pilgrimages. Village boundaries were always intersected by ties of kinship, occupational and religious contacts. In contradiction to Marx's prediction, Hinduism has survived for many centuries in this continent—though it changes its forms, as some scholars point out. Also, it is widely pointed out that Marx failed to see Hinduism as an instrument of exploitation or control as he did in the case of Western religions.

### 10.5.2 Weber on 'Hinduism and Capitalism'

In the sub-section 10.4.2 it was explained that Weber could see strands of ascetic protestantism supplying ideas conducive for the origin and development of capitalism. As a sequel to that Weber argued that, the Eastern religious including Hinduism lacked an ethic conducive for the origin of capitalism. Weber's view on Hinduism, was formulated through his understanding of 'power structure' in Indian society and the 'economic ethic' embodied in the 'caste system' and 'Karma Philosophy'.

#### Box 10.02

Weber believed that Brahmins dominated the power structure in Indian society. Only the Brahmins, who were educated in Vedas, were the highest status group. Brahmins were the ones, towards whom vertical division of society was oriented. Society was divided into hereditary, occupational groups whose statuses were determined as per their proximity/distance from the Brahmins. Since the Brahmins has the 'ritually' sanctioned dominance over the society, they influenced the practical ethic of Hinduism. The practical ethic, shaped by the Brahmins involved much mysticism and magical elements. Purity and pollution were the major magical elements introduced by the Brahmins. Mysticism, directed the attention of religion towards 'salvation' and inner-wordly (at heart) asceticism. With the help of mysticism and magical elements, Brahmins kept vast mass of people servile to them.

'Karma' and the 'caste system' further supplemented this power structure. 'Caste system' was irrational and hence prevented the origin of capitalism in India. How? Firstly, caste system fixed millions of people as servile labourers attached to their upper caste masters'. Secondly, caste system conferred status on one group and heaped multiple disadvantages for other groups; thirdly, the vertical division of humanity into occupational groups had ritual and religious sanctions. The religious sanction, **stabilised** the caste system; fourthly, since the caste system was hereditary and within it, the occupation, the occupational mobility was prevented. Occupational divisions become stable, when groups monopolies certain kinds of occupations. The Karma philosophy, as per the understanding of Weber, is the belief that actions of this-world/this-life has a consequence for the next-life. Karma is a cycle of rebirth, which guarantees status mobility for the individual in the next birth on the basis of his performance of his duty in this-life. If somebody sincerely carries out the duties assigned through his caste position, his position in the (ritual) status hierarchy will be better in the **next birth**. What is the social impact of Karma philosophy? It prevents the individual from searching for better occupations—it confines him to what is assigned to him through his caste position.

Thus the power structure, coupled with the caste system and Karma philosophy generate a 'spirit' which impedes the development of capitalism in India.

#### Activity 2

Try to find out which religious community or caste community is influential in business/trade in your town/city. Find out, in what/which trade they are influential and how?

### 10.5.3 An Evaluation of Weber

Weber's thesis on Hinduism has been refuted by many scholars. Rao (1969) points out many problems in Weber's analysis : Firstly, Weber's units of comparison were mistaken. Like he studied protestant sects, he should have studied a Hindu sect and tried a comparison secondly, Weber's understanding of 'Karma' is partial and it takes into account the interpretation of only a single school of thought, when there are many; fourthly, most of such views constructed from religious texts, consider ideas to be stable and unchanging throughout history, which is wrong.

Most of Weber's arguments have been defeated over the development in the past forty years of Indian independence. By now various studies have established that traditional institutions like joint family and caste have well adapted themselves to development. Caste associations have helped in spreading education, caste communities have helped in building textile industries in Western India. Joint family has adapted to the modern corporate sector (Singer 1972) in Madras. Many studies done in 1950s and 1960s, showed that Indian farmers were very receptive to modern methods of agriculture, especially the 'Green Revolution' technology.

Weber mistakenly held that 'Hinduism' is a homogenous, monolithic religion. Due to his mistaken view, he postulated 'one' spirit for Hinduism, which is again unacceptable. Hinduism is heterogenous, with diverse systems of philosophy, and culture. Within Hinduism itself, there have arisen many sects, which have some similarities with the protestant ethic. Veera Saivism or Lingayatism of the 12th century Karnataka, opposed the idea of ritual pollution, preached that 'work is heaven' and advocated self-control. Scholarly studies establish that Lingayats (members of the sect 'Lingayatism') are very active in many entrepreneurial ventures.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) Match the following :

- a) Karl Marx : i) "Work is Heaven"
- b) Max Weber : ii) Joint family adapts itself to modern corporate sector
- c) Milton Singer : iii) Hinduism will die because of colonialism
- d) Veera Saivism : iv) Karma philosophy obstructs development.

2) Give answers for the following questions. Follow the instructions carefully :

- i) answers are hidden in the unit itself
- ii) answers must be brief and precise.
- a) Explain Marx's views on Hinduism. Use five lines for your answer.

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b) What is the social impact of Karma Philosophy? Use five lines for your answer.

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c) Can any one agree with Max Weber on his view on 'Hinduism and Development'? Give your own reflections. Use five lines for your answer.

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**10.6 LET US SUM UP**

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Unit 10 had the basic objective of explaining the relationship between religion and the economic order. Section 10.2 demonstrated that religious belief and values affect our words and deeds, everyday. This basic importance of religion was further extended to the realm of economics, namely production, distribution and consumption. This was in Section 10.3.

In 10.4, we chose one particular model of economic life, namely capitalism and its

relationship with religion was discussed. Here, Marx and Weber came to our rescue. It was pointed out in 10.4.1 that Karl Marx's understood religion as a veil over the exploitative conditions of society. For him, religion is only imaginary and it will vanish, when real conditions of exploitation in the society are removed. In 10.4.2 Max Weber's famous thesis on the relationship between protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism was explained. It was pointed out that Calvin's new interpretation of certain doctrines had the potentiality to generate impulses for the origin of capitalism. Weber's analysis of the protestant ethic, made him realise that ideas can play an effective role in development.

In section 10.5, the focus of our discussion was the nature of relationship between Hinduism and the economic order. Here, our main concern was Weber whose statement is that Hinduism lacks an ethic conducive for capitalist origin and development. Weber's statement was elaborated and evaluations in the light of forty years of development experience in India, was prescribed. Both Marx and Weber had understood India, Hinduism in particular, in a partial way since they had very limited access to sources.

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## 10.7 KEY WORDS

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**Asceticism** : Intense self-control or denial of oneself.

**Alienation** : A process through which a person becomes subordinated to the product of his own activity.

**Base and Superstructure (substructure)** : A model used by Marx to show the importance of one institution when compared with others. Base generally means 'foundation'.

**Calling** : One's occupation or Profession.

**Capitalism** : A system where free wage labour is employed, whose productivity is maximized through machines, and profit is generated continuously, by sale in the market.

**Feudalism** : An economic system where labour is servile and attached to the master through ties of varying nature and production is only for subsistence.

**Ideology** : There are two meanings :

- i) Political ideals of any class, especially ruling class.
- ii) A kind of distorted image/thought.

**Predestination** : 'Chosen already'/'predetermined'.

**Puritan** : One who adheres to the doctrines any of the protestant sects.

**Rationalization** : Displacement of magical elements of thought, and systematic coherence and consistency of ideas.

**Salvation** : 'After-life' or redemption from misery.

**Sect** : A voluntary association, which gives new interpretation of sacred text.

**Socialism** : Society where private property is abolished.

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## 10.8 FURTHER READINGS

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Robertson, Roland (1987). 'Economics and Religion', in Elaide (M) ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York : Mac Millan, Vol. 6 pp. 1-11.

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## 10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) a) True  
b) False  
c) True  
d) False  
e) False
- 2) a) Commodity and religion, both are men's creations. But they exist over and above men and sedate them.  
b) According to Marx, when the real conditions of exploitation are destroyed there is no misery. Then, religion will whiter away.  
c) The social impacts of the doctrine of predestination are as follows :
  - i) The individual is left alone, because there is nobody to mediate and their is no magical cure.
  - ii) Work becomes an end, in itself. A puritan has to work for the greater glory of God.
  - iii) Conviction of salvation has to be demonstrated through work and self-control.
  - iv) When a puritan earns but desists from spending, money accumulates, which can be productivity invested.
- d) For Luther, 'calling' is acceptance of one's social position as given by God. In the case of Calvinist, he/she has to work because that position is an opportunity to honour the glory of God.
- e) Rationalization denotes two almost simultaneous processes (i) Displacement of magical thought and action. (ii) The process through which ideas attain systematic coherence and natural consistence. Rationalisation is the unifying theme of Weber's scholarship.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) a) (iii)  
b) (iv)

- c) (ii)
  - d) (i)
- 2) a) Marx understood Hinduism as nature worship. For him, this was a natural outcome of the stagnant type of social **organization**, characteristic of Indian villages.
- b) Karma Philosophy advocates that one should sincerely carry out the duties assigned to him (through his caste position), so that he can improve his status in **next-birth**. This tends to prevent an individual from searching for better occupations—it prevents occupational mobility.
- c) Go through the sub-section 10.5.3 carefully and present your own views on Weber's thesis on Hinduism.