

## **RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*The secular concept is substantially different from societies that adhere to religious law, wherein "religious education" connotes the dominant academic study, and in typically religious terms, teaches doctrines which define social customs as "laws" and the violations thereof as "crimes", or else misdemeanors requiring punitive correction. The topics of the paper touch all levels of the educational institution: the micro-level (such as religious education, moral education, teacher ethics), the meso-level (such as identity of schools, schoolethos, admission of pupils, normative school leadership, influence of parents in the school board) and the macro-level (such as state politics, law, legitimization of religiously affiliated schools, relation to the churches). This paper spans a wide range of academic disciplines, including education, pedagogy, philosophy, theology, ethics, law, sociology, and psychology.*

**Keyword:** Religion education

### **Religion**

Religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to an order of existence. Many religions have narratives, symbols, and sacred histories that are intended to explain the meaning of life and/or to explain the origin of life or the Universe. From their beliefs about the cosmos and human nature, people derive morality, ethics, religious laws or a preferred lifestyle.

According to some estimates, there are roughly 4,200 religions in the world.

Many religions may have organized behaviors, clergy, a definition of what constitutes adherence or membership, holy places, and scriptures.

The practice of a religion may also include rituals, sermons, commemoration or veneration of a deity, gods or goddesses, sacrifices, festivals, feasts, trance, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art, dance, public service or other aspects of human culture. Religions may also contain mythology.

The word religion is sometimes used interchangeably with faith, belief system or sometimes set of duties; however, in the words of Émile Durkheim, religion differs from private belief in that it is "something eminently social."

A global 2012 poll reports that 59% of the world's population is religious, and 36% are not religious, including 13% who are atheists, with a 9 percent decrease in religious belief from 2005. On average, women are more religious than men. Some people follow multiple religions or multiple religious principles at the same time, regardless of whether or not the religious principles they follow traditionally allow for syncretism.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In secular usage, **religious education** is the teaching of a particular religion (although in England the term *religious instruction* would refer to the teaching of a particular religion, with *religious education* referring to teaching about religions in general) and its varied aspects: its beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites, and personal roles. In Western and secular culture, religious education implies a type of education which is largely separate from academia, and which (generally) regards religious belief as a fundamental tenet and operating modality, as well as a prerequisite for attendance.

Since people within a given country often hold varying religious and non-religious beliefs, government-sponsored religious education can be a source of conflict. Countries vary widely in whether religious education is allowed in government-run schools (often called "public schools"). Those that allow it also vary in the type of education provided.

People oppose religious education in public schools on various grounds. One is that it constitutes a state sponsorship or establishment of whatever religious beliefs are taught. Others argue that if a particular religion is taught in school, children who do not belong to that religion will either feel pressure to conform or be excluded from their peers. Proponents argue that religious beliefs have historically socialized people's behavior and morality. They feel that teaching religion in school is important to encourage children to be responsible, spiritually sound adults.

### Religious education by religion

In Christianity, catechesis refers to the religious instruction of Christian children and adult converts. The Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) provides religious education for the youth and adults in 145 countries.

In traditional Muslim education, children are taught to read and sometimes speak Arabic and memorize the major suras of the Qur'an. Many countries have state-run schools for this purpose (known as Madrasah Islamiyyah in Arabic; meaning "Islamic school"). Traditionally, a settlement may pay a mullah to teach children. There is a historic tradition of Sufi mullahs who wander and teach, and an ancient tradition of religious

universities. However, the study of Islam does not suffice. Students must pass the state mandated curriculum to pass. Religious scholars often serve as judges, especially for criminal and family law (more rarely for commercial law).

Pertaining to Jewish religious education in a secular society, Michael Rosenak, an Israeli philosopher of Jewish education, asserts that even when non-religious Jewish educators insist that the instruction of Judaism is not only a religious matter, they agree that “the religious factor” was very important to its culture before secularism dawned on society, and that “an understanding of natural history and literature requires a sense of historical Jewish sensibility.

**In India**, there are a number of private schools run by religious institutions, especially for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains and Buddhists. During the era of British rule, Christian private schools were quite prominent and widely attended by both UK (British) and Indian students. Many of the schools established during this era, especially in areas with a heavy Christian population, are still in existence today.

The school teaches academic education according to the standard UK curriculum, alongside devotional subjects of bhajan/kirtan singing and instrumentation and also Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. ISKCON has instituted a number of seminaries and schools of tertiary higher education. In addition to typical formal education, ISKCON also offers specialized religious/spiritual instructional programs in scriptural texts, standardized by the ISKCON Ministry for Educational Development and the GBC committee on Vaisnava Training & Education, categorized by level and difficulty; in India, they are primarily provided by the Mayapur Institute for Higher Education and Training and the Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education. ISKCON also offers instruction in archana, or murti worship and devotional ceremony, through the Mayapur Academy.

In addition to regular formal education, a number of religious institutions have instituted regular informal religious/spiritual education programs for children and adults. ISKCON temples have established a number of such

## **RELIGION AND EDUCATION**

Religion and Education are closely associated with each other both are of spiritual tendencies. Spiritual, material or physical urge are dealt with by religion as well as by the education. “Both seek to emancipate man, not from contract with his environment, but from slavery to it.”

As has already been discussed, education creates certain values of life and help in the modification of behavior. It gives certain moldings to the life, while religion beautifies the

life by cultivation of truthful heart with the moral and spiritual values. In this way religion and education have different ways but the same aim of achieving God through cultivating three absolutes truth, and goodness.

Religion must be given suitable places in the curriculum because it is the core of our culture and 'heritage'. Gentle given a fine statement in regard to the place of religion in the curriculum.



“National cultures have never been more conscious than now of the higher needs of the mind, needs that are not only aesthetic and abstractly intellectual but also ethical and religious. For a school without an ethical and religious constant is an absurdity.”

Thus, religion should find a suitable and proper place in the sphere of education. Education, according to Pestalozzi, is aimed at “natural harmonious and progressive development of man’s innate powers.

Wider education means an education which broadens the outlook, awakens the inner powers and teaches us to respect all the religions. In this manner, a teacher should enable the pupils to cultivate religious attitude and mentality through education. Religion, in this sense

does not mean merely a bundle of rites and of dogmas followed by symbols and emotions but it is applied to all that what noble.

Religion and education with these collective and mutual efforts lead a person towards self-realization and self-understanding. Rousseau and Wordsworth believed in nature and education on the lane; of nature.

The essence of their philosophy was to worship nature in practical way. In other words, we should obey natural laws and must follow the path traced by her.

Truly speaking, religious education does not mean something separable but pure, honest and beneficial. Education is nothing but religion, because both the religion and the education aim at harmonizing the person to the ultimate truth. Religion is the pure form of education.

Education has been defined as **“a process of development in which consists the passage of human being from infancy, to Maturity, the process by which he adopts himself gradually in various ways to his physical and spiritual environment.”**

In this definition the ability of social adaptation means the development of the social qualities like cooperation, coordination among social groups and communities.

This ability of the adaptation is religious, because religion in a wider sense says clearly that all are one. We are brothers and sisters borne of the same father. The same ideology of cooperation is found in this interpretation are like education. Therefore, curriculum construction should be based on the principle that education and religion are not the separate entities but they are one in nature and consequence.

These are the main problems dealt with by religion. These are the truth of a vital significance and are at the basis “of the whole structure of knowledge whether of fact or value, and deprived of them education as well as life is radically defective, without centre, balance or proper subordination of part to part.”

The aim of education is all-round development of man. The same is the aim of religion. So because use of this common aims the correlation of education and religion quite natural now to include the various forms of religion in education, is a great problem.

Some people due to their ignorance of the true nature of religion do not and to give any place to religion in education, whereas some people want to give it an important place. Since earliest times in India, education and religion have been related to each other.

With the break of this relation, indiscipline, violence and immorality have increased. According to Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan the reason for all vices and troubles pervading the

world is want of morality which has been created due to education being not correlated to religion. Here in India there were those centers of education in which people from all parts of the world came to receive education.

In Western countries also Movements were started for, educational organization by correlating religion and education. Sunday School Movement, Religious Education Movement was some such movements in which the demand for integration of education and religion was asserted. The world has witnessed the evil effects of materialism.

Hence it has rightly realised that humanity cannot be saved without relating education to religion. Now, the need for education integrated with religion is being felt throughout the world. Some politicians and economic groups do not think it proper to give a place to religion in education. In fact, if religion is treated as 'human religion' a revolution can be brought out in the improvement of education. Peace can be established in the world through a religion integrated education based on thinking of universal peace, universal-brotherhood and universal-good.

On the basis of the view point expressed above, it seems useful to impart religious education by integrating education and religion. But it is necessary to consider points both in its favour and against.

### **Religiosity and education**

The relationship between the level of **religiosity** and the level of **education** has been studied since the second half of the 20th century. The parameters of the two components diverse: the "level of religiosity" remains a concept which is difficult to differentiate scientifically, while the "level of education" is easier to compile, such as official data on this topic, because data on education is publicly accessible in many countries.

Different studies show contrasted conclusions regarding any link between the two concepts, depending on whether "religiosity" is measured by religious practices (attendance at places of worship, for example) or specific religious beliefs (belief in miracles, for example), with notable differences between nations. For example, an international study states that in some Western nations the intensity of beliefs decreases with education, but attendance and religious practice increases. Other studies indicate that the religious have higher education than the non-religious. Other studies find that the positive correlation with low or non religiosity and education has been reversed in the past few decades.

In terms of university professors, one study concluded that in the US, the majority of professors, even at "elite" universities, were religious.

### **Positive relationships**

According to the General Social Survey, which has collected data on Americans since 1972, people who are educated often are more religious by various measures. For instance, as of 2010 sociologist Philip Schwadel found that with each additional year of education: the likelihood of attending religious services increased 15%, the likelihood of reading the Bible at least occasionally increased by 9%. The likelihood of switching to a mainline Protestant denomination increased by 13%. On belief in God or a higher power, Schwadel said, "With more years of education, you aren't relatively more likely to say, 'I don't believe in God...But you are relatively more likely to say, 'I believe in a higher power.'

According to the Gallup's 2002 Index of Leading Religious Indicators for the US, the relationship between education and religiosity are complex. For instance, there are slight differences in belief in God and membership in a congregation: 88% of those with postgraduate degrees believe in God or a universal spirit, compared to 97% of those with a high school education or less; 70% of postgraduate degree holders say they are members of a congregation, compared to 64% of those with a high school education or less.

Sociologist Bradley Wright reviewed results from the 2008 Pew US Religious Landscape Survey and noted that religious groups normally have significant levels of education compared to those who are non-religious. "The irony" he states "is that some of the religiously unaffiliated explain their rejection of religion in terms of superior learning, but several religious groups have much higher levels of education." He found that Hindus, Jews, Episcopalians, Buddhists, and Orthodox Christians have the highest levels of education, Catholics, Mormons, and Muslims are at about the national average, and Jehovah's Witnesses have by far the lowest education. Evangelicals are somewhat below the national average. The religiously unaffiliated are just slightly above average in levels of college education. Sociological research by Patricia Snell and Christian Smith on many dimensions of general American youth have noted that older research on baby boomers showed correlations where higher education undermined religiosity, however, studies on today's youth have consistently shown that this has disappeared and now students in college are more likely religious than people who do not go to college.

Sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox said that people with less education have decreased in religiosity in America. Their views on family and work have been associated with this effect. Research on secularity has noted that, in America, agnostics have significant levels of education, while atheists have relatively low levels of education. Sociologist Christian Smith has done research on American evangelical and has found that on average, self-identified evangelicals have more years of education than fundamentalists, liberals, Roman Catholics, and the nonreligious, but slightly less than mainline Protestants. He also found that evangelicals were the least likely to have high school education or less, the nonreligious were the most likely to have high school education or less, and higher proportions of evangelicals had studied at the graduate level than fundamentalists, liberals, and the nonreligious.

Sociologist Philip Schwadel found that higher levels of education are associated with increased religious participation and religious practice in daily life, but also

correlate with greater tolerance for atheists' public opposition to religion and greater skepticism of "exclusivist religious viewpoints and biblical literalism".

Cross-national sociological research by Norris and Inglehart notes a positive correlation between religious attendance among the more educated in the United States. Research in nonreligion in Britain has shown that the positive relationship between education and non-religion has been reversed with generations after 1955, in other words, that the nonreligious populations tend to have less education and that religious populations tend to have higher education, even though religious affiliation has decreased for both.

### **Negative relationships**

In one analysis of World Values Survey data by Edward Glaeser and Bruce Sacerdote, noted that in 65 former socialist countries "there is a negative relationship between years of education and belief in God", with similar negative correlations for other religious beliefs while, in contrast, there were strong positive correlations in many developed countries such as England, France and the US. They concluded that "these cross-country differences in the education-belief relationship can be explained by political factors (such as communism) which lead some countries to use state controlled education to discredit religion". The study also concludes that, in the United States and other developed nations, "education raises religious attendance at individual level," while "at the same time, there is a strong negative connection between attendance and education across religious groups within the U.S. and elsewhere." The authors suggest that "this puzzle is explained if education both increases the returns to social connection and reduces the extent of religious belief," causing more educated individuals to sort into less fervent denominations.

In Ireland, the non-religious have a greater level of education than the general population. A study noted positive correlations, among nonreligious Americans, between levels of education and not believing in a deity. An EU survey finds a positive correlation between leaving school early and believing in a God. Frank Sulloway of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Michael Shermer of California State University conducted a study which found in their polling sample of "credentialed" U.S. adults (12% had Ph.Ds and 62% were college graduates) 64% believed in God, and there was a correlation indicating that religious conviction diminished with education level.

### **Mixed relationship**

According to a 2015 global survey by Gallup International, the most religious had lower levels of education, however, religious people in general were a majority in all educational levels.

Research done by Barry Kosmin indicates that Americans with post-graduate education have a similar religious distribution to the general population, with a higher "public religiosity" (i.e. membership in congregations and worship attendance), but slightly less "belief."

Research done by Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar on college students looked at 3 worldviews: Religious, Secular, Spiritual and looked students from various levels from Freshmen to Post-graduates from various majors such as STEM (Science, Technology,

Engineering, Mathematics), Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Undecided. The Religious were 31.8% of total sample (40% from STEM, 27% from Social and Behavioral Sciences, 27% from Arts and Humanities, and 5% from Undecided; the Secular were 28.2% of total sample (38% from STEM, 29% from Social and Behavioral Sciences, 30% from Arts and Humanities, and 3% from Undecided; the Spiritual were 32.4% of total sample (29% from STEM, 36% from Social and Behavioral Sciences, 31% from Arts and Humanities, and 4% from Undecided).

Research by Neil Gross and Solon Simmons done on more than 1,400 professors from 20 disciplinary fields and religiosity found that the majority of professors, even at "elite" universities were religious believers. As a whole, university professors were less religious than the general US population, but it is hardly the case that the professorial landscape is characterized by an absence of religion. In the study, 9.8% were atheists, 13.1% were agnostic, 19.2% believe in a higher power, 4.3% believe in God some of the time, 16.6% had doubts but believed in God, 34.9% believed in God and had no doubts. At "elite" doctoral universities 36.5% were either atheists or agnostics and 20.4% believed in God without any doubts, furthermore the authors noted, "...religious skepticism represents a minority position, even among professors teaching at elite research universities." They also found that professors at elite doctoral universities are much less religious than professors teaching in other kinds of institutions with more atheists and agnostics in numbers, however, both groups were still a minority there also.

A survey conducted by Times Of India revealed that 22% of IIT-Bombay graduates do not believe in the existence of God, while another 30% do not know.

### **Does More Educated Really = Less Religious?**

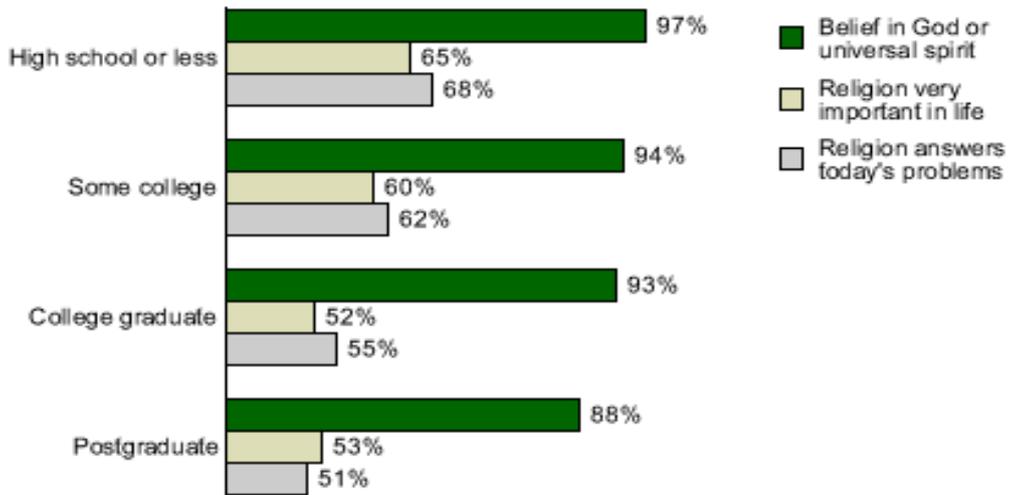
Conventional wisdom has it that there is an inverse relationship between individuals' education and religiosity levels -- that is, the higher a person's level of education, the less likely he or she is to be religious. That may be accurate with regard to some aspects of religion, but recent Gallup research suggests that in others it is not necessarily the case.

According to Gallup's 2002 Index of Leading Religious Indicators\*, 88% of those with postgraduate degrees believe in God or a universal spirit, compared to 97% of those with a high school education or less. More dramatically, postgraduate degree holders are less likely than those with a high school education or less to believe that religion can answer today's problems, by a margin of 51% to 68%. And those with a high school education or less are more likely than their postgraduate counterparts to say that religion is "important" or "very important" in their lives (65% to 53%). All this would seem to confirm that highly educated individuals put less emphasis on the role of religion than less educated individuals do.

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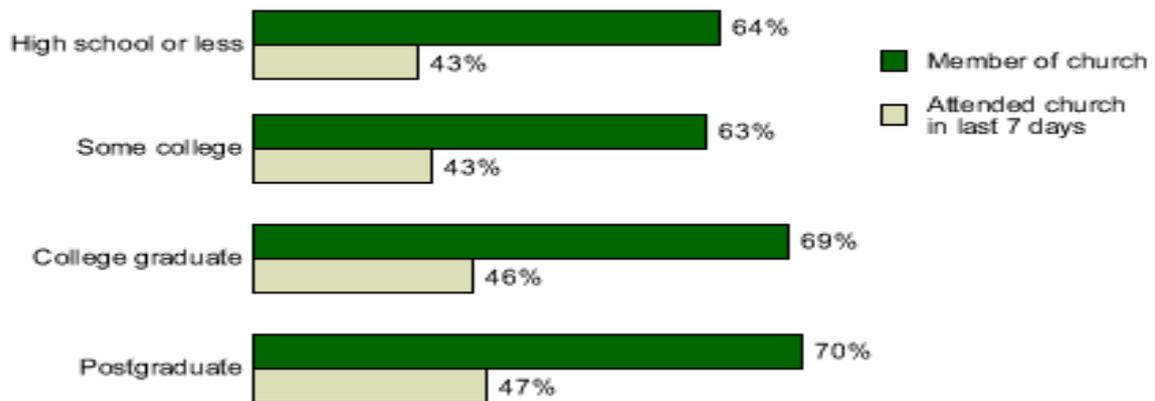
\*Assistant professor, Vaish arya shikshan mahila mahavidyalya, Bahadurgarh, Haryana

**Religion and Education: Belief and Importance**



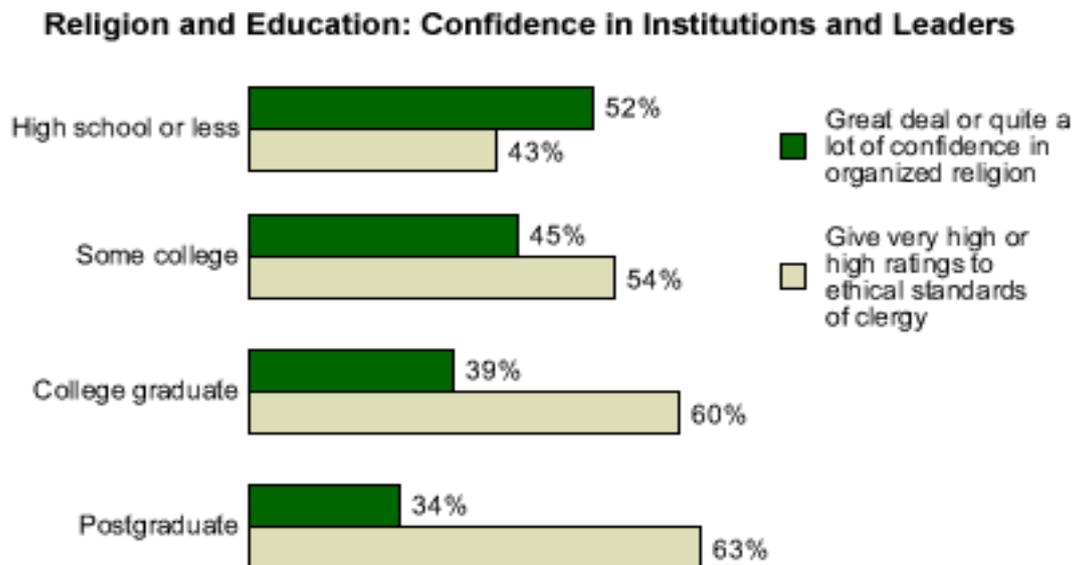
But these data don't tell the whole story. Results from other survey questions indicate that more highly educated people are at least as likely to go to church. Seventy percent of postgraduate degree holders say they are members of a congregation, compared to 64% of those with a high school education or less. And the percentage of postgraduates (47%) and those with a high school education or less (43%) were essentially the same.

**Religion and Education: Membership and Attendance**



The data also reveal a fascinating -- and important -- difference between those with a high level of education and those with minimal education. The former group is *less* likely to trust organized religion but *more* likely to trust clergy members, while the latter is *more* likely to trust organized religion and *less* likely to trust the clergy. Only 34% of postgraduate degree holders say they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion, while 52% of those with a high school education or less say so. In addition, 63% of the postgraduate group give "high" or "very high" marks to the ethical standards of clergy, while only 43% of those with a high school education or less do so.

Earlier Gallup data show that this pattern of results also existed prior to the Catholic priest sex abuse scandals that affected Americans' ratings of clergy members and organized religion.



### Bottom Line

To some degree, those with a lower level of education are more likely to "talk the talk" when it comes to religion -- that is, they're more likely to say they believe in God, place religion prominently in their lives, and recognize religion's importance in the world. But those with a *higher* level of education are as likely as those with less education to "walk the walk" -- by belonging to a congregation and attending services regularly. These results may point to a failure on the part of organized religion to attract and connect with those with a lower education level, perhaps reflecting the trend in the last century toward more highly educated clergy.

### CONCLUSION

Even though they do not belong in as great a number or attend as frequently as their more highly educated counterparts, those on the lower end of the educational scale have much more faith in religious institutions, perhaps reflecting a broader tendency to rely on institutions in other areas of their lives -- unions, HMOs, government agencies, etc. Those in this group have far less faith in the individuals at the head of their religious institutions -- the clergy -- than in the institutions themselves.

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