

**EXPLORING RELIGION: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY INTO THE RELIGIOUS
PRACTICES OF YOUTH IN KOCHI CITY**



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MARCH 2025

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Thesis submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Bachelor of Arts in Sociology**.

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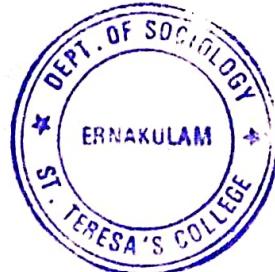

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled "**Exploring Religion: A Sociological Study into The Religious Practices of Youth in Kochi City**" is a record of bonafide research work carried out by **Anjali Bonifus, Ansa Antony, Elsa Chakkalakkal, Mansi Pillai, Daya Thresia Jyothy, Madhavi P A**, under my guidance and supervision. The thesis is worth submitting in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology.



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DECLARATION

We **Anjali Bonifus, Ansa Antony, Elsa Chakkalakkal, Mansi Pillai, Daya Thresia Jyothi, Madhavi P A**, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "**Exploring Religion: A Sociological Study into The Religious Practices of Youth in Kochi City**" is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by us under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. Sajitha J Kurup**. We further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or other similar title.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In this humble endeavour we have received a great deal of support and guidance from different Quarters. First and foremost, we thank the God almighty, for bestowing upon us abundance of grace, wisdom and power throughout the study and making it a success.

We are extremely grateful to our Principal Dr. Alphonsa Vijaya Joseph for giving us this opportunity. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Dr Leela P U, Head of the Department of Sociology and to all the faculty members for their encouragement and guidance in accomplishing the work.

We are grateful to Dr. Sajitha J Kurup for her constant guidance and inspiration without which this work would not have been possible.

We would like to express our gratitude to the respondents of the study without whose cooperation this study could not have conducted successfully. Last but not the least we take this opportunity to thank our classmates, friends and family for their love and support.

Ernakulam

March 2025

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Abstract

Religion is a set of beliefs, practices, and ethical norms that surround the concept of a divine or superior being. It is concerned with existential themes, the meaning of life, and the afterlife. Religion is one of humanity's most powerful social institutions. Religions usually involve rituals, sacred texts, and moral standards. It provides a sense of belonging among members, which is typically based on similar views and ideals. It influences behavior by enforcing previously established codes of conduct and social norms. It aids in identity formation, influences beliefs, and defines community boundaries. Religion is a force that may both unite and divide society.

Religion has a lengthy history, extending back to the Animist period. According to this faith, everything—plants, rivers, stones, animals, and even objects—has a spiritual component. It pertains to the concept that natural phenomena and inanimate objects possess souls. It is synonymous with fetishism, which holds that inanimate objects like trees, stones, or volcanic eruptions possess magical properties and live spirits. Polytheism or the worship of numerous gods, ensued. These beliefs are supported by evidence that precedes written records, which first appeared in Mesopotamia around 3500 to 3000 BCE. The period spanning from 800 to 200 BCE, witnessed the emergence of strong belief systems such as Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. During the Middle Ages, Christianity dominated in Europe. Islam arose in the seventh century CE and spread rapidly throughout the Middle East and beyond.

The study is conducted as religion continues to hold significant influence in modern society. It aids an understanding of youth's perspective toward the existing religious practices. As traditional beliefs intersect with evolving cultural and social norms, understanding these practices provides valuable insights into the role of religion in shaping the values, behaviours and morals of young people. The study also helps to identify factors that drive changes in the religious practices among the youth, and gain deeper understanding of contemporary religious trends. This research examines how traditional religious practices interact with evolving cultural, social, and personal factors among young people.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background of Religion

Religion is a set of beliefs, practices, and ethical norms that surround the concept of a divine or superior being. It is concerned with existential themes, the meaning of life, and the afterlife. Religion is one of humanity's most powerful social institutions. Religions usually involve rituals, sacred texts, and moral standards. It provides a sense of belonging among members, which is typically based on similar views and ideals. It influences behavior by enforcing previously established codes of conduct and social norms. It aids in identity formation, influences beliefs, and defines community boundaries. Religion is a force that may both unite and divide society.

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1.2 Religion in India

India has a wide range of religious practices and beliefs. The 2011 census found that 79.8% of Indians are Hindu, 14.2% are Muslim, 2.3% are Christians, 1.7% are Sikhism, 0.7% are Buddhist, 0.4% are Jainism, and 0.5% are Animism/Adivasi. Other religions make up 0.15 percent of the population, and the remaining 0.25% are not religiously affiliated. Religion has long played an important role in Indian culture. The Indian subcontinent is home to four of the world's main religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. They are also known as native Indian religions or Dharmic religions and make up almost 83% of India's population. India is one of the oldest centers of human civilization, and its religious history demonstrates the evolution and coexistence of different faiths, ideologies, and cultural traditions. The earliest evidence of religious ceremonies in India dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization (which existed between 3300 and 1400 BCE and reached maturity between 2600 and 1900 BCE). Little is known about their religious rituals, but archaeological evidence includes images of gods and goddesses (such as the Goddess of Fertility), symbols like the swastika, and some researchers point to the Great Bath of Mohenjo-daro as a precursor to ritual bathing, which is central to Hinduism. Vedic Hinduism first emerged during the Vedic era (1500-500 BCE). Worships took the form of sacrifices (Yajna), which included chanting Rigveda hymns, singing Samans, and mumbling sacrificial mantras. Indra, Agni, and Soma were the main gods of the Vedic pantheon, along with other gods of social order such as Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Bhaga, and Amsa, as well as nature deities such as Surya, Vayu, Prithivi, Ushas, Aditi, Saraswati, etc. This era established the foundations for Hinduism.

Buddhism and Jainism emerged as reformist movements opposed to Vedic orthodoxy. These two Indian faiths originated in Magadha, Bihar, and are still quite popular today. The founder of Jainism is Mahavira, who is thought to have lived in the sixth century BCE. However, according to Jains, their faith has been around much longer and was taught by 24 Tirthankaras, the first of which was Rishabhanatha. The most renowned person in Jainism is Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, who is widely credited with creating the religion in Its present form. Asceticism, or abstinence, is central to Jainism. Adherents follow extremely strict dietary and lifestyle standards. For example, Jains take great care to protect all living things, even bacteria. They clean the ground before walking to avoid stepping on living things, and they wear masks to avoid inhaling insects. Buddhism is another ancient Indian religion founded by the Buddha,

also known as Siddhartha Gautama, who achieved enlightenment in the sixth century BCE. Buddhism taught that, while misery (dukkha) is a normal aspect of existence, people can overcome it and break free from the cycle of rebirth by following the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Buddhism advocates the Middle Way, rejecting both extreme self-denial and extreme pleasure. Early in his life, the Buddha practiced extreme asceticism, but he gradually abandoned it in favor of a more balanced approach to spiritual practice. Buddha originally taught in the northeastern Indian subcontinent, specifically Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. After reaching enlightenment, Buddha spent the rest of his life disseminating his teachings, primarily via traveling and gathering an audience. Buddha gave his first sermon in Sarnath, which is near to Varanasi. Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism. He aggressively promoted the Buddha's teachings throughout India and beyond. Asoka sent missionaries both inside and outside of India, to Sri Lanka, Nepal, Southeast Asia, and even parts of the Mediterranean. He issued rock edicts promoting Buddhist teachings including good behavior, tolerance, and nonviolence. Buddhism had declined in India by the 12th century CE, in part due to the rise of Hinduism and the destruction of Buddhist monasteries caused by Islamic invasions. However, millions of people worldwide continue to practice Buddhism, which has spread throughout Asia. Maharashtra has the highest number of Buddhists and Jain people, owing largely to historical influences and the presence of considerable Buddhist and Jain populations in cities such as Pune and Mumbai. According to the 2011 Census, 79.8% of Indians identify as Hindus, making them the country's largest religious group. Hinduism's roots include cultural influences from the Indus Valley Civilization and other ancient Indian civilizations. Hinduism continued to evolve as the Puranas, epic literature such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, and the Bhakti movement grew in popularity. Hinduism is a collection of beliefs, practices, and philosophies, not a single religion. It covers a wide spectrum of gods, ideas, and intellectual frameworks. Key Hindu ideas are karma, dharma, moksha, rebirth, and the belief that the cosmos is cyclical. Most of these temples were built during that period. The 2011 census shows 14.2% of Indians follow the most often used religion. In fact, India has the world's third largest Muslim population. Sunni Muslims account up the majority of Muslim sales in India, but they are closely following Sunnis, accounting for approximately 15%. Islam arrived in India during the seventh century as a result of trade and conquest. Shortly, after its introduction in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam is thought to have spread quickly among Indian people along Arab coastal trade routes in Gujarat and the Malabar Coast. Methala, Kodungallur Taluk, Thrissur District, Kerala, is home to the Cheraman Juma Mosque, India's oldest mosque. Muslims make up most of the

population in Jammu and Kashmir (68.3%), as well as Lakshadweep (96.2%). The three states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar are home to around 47% of India's Muslim population. Sufism, a mystical form of Islam, experienced a significant increase in followers during this time, while Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism remained popular. During this period of cultural fusion, Indian and Islamic cultures influenced one another. Sikhism, a monotheistic Indian religion, originated in Punjab in the 15th century as a result of Guru Nanak and nine other Sikh Gurus' teachings. As the results of the 2011 census, Sikhs account for 1.7% of India's overall population—roughly 20.8 million individuals. Sikhs inhabit only in one of India's states, Punjab. Before Greater Punjab, the most frequently occurring sites were in other areas, including Jammu, Delhi, and Haryana. Christianity is a monotheistic religion founded on the New Testament's accounts of Jesus' teachings and life. With 2.3% of the population, it is India's third most popular religion. St. Thomas is credited with introducing Christianity into India. In 52, he arrived in the Malabar Coast. Throughout British colonial authority, the British colonial regime was always associated with Christianity. The majority of Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya are Christians in Manipur, Goa, Kerala and Mumbai.

Other religious minorities in India make up approximately 0.15% of the population, including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and many tribal religions. The rest are atheist. Around 0.25% of India's population did not name their religion in the 2011 census, and were classified as "religion not stated."

Religion had an important role in India's freedom struggle and, later, partition. The partition of India in 1947 resulted in savage riots and indiscriminate intercommunal massacres of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs across the Indian subcontinent, particularly in Punjab. After India was partitioned in 1947, two-thirds of Muslims lived in Pakistan (east and west), with one-third in India. Approximately 7.3 million Hindus and Sikhs permanently moved to India, while 7.2 million Muslims relocated to Pakistan, resulting in a population change in both countries. As a result, India's Hindu population increased dramatically, from 74.8% in 1941 to 84.1% in the 1951 census. India has been a secular state since independence, yet religion continues to play an important role in politics, social standards, and culture.

1.3 Religion in Kerala

Popular religions in Kerala are Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. According to the 2011 census, Hindus make up 54.73% of the population, while Muslims account for 26.56% and Christians for 18.38%. The state's historical context reflects significant religious tolerance and cultural integration. Hinduism, is the oldest faith that influences local culture significantly, with numerous temples and festivals like Onam celebrated statewide. Christianity was introduced by St. Thomas the Apostle in 52 AD and it further developed into a rich Christian heritage with various denominations. Islam arrived through Arab traders in the 7th century, contributing to Kerala's cultural tapestry. Additionally, smaller communities of Jews, Buddhists, and Jains exist, reflecting the state's historical openness to different faiths. Each district of Kerala has unique religious demography. North Kerala: is dominated by Muslims, with Malappuram having a Muslim majority compared to Hindus. Other districts like Kannur and Wayanad also show significant Muslim populations. South Kerala: is mainly dominated by Christians, particularly in districts such as Kottayam, Idukki and Ernakulam. Hindus make up a larger share compared to North Kerala.

1.4 Religion in Kochi

Kochi is a religiously diverse city where in addition to Hindu, Muslim, and Christian faiths several lesser-known religions are also practiced. About 38.12% of Kochi's population are identified as Christians. Christians adhere to teachings of Jesus Christ. They engage in a variety of ceremonies and rituals, many of which are connected to certain events or stages of a person's life. Thomas the Apostle, who introduced Christianity in India is said to have baptized many from Malabar region. Despite being a minority, Kerala's Christian population is significantly larger than India's overall population. About 43.78% of Kochi's population are identified as Hindu. Hinduism believes in many different spiritual beings, including a pantheon of gods and goddesses. They engage in a range of ceremonies and rituals, often associated with specific events or life stages. The myths surrounding Kerala's beginnings are predominantly around Hindus. With about 17.56% of Kochi's population, Islam is the third most popular religion in Kochi. Muslims follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and believe in the existence of a single God.

1.5 Religious Practices in India

Religious practices refer to the ways or practices that are followed by individuals or communities in the form of worship, prayers, and a way of engaging in rituals and ceremonies. These practices or customs can be in different form, as it can take different forms of shapes, which are dependent upon the fundamental ideas or principles of each religion. The intricacy and heterogeneity in religion and in its practices by the human experience and culture are reflected in the religious activities. Different kinds of religious practices exist in the world. Hinduism consists a wide range of rituals including Pooja, Yajna, Japa, Aarti, Darshan, Havan, Yoga. The main festivals include Diwali (festival of light) and Holi (festival of colours). In Hinduism, there are numerous significant and hallowed locations that are typically connected to various gods. They believe they can create a connection with Brahman, by going on pilgrimage. Adi Shankara, a religious philosopher who promoted Advaita and made contributions to Hinduism was born in Kerala. He played a pivotal role in founding the four mathas in Puri, Dwarka, Jyotirmath, and Sringeri. Narayaniyam, a compilation of poetry praising the Hindu God Krishna, was written by Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, another religious figure. In Islam, Muslims are expected to engage in certain regular acts of worship that increase their sense of God-consciousness (taqwa), and discipline their attitudes towards others. The core beliefs and practices of Islam are called the "Five Pillars of Islam" which include Shahadah (profession of faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (alms), Sawn (fasting), Hajj (pilgrimage). In Christianity, the practices differ depending on the specific denominations but globally Christians share the practice of the sacraments. They are deeds that draw people closer to God and emphasize their Christian identity. There are seven sacraments namely Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Healing, Marriage and Ordination. By going on pilgrimage, they believe they can grow closer to God and strengthen their belief. The main festivals celebrated are Christmas and Easter.

1.6 Sociological Interpretations

Religion, as a social phenomenon, has been interpreted differently by prominent sociologists like Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx, each shedding light on its complex role in shaping human lives and society. Emile Durkheim viewed religion as a reflection of society

itself, emphasizing its ability to foster unity and provide moral guidance. For Durkheim, religion distinguishes between the sacred and the profane, creating a shared sense of purpose and belonging that reinforces community bonds. In today's fast-paced world, where traditional institutions are often questioned, youth frequently turn to online communities or social movements for identity and connection. These modern "belief systems" echo Durkheim's idea that religion evolves to meet societal needs, offering solidarity and meaning in times of change. Max Weber, on the other hand, focused on how religion shapes individual behaviour and worldviews. He explored ideas like theodicy (explaining human suffering) and soteriology (the quest for salvation), showing how religious values influence life choices. For example, Weber famously linked Protestant ethics to the rise of capitalism, demonstrating how spiritual beliefs can drive economic behaviour. Today, young people navigating social and economic uncertainties often gravitate towards spirituality or alternative practices, seeking answers and purpose in a chaotic world. This mirrors Weber's view that religion adapts to address contemporary needs for meaning and self-fulfilment. Karl Marx took a more critical stance, famously describing religion as the "opium of the people." He argued that religion offers false hope, distracting individuals from confronting the inequalities and struggles inherent in capitalist systems. For Marx, religion perpetuates alienation, separating individuals from their true selves by imposing external beliefs. In a modern context, youth may feel this alienation when religious doctrines clash with their personal identities or values, leaving them with guilt or inadequacy for not conforming. This tension reflects Marx's critique of religion as both a comfort and a tool for control. In summary, these perspectives highlight how religion continues to shape human experiences—whether as a source of unity, a guide for personal growth, or a mechanism of societal control. For today's youth, navigating a world of rapid change, the search for belonging, purpose, and meaning remains as vital as ever, even as the forms of "religion" they engage with evolve.

1.7 Religion from the Perspective of Youth

From a sociological perspective, youth is considered a phase of social construct, influenced by cultural, economic and political contexts. Religion has a significant influence on youth at various levels of social life. Religion provides moral and ethical development teaching youth values like honesty, compassion and responsibility. It works as a key component of personal and social identity offering the youth a sense of belongingness. Religion can also take part in

educational and career choices that align with moral or spiritual goals. It can motivate the youth to engage in activism, charity and social justice initiatives. Likewise, there are many ways in which religion interacts with youth. But, these days the attitude of youth towards religion has a drastic change when compared to the traditional generation who gave utmost importance to religion in their everyday lives. Arrival of different ideologies such as secularism, liberty, equality etc. has led to the questioning of religious authority in different aspects of an individual's life. The concept of religion among youth has changed a lot. This research aims to explore and understand the changes in youth attitudes toward religion.

1.8 Need and significance of the study

The study is conducted as religion continues to hold significant influence in modern society. It aids an understanding of youth's perspective toward the existing religious practices. As traditional beliefs intersect with evolving cultural and social norms, understanding these practices provides valuable insights into the role of religion in shaping the values, behaviours and morals of young people. The study also helps to identify factors that drive changes in the religious practices among the youth, and gain deeper understanding of contemporary religious trends.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Through the literature review, the aim is to understand the complex relationship between religious beliefs, practices, and their influence on individuals and society. It explores the various ways in which youth engage with religion, considering factors like upbringing, social networks, and evolving spiritual identities. These studies provide insights into the changing nature of religious beliefs among young people in different cultural contexts.

Carole M Cusack (2011) In the study “Some recent trends in the study of religion and youth” analyzes the significant developments in the way youth engage with religion and spirituality in contemporary society. The study highlights that today's youth are not merely passive recipients of religious teachings; instead, they actively engage in shaping their own spiritual and social identities. It also depicts friendship as a key determinant as to why certain religious beliefs and practices might be adopted. Contrary to earlier assumptions that religion was declining among young adults, recent studies indicate a resurgence of interest in various forms of spirituality and transnational religions, such as Pentecostalism. Additionally, new spiritual movements-including Paganism, Satanism, and subcultures like Goth, demonstrate that young people are exploring a wide array of religious identities, challenging the notion of uniform disinterest in organized religion. The review also critiques traditional research methodologies that often rely on outdated notions of religious identity. It advocates for contemporary approaches that consider the complexities of lived religion and the diverse ways young people engage with their beliefs.

Tyler J Vanderweele (2018) In the study “Religious Upbringing and Adolescence” examines the impact of religious upbringing on various aspects of adolescent development, including their mental health, well-being and social behaviour. The study shows the outcomes of a survey conducted among 5000 adolescents, over a time period of eight years by controlling different variables to filter out the effects of religious upbringing. It shows that the children raised in a religious environment were better protected from the dangers of adolescence. Religious practice and prayer or meditation can be important in adolescence which helps to navigate the

challenges of life and to improve life's quality. It also shows the religious practices can really cause health and well-being of youth. It indicates the role of family and community in moulding the religious interest of youth. The study has its positives and negatives which lies in the ideologies of readers about religion.

Tarun Joshi, Roumi Deb & Rimai Joy (2014) In the study "An anthropological study towards the religious beliefs amongst the youths in India" explores the importance of religion in youth's life, its impact, the causes and degree of religious belief amongst youths. The research was conducted among 100 individuals belonging to the age group 17-28yrs in Amity University, Noida. The research highlighted strong and positive religious views among the youth. From the study, it was observed regular prayer was uncommon, and if they do so it was only once or twice a day. They did not pray out of fear, rather felt a sense of happiness in it. However, it was found that Muslim participants prayed as frequently as four to five times a day, viewing it as their duty and showing fear of punishment for not doing so. The intensity of religious beliefs in studied individuals varied from average to high along with individuals who expressed low or even no intensity in religious beliefs but their proportion was quite low in comparison. The research also found a correlation between educational background and religious beliefs. Biology students or students from science streams were seen giving contradictory explanations and questioning religious beliefs while others had more firm beliefs. Even then some still saw God as the creator, highlighting religion's influence beyond scientific reasoning.

Thushara Mariam Thomas & Dr. Shailaja Shastri, (2016) In the study "Attitudes towards Religion and Religious practices among youth: A Qualitative Study" examines various beliefs and perceptions held by the youth of Bangalore towards religion and related practices. The qualitative analysis was conducted among 18 individuals across three religions Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Among the three, Muslim participants were observed to hold stronger and firmer religious beliefs as compared to those belonging to Christianity or Hinduism. The Respondents were asked about how they would like to raise the children, from which it was clear that the majority of Muslim participants favoured bringing their children up in a strict religious environment, while the rest preferred a moderate religious approach. The study also explored the influence of media on religious beliefs, where a majority of 55.5% did not believe media to play any role on their beliefs and practices. Of those, who believed media to have

a slight or significant impact on religious beliefs majority were Muslims. Though some participants state a decline in the relevance of religion, other participants have identified themselves as religious. This shows that religion continues to play a complex and evolving role among the youths.

Sylvia Collins-Mayo, Pink Dandelion & Grace Davie (2010) In the book “Religion and youth” explores the influence of religion in young people's lives, examining how religious beliefs, practices, and identities evolve over time. The book highlights the view of religion and spirituality as dynamic in nature and evolving over time instead of viewing it as a static tradition. In the book, it is observed that young people are distancing themselves from organized religions and constructing their own beliefs combining elements from various sources. It also discusses the role of social networks in moulding individual beliefs. The book showcases a strong influence of media and technology on the way people interact with religion and faith. There still remains a strong hold of religion on shaping youth's identity but its complexity has increased in the contemporary settings.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem –

Religion has been a catalyst in shaping individual behaviour and social structures since its inception. In contemporary society, religion continues to be an important social institution influencing youngsters. This study seeks to explore the prevailing trends in religious practices among youth and the factors determining their beliefs.

Objectives –

(a)General Objective-

The general objective of the study is to explore the religious practices among youth in Kochi city.

(b)Specific Objectives-

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of youth in Kochi.
2. To identify current trends in religious beliefs and practices among the youth in Kochi.
3. To analyze the factors influencing the religious practices of youth.
4. To explore the expectations of youth from religion.

Clarification of concepts –

(a)Theoretical Definition –

Religious Practices- Religious practices means a term including practices and observances such as attending worship services, wearing religious garb or symbols, praying at prescribed times, displaying religious objects, adhering to certain dietary rules, refraining from certain activities, proselytizing, etc.

Youth- The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines ‘Youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

(b)Operational Definition –

Religious Practices- In our study we are considering the following religious practices. Christianity- Baptism, Confirmation, The Eucharist, Reconciliation (Confession), Participation in Church services, attending the holy mass, Bible reading, Evening prayer, Catechism (Sunday classes), Lent and Fasting. Hinduism- Visiting temples, Lighting lamps, Puja/Rituals, Ramayana/Mantra chanting, Fasting, Festival and Pilgrimage. Islam- Fasting, Friday classes, Going to Mosque, Quran reading, Prayer and Pilgrimage.

Youth- In our study we are analysing the religious practices of youth belonging to the age group 18-22 years.

Variables –

Independent variables considered in the study are age, gender, occupation, marital status, educational level, stream and religion.

Dependent Variable-

Dependent variable considered in the study is nature of religious practices among youth.

Universe –

In this study, the universe consists of all youth residing in Kochi city, encompassing individuals from different socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Sample –

Data is collected from 79 students aged between 18 and 22.

Sampling Method –

The sampling method used in this study is simple random sampling method.

Tool of Data Collection –

The data collection tool used in this study is Questionnaire.

Data analysis and interpretation -

The data collected using the tool was duly analysed and interpreted using percentages and other statistical measures.

Limitations of the study-

1. Religion being a sensitive topic, some participants expressed difficulty in sharing their views openly.
2. Due to personal faith commitments, some respondents may have provided answers that align with their religious beliefs. This could have introduced bias into the findings.
3. Some participants did not provide direct answers to certain questions.
4. As we conducted the study along with the academic curriculum, it was difficult to manage both.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study aimed to explore the religious practices among youth in Kochi city. 79 samples were taken to analyse the religious practices.

Table 1 - Age

Age (in years)	Number	Percentage
18	8	10.1
19	6	7.6
20	41	51.9
21	19	24.1
22	5	6.3
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents in the study belong to the age group of 20 years (51.9%)

Table 2 - Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	42	53.2
Male	37	46.8
Total	79	100

The samples collected represent a fairly balanced gender distribution with females accounting (53.2%)

Table 3 - Educational level

Education	Number	Percentage
Postgraduate	2	2.5
Undergraduate	77	97.5
Total	79	100

Majority are undergraduates accounting 77 (97.5%), making this study reflective of the educated youth demographic.

Table 4 - Stream

Stream	Number	Percentage
Arts	23	29.1
Commerce	15	19
Science	41	51.9
Total	79	100

From the sample, majority belong to science stream (51.9%)

Table 5 - Occupation

Occupation	Number	Percentage

Employed	2	2.6
Student	77	97.4
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants are students (97.4%), highlighting that the study is primarily centered on students.

Table 6 - Marital status

Marital status	Number	Percentage
Unmarried	77	97.5
Married	2	2.5
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants are unmarried (97.5%), indicating a homogenous life-stage sample.

2.1 Do you identify with any religious tradition?

Table 7 – Identification with religious tradition

Response	Number	Percentage
No	13	16.5
Yes	66	83.5
Total	79	100

83.5% identify with a religious tradition, while 16.5% do not.

2.2 If yes, please specify the religious tradition:

Table 8 – Religious affiliation

Religion	Number	Percentage
No affiliation	13	16.5
Christianity	17	21.5
Hinduism	41	51.9
Islam	8	10.1
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents belong to Hinduism (51.9%)

2.3 If no, do you consider yourself spiritual in any way?

Table 9 – Spiritual following

Response	Number	Percentage
Religious	66	83.5
No	9	11.4
Yes	4	5.1
Total	79	100

From the data, 13 (11.4%) of who stated to have no religious identity, only 4 (5.1%) consider themselves spiritual.

T-Test (Comparing Means Between Two Groups)

It is used to check whether the means of two groups are significantly different.

Objective: Understanding Socio-Economic Profile & Religious Beliefs Among Youth

- Does gender influence the frequency of religious service attendance?

Hypothesis for t-Test:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant difference in the frequency of religious service attendance between male and female respondents.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant difference in the frequency of religious service attendance between male and female respondents.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	1.468354	1.607595
Variance	0.252191	1.472249
Observations	79	79
Pooled Variance	0.86222	
Hypothesized Mean		
Difference	0	
df	156	
t Stat	-0.94244	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.173712	
t Critical one-tail	1.65468	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.347423	
t Critical two-tail	1.975288	

Interpretation of Results:

The **t-test result** shows **$t = -0.9424$, $p = 0.3474$ (two-tailed)**, which is **greater than 0.05**.

This means we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference in religious service attendance between males and females. This aligns with the study's findings that religious participation is influenced more by personal beliefs, education, and societal factors rather than gender.

- **Is there a significant difference in religious belief (belief in a higher power) between students from different fields of study?**

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Variable</i>	
	<i>Variable 1</i>	2
		2.59493
Mean	1.772152	7
		0.47484
Variance	0.767932	6
Observations	79	79
Pooled Variance	0.621389	
Hypothesized Mean		
Difference	0	
df	156	
t Stat	-6.55999	
P(T \leq t) one-tail	3.75E-10	

t Critical one-tail	1.65468
P(T<=t) two-tail	7.5E-10
t Critical two-tail	1.975288

Hypothesis for t-Test:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant difference in belief in a higher power between students from different fields of study.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant difference in belief in a higher power between students from different fields of study.

Interpretation of Results:

The **t-test result** shows $t = -6.56$, $p = 7.50 \times 10^{-10}$ (two-tailed), which is **much smaller than 0.05**.

This means we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant difference in belief in a higher power among students from different fields of study. This suggests that academic background influences religious belief, with students in certain fields being more or less likely to believe in a higher power.

2.4 How often do you attend religious services or gatherings?

Table -10 Frequency of attending religious services

Frequency of attendance	Number	Percentage
Frequently (once a week or more)	18	22.8
Never	6	7.6

Occasionally (a few times a year)	25	31.6
Rarely (1-2 times a year)	16	20.3
Regularly (once a month)	14	17.7
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants attend religious practices occasionally (31.6%). It sheds light into the religious participation of the respondents.

2.5 How often do you pray?

Table – 11 Frequency of prayer

Frequency of prayer	Number	Percentage
Daily	32	40.5
Monthly	15	19.0
Weekly	21	26.6
Never	11	13.9
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants pray daily (40.5%), indicating the frequency of prayer.

T-Test

- Do students who regularly engage in religious practices experience greater life satisfaction compared to those who do not?

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	2.379747	2.037975
Variance	0.418046	0.806232
Observations	79	79
Pooled Variance	0.612139	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	156	
t Stat	2.745429	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.003377	
t Critical one-tail	1.65468	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.006753	
t Critical two-tail	1.975288	

Hypothesis for t-Test:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant difference in life satisfaction between students who regularly engage in religious practices and those who do not.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** Students who regularly engage in religious practices experience greater life satisfaction compared to those who do not.

Interpretation of Results:

- **t-Statistic (2.75)** is greater than the **critical value (1.97)** for a two-tailed test, meaning the difference is statistically significant.
- **p-value (0.0068, two-tailed)** is less than **0.05**, indicating strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis.
- **Conclusion:** Students who engage in religious practices report significantly higher life satisfaction than those who do not.

Students who participate in religious practices tend to report greater life satisfaction compared to those who do not. Engaging in religious activities might offer emotional support, coping mechanisms or the ability to understand life's challenges, indicating higher life satisfaction.

Correlation Test:

1. **Is there a correlation between the frequency of prayer and belief in a higher power?**

Column	Column
1	n 2
<hr/>	
Colum	
n 1	1
<hr/>	
Colum	0.53486
n 2	1
<hr/>	
<hr/>	

Interpretation of Results:

- **Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.5349$)** indicates a **moderate positive correlation** between the frequency of prayer and belief in a higher power.

This means that as prayer frequency increases, belief in a higher power also tends to be stronger. Since the correlation is positive and relatively strong, it supports the idea that religious practices (like prayer) reinforce belief in a higher power.

2. Is there an association between field of study and frequency of religious participation?

	<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column n 2</i>
Colum		
n 1	1	
	-	
Colum	0.0807	
n 2	5	1

Interpretation of Results:

- Correlation Coefficient ($r = -0.0808$) suggests a very weak negative correlation between field of study and frequency of religious participation.

Since the value is close to 0, it indicates little to no meaningful relationship between a student's academic field and their religious involvement. The negative sign suggests a slight tendency that students in certain fields may participate less in religious activities, but the correlation is too weak to draw strong conclusions.

2.6 Do you believe in a higher power or divine being?

Table – 12 Belief in higher power

Response	Number	Percentage
No	9	11.4
Unsure	14	17.7
Yes	56	70.9
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants (70.9%) believe in a higher power.

2.7 What role do you think religion plays in society?

The data presents various views on the role of religion in society. 6.3% of the respondents see religion as a source of moral guidance. 8.9% believe it unites communities and promotes peace. 11.4% feel it causes division and conflict. The data indicates that while some people view religion as a unifying and morally guiding force, others see it as a source of division and conflict.

2.8 How do you feel about religion in the context of modern society?

Table – 13 Religious relevance

Responses	Number	Percentage
It is becoming less relevant	31	39.2
It is not relevant at all	6	7.6
It is somewhat relevant	25	31.6
It is still very relevant	17	21.5
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants believe that religion is becoming less relevant (39.2%), indicating the perception of religion in society.

2.9 Do you think young people today are more religious than previous generations?

Table 14 - Youth religiosity

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
No	33	41.8
Not sure	41	51.9
Yes	5	6.3
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents tend to be uncertain about the trend (51.9%). This could reflect the societal trends such as secularization, shifting values and so on but the uncertainty might be due to lack of clear evidence about on the issue.

2.10 How open are you to exploring religious beliefs outside of your own?

Table – 15 Religious exploration

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Not open at all	12	15.2
Not very open	14	17.7
Somewhat open	30	38
Very open	23	29.1
Total	79	100

Majority of the responses are ‘somewhat open’ 38% and 29.1% are ‘very open’ to learning about different religions, depicting the openness to other religions.

2.11 How would you describe your current relationship with religion?

Table – 16 Religious perspective

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I no longer identify with religion	10	12.7
Moderate and personal	35	44.3
Strong and active	9	11.4
Weak but still significant	25	31.6
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants describe their religious relationship as ‘moderate and personal’ (44.3%), indicating the personal relationship of respondents with religion.

2.12 How would you describe your religious practices when you were younger (before the age of 15)?

Table – 17 Childhood practices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Not religious (no regular prayers or religious practices)	7	8.9
Somewhat religious (prayers, attending services during holidays etc.)	35	44.3
Very religious (regular prayers, attending religious services etc.)	37	46.8
Total	79	100

Majority of the participants describe themselves as very religious before the age of 15 (46.8%). The data highlights that religious engagement was a significant part of their early lives.

2.13 Have your religious practices changed since you were younger?

Table – 18 Change in religious practices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I didn't have any religious practices when I was younger	2	2.5
No, they have remained the same	12	15.2
Yes, significantly	21	26.6
Yes, somewhat	44	55.7
Total	79	100

From the study, 26.6% say their religious practices have changed significantly since childhood whereas for 15.2%, they have remained the same.

2.14 How do you view the role of religion in your life now, compared to when you were younger?

Table – 19 Role of religion in life

Role of religion in life	Number	Percentage
About the same	19	24.1

Less central to my life now	27	34.2
More central to my life now	19	24.1
Religion was never central to my life	14	17.7
Total	79	100

As shown in the table, 34.2% say religion is less central to their lives now, while 24.1% believe it is more central to one's life.

2.15 Do you still identify with the same religious tradition you followed when you were younger?

Table – 20 Current religious traditions

Current religious traditions	Number	Percentage
I never identified with any religious tradition	10	12.7
No, I have changed or adopted a different belief system	12	15.2
Yes, I still identify with the same religious tradition	57	72.2
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents, 72.2% state that they still identify with the same religious tradition they followed when they were younger.

2.16 If your religious beliefs have changed, what do you think caused this shift?

A majority of the respondents report that social media and digital platforms have had a strong influence on the shift in their religious beliefs. Personal life experiences, along with doubts or loss of faith in religious teachings, also contribute to changes in religious views. Exposure to different belief systems along with education also influences the shift.

2.17 To what extent has your family influenced your religious beliefs?

Table – 21 Influence of family

Influence of family	Number	Percentage
No influence at all	4	5.1
Not much influence	8	10.1
Somewhat influenced	23	29.1
Strongly influenced	44	55.7
Total	79	100

A majority of the respondents (55.7%), feel that their family has strongly influenced their religious beliefs, indicating that family plays a key role in shaping the religious views.

2.18 Do your friends share their religious beliefs with you?

Table – 22 Conversations about religion among friends

Conversations about religion among friends	Number	Percentage

I don't know	3	3.8
None of them	10	12.7
Some of them	54	68.4
Yes, most of them	12	15.2
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents (68.4%) state that some of their friends share their religious beliefs.

2.19 How often do you discuss religious topics with friends or peers?

Table – 23 Discussions about religion among friends

Discussions about religion among friends	Number	Percentage
Never	10	12.7
Occasionally	27	34.2
Rarely	36	45.6
Regularly	6	7.6
Total	79	100

As shown in the table, 45.6% report that they discuss religious topics rarely. This suggests that for most people, religious discussions are not a regular part of their interactions with friends or peers.

2.20 To what extend has your friends or peers influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

Table – 24 Influence of friends

Influence of friends	Number	Percentage
Not influenced at all	35	44.3

Somewhat influenced	37	46.8
Strongly influenced	7	8.9
Total	79	100

According to the data, 44.3% of the respondents indicates that their friends or peers had no influence on their religious practices or beliefs, suggesting that their religious views are largely independent of their social circles. At the same time 46.8% of the respondents suggests a moderate level of influence.

2.21 To what extent has education influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

Table – 25 Influence of education

Influence of education	Number	Percentage
Not influenced at all	27	34.2
Somewhat influenced	41	51.9
Strongly influenced	11	13.9
Total	79	100

As shown in the table, education is said to have strongly influenced the religious practices or beliefs of 13.9% and moderately influenced 51.9%. These suggest that education has a role to play in shaping the religious views or practices of the majority respondents.

2.22 Do you feel that your religious identity impacts your personal or social life?

Table – 26 Impact of religious identity

Impact of religious identity	Number	Percentage
No, it does not impact	26	32.9

Not sure	16	20.3
Yes, negatively	4	5.1
Yes, positively	33	41.8
Total	79	100

Among the respondents, 41.8% have had a positive impact on their social or personal life.

2.23 Do you think your personal experience have influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

Table – 27 Influence of personal experience on religion

Influence of personal experience on religion	Number	Percentage
No	17	21.5
Yes	62	78.5
Total	79	100

The majority of respondents, 78.5% believe that their personal experiences have influenced their religious practices or beliefs. This indicates the influence of day-to-day events on religious practices and beliefs.

2.24 Do you think religious leaders or mentors have an influence on your religious beliefs?

Table – 28 Influence of religious leaders

Influence of religious leaders	Number	Percentage
No	58	73.4

Yes	21	26.6
Total	79	100

As shown in the table, 73.4% feel that religious leaders have not influenced their beliefs, indicating that, for most of the people, their faith or religious practices are shaped more by other factors, rather than by religious leaders.

2.25 To what extent has technology (e.g. social media, online religious content, apps) influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

Table – 29 Influence of technology

Influence of technology	Number	Percentage
I do not use technology in relation to religion	18	22.8
Not influenced at all	23	29.1
Somewhat influenced	33	41.8
Strongly influences	5	6.3
Total	79	100

According to the data, 41.8% of the respondents are somewhat influenced by online religious content.

2.26 Are you aware of any online communities or digital spaces that engage with religion?

Table – 30 Awareness of online communities

Awareness of online religious communities	Number	Percentage
No	49	62
Yes	30	38
Total	79	100

Majority of the respondents, 62% are not aware of digital religious communities. The data indicates that awareness of online religious communities or spaces is still limited.

2.27 In your opinion, what should be the role of religion in the education system?

Table – 31 Expected role of religion in educational system

Expected role of religion in educational system	Number	Percentage
It should be a key component	7	8.9
It should be an optional subject	31	39.2
It should be completely separate	41	51.9
Total	79	100

According to the data, 51.9% believe religion should be separate from education. This can help to provide an unbiased environment, where all students, regardless of their religious beliefs can feel comfortable and included.

2.28 In your opinion, how can religion better serve the needs of young people today?

The responses showcase diverse perspectives on how religion can better serve the needs of young people today. Many suggest that religious practices should adapt itself to contemporary world, rather than strictly adhering to tradition. They believe that religion should focus on personal freedom rather than enforcement. Some suggest use of technology and media to spread values and to create an inclusive environment for people belonging from diverse religious background. Some believe religion can act as a source of hope that helps young people to cope with their problems, provide moral guidance and a sense of purpose. Some think religion can unify individuals by engaging them in community life and bring positivity to their lives. Yet another group of individuals believe religion holds no value and cannot serve the needs of young people.

2.29 What challenges do you face in reconciling your faith with the modern world?

The responses highlight various challenges faced by individuals in reconciling their faith with contemporary society. Ethical conflicts, societal expectations and scientific reasoning are the major challenges faced by the youth. Some respondents feel pressured or forced to adhere to their religious beliefs and practices which drives them further away from it. The fear of judgement and stereotypes for belonging to certain groups like Islam or Atheism is also prevalent, making it difficult to follow their faith and often becoming a ground for conflicts and exclusion. Some believe religion has lost its relevance and fails to incorporate solutions to issues such as mental health as faced by the youth. Inner doubts, confusion are also seen as contributing factors for some. On the other hand, a significant number of respondents argue that they do not face any challenge and prefer keeping their religious beliefs and practices personal and private.

2.30 What do you think religion offers young people today that might be different from what it offered previous generations?

A majority of the respondents, did not hold any specific opinion and believed religion to be more or less the same as in previous generation. Of the rest, some believe religion today offers more freedom to do what they want, becoming more flexible in comparison. Some believe it acts as a protective factor by providing a source of resilience during the times of hardships. Some mentioned considerations or advantages one gets in different levels like political representation and educational quotas, if you belong to a particular religion. Many noticed a shift after COVID-19, which changed the way that people engage with faith, making religion more of a personal journey. Youth today have a greater exposure to diverse religious practices, unlike the previous generation who were very much limited to their own set of beliefs and practices.

2.31 Are you aware of the differences between religion and spirituality? if yes, which one do you prefer?

A notable number of participants were unaware of the difference between religion and spirituality. However, among those who were aware, most preferred spirituality over religion. Most of them viewed religion as an organized structure following a set of rules, laws and doctrines, leaving limited space for personal growth and interest. They preferred spirituality and appreciated its ability to be flexible, providing inner wisdom, happiness and a sense of peace. Some believed religion and spirituality as interconnected, with only a handful number of participants who preferred religion over spirituality giving it greater importance.

2.32 Any other thoughts or experiences related to youth and religion that you would like to share?

A majority of the respondents didn't share any particular thought or experiences. However, some suggested that religion should become more flexible, sharing negative experiences of feeling pressured into following religious practices. They believe religion should adapt itself to the changes in the modern world rather than sticking to traditional practices. Few raised concerns about following religion blindly emphasizing the need to critically evaluate certain

beliefs and practices. There seems to be an overall decline in rigid religious practices among youth.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study explores religious beliefs, practices, and perspectives among youth in Kochi. This chapter aims to provide the findings of the study. A majority (83.5%) of respondents identify with a religious tradition, primarily Hinduism (51.9%), Christianity (21.5%), and Islam (10.1%). However, 16.5% do not associate with any religion, indicating a growing trend of secularism.

The first objective was to understand the socio-economic profile of the respondents. 51.9% of respondents are 20 years old, with a fairly balanced gender distribution (53.2% female, 46.8% male). 97.5% are undergraduate students, making this study reflective of the educated youth demographic. Science (51.9%), Arts (29.1%), and Commerce (19.0%) dominate the academic background. 94.9% are students, and 97.5% are unmarried, indicating a homogenous life-stage sample.

The second objective was to analyze current trends in religious beliefs and practices. 83.5% identify with a religious tradition, while 16.5% do not. Of the latter, only 5.1% consider themselves spiritual. The participation varies among the respondents with 22.8% attending religious services frequently, 31.6% occasionally, and 7.6% never attending. 40.5% pray daily, while 13.9% never pray. When enquired about belief in a higher power, 70.9% believe in a higher power, 11.4% do not, and 17.7% are unsure.

The third objective was to find out the factors influencing religious practices. Social media, education, and exposure to diverse belief systems play a role, with 7.6% highlighting social media's impact. 68.4% share religious beliefs with some of their friends, indicating the influence of friends and peer group. 78.5% said personal experiences have shaped their beliefs, with 41.8% noting a positive impact on their social or personal life.

The fourth objective was to explore and understand the expectations of youth regarding religion. The following are some of the suggestions they provided:

- Religion should serve as a source of hope for young people in situations where they experience uncertainty or hardship by providing moral guidance, emotional support, and a sense of purpose.
- Religious practices should adapt to the contemporary world rather than strictly adhering to tradition.
- Religion should acknowledge and respect the opinions of young people by allowing them to express their perspectives, concerns and ideas.
- Religion should work towards a balanced approach where it supports personal development without ignoring logic and reasoning.

The study reveals a complex and evolving landscape of religious beliefs among youth in Kochi. While traditional religious affiliations remain strong, participation and institutional influence are declining. Factors like education, technology, and personal experiences significantly shape religious views. Many young people prefer spirituality over structured religion, emphasizing personal faith over institutional practices. This study highlights a generational shift toward individualized and evolving religious perspectives in an increasingly modern world.

The literature review effectively substantiates the findings of this study by highlighting the diverse and evolving nature of religious beliefs and practices among youth. The findings align with the declining relevance of traditional religious practices and a growing trend of youth actively engaging in creating their own personalized spiritual identities, as observed in the previous works by Carole M Cusack and Collins-Mayo. The impact of peer groups and media on the religious identity of youth as seen in earlier studies is also reflected in the findings. Additionally, the impact of upbringing discussed by Vanderweele finds relevance in the suggestions provided by the respondents for adapting religious practices to the contemporary world. The study by Joshi, which revealed the varying intensity of religious beliefs across different educational backgrounds, resonates with the diverse attitudes observed among youth in the study.

CHAPTER 6

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART-A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

1.Age

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22

2.Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

3.Educational level

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate

4.Stream

- Arts
- Commerce
- Science

5.Occupation

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed

6.Marital status

- Yes
- No

PART-B CURRENT TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

7.Do you identify with any religious tradition?

- Yes
- No

8.If yes, please specify the religious tradition:

- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Atheist
- Other

9.If no, do you consider yourself spiritual or religious in any way?

- Yes
- No

10. How often do you attend religious services or gatherings?

- Never
- Rarely (1-2 times a year)
- Occasionally (a few times a year)
- Regularly (once a month)
- Frequently (once a week or more)

11. How often do you pray?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never

12. Do you believe in a higher power or divine being?

- Yes
- No

13. How important is religion in your daily life?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

14. What role do you think religion plays in society? (check all that apply)

- Provides moral guidance
- Unites community
- Causes division and conflict
- Promotes peace and social harmony
- Encourages personal growth
- Violence
- Other

15. How do you feel about religion in the context of modern society?

- It is still very relevant
- It is somewhat relevant
- It is becoming less relevant
- It is not relevant at all

16. Do you think young people today are more religious than previous generations?

- Yes
- No

17. How open are you exploring religious beliefs outside of your own?

- Very open
- Somewhat open
- Not very open
- Not open at all

18. How would you describe your current relationship with religion?

- Strong and active
- Moderate and personal
- Weak but still significant
- I no longer identify with religion

19. How would you describe your religious practices when you were younger (before the age of 15)?

- Very religious (regular prayers, attending religious services, etc.)
- Somewhat religious (occasional prayers, attending services during holidays, etc.)
- Not religious (no regular prayers or religious practices)

20. Have your religious practices changes since you were younger?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, somewhat
- No, they have remained the same
- I didn't have any religious practices when I was younger

21. How do you view the role of religion in your life now, compared to when you were younger?

- More central to my life now
- About the same
- Less central to my life now
- Religion was never to my life

PART- C FACTORS INFLUENCING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

22. Do you still identify with the same religious tradition you followed when you were younger?

- Yes, I still identify with the same religious tradition
- No, I have changed or adopted a different belief system
- I never identified with any religious tradition

23. If your religious beliefs have changed, what do you think caused this shift?

- A personal experience
- Family members
- Friends or peers
- Education/ School environment
- Social media and digital platforms
- Exposure to different belief systems or religions
- Loss of faith or doubts in the religious teachings
- Other

24. To what extent has your family influenced your religious beliefs?

- Strongly influenced
- Somewhat influenced
- Not much influence
- No influence at all

25. Do your friends share their religious beliefs with you?

- Yes, most of them
- Some of them
- None of them
- I don't know

26. How often do you discuss religious topics with friends or peers?

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

27. To what extent has your friends or peers influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

- Strongly influenced
- Somewhat influenced
- Not influenced at all

28. To what extent has education influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

- Strongly influenced
- Somewhat influenced
- Not influenced at all

29.Do you feel that your religious identity impacts your personal or social life?

- Yes, positively
- Yes, negatively
- No, it does not impact
- Not sure

30.Do you think your personal experience have influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

- Yes
- No

31.Do you think religious leaders or mentors have an influence on your religious beliefs?

- Yes
- No

32.To what extend has technology (eg. social media, online religious contents, apps) influenced your religious practices or beliefs?

- Strongly influences
- Somewhat influenced
- Not influenced
- I do not use technology in relation to religion

33.Are you aware of any online communities or digital spaces that engage with religion?

- Yes
- No

PART-D EXPECTATIONS OF YOUTH FROM RELIGION

34.In your opinion, what should be the role of religion in the education system?

- It should be a key component
- It should be an optional subject
- It should be completely separate

35.In your opinion, how can religion better serve the needs of young people today?

36.What challenges do you face in reconciling your faith with the modern world?

37.What do you think religion offers young people today that might be different from what it offered previous generations?

38.Are you aware of the differences between religion and spirituality? If yes, which one do you prefer?

39.Any other thoughts or experiences related to youth and religion that you would like to share?