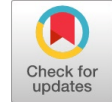


# Understanding the Religions of India

Radhika Kapur



**Abstract:** *In India, in all communities, individuals have the right to practice the religion of his or her own choice. The religions have an important influence in the lives of the individuals. The individuals generate information in terms of norms and values through practicing their religion. In the lives of the individuals, in both personal and professional spheres, the practicing of religion is regarded as vital. In this manner, the individuals are able to benefit in number of ways, i.e. putting into operation all types of job duties successfully; inculcating the traits of morality and ethics; implementing the traits of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness; developing mutual understanding with others and promoting good health, physically and psychologically. As a consequence, individuals are able to render an important contribution in promoting enrichment of their overall personality traits and standards of living. The individuals, belonging to all communities, neighbourhoods and professional settings need to accept the religions of other individuals. In other words, individuals need to form positive viewpoints in terms of all religions and accept these. One of the important aspects that needs to be taken into account is, one should not possess negative feelings in terms of any other religion. Therefore, it is understood on a comprehensive basis that religions are vital in promoting enrichment of overall quality of lives of individuals. The main concepts that are taken into account in this research paper are, religions of India, understanding the objectives of practicing religions and factors highlighting the importance of religion in India.*

**Keywords:** *Communities, Goodwill, Individuals, Norms, Personality Traits, Religions, Values, Well-being*

## I. INTRODUCTION

India is a secular country. In India, all the individuals, irrespective of occupations, communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds have the right to practice the religion of his or her own choice. Throughout the lives of the individuals, religion has rendered an important contribution in having an influence. The overall living conditions of individuals are centred on religions (Chapter – I, n.d., [1]). The vast majority of Indians associate themselves with religion and religious tolerance is established in both custom and law. It is apparently understood that individuals, belonging to all communities have one of the primary goals of promoting enrichment of personality traits and standards of living. Hence, through practicing religious beliefs, they are able to contribute effectively in leading to up-gradation of motivation and concentration levels towards putting into operation all tasks and activities.

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\* Correspondence Author (s)

**Dr. Radhika Kapur\***, Pedagogy and Organizational Culture in Nursery Schools, Delhi University, New Delhi, India. E-mail: [radhikakapur2004@hotmail.com](mailto:radhikakapur2004@hotmail.com)

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The individuals follow different religions, i.e. Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Bahai. The individuals practicing a particular religion need to ensure, they form positive viewpoints in terms of other religions. Furthermore, they need to ensure, they do not possess any types of negative feelings regarding any other religion. The individuals, belonging to all age groups and genders have reinforced this viewpoint that through practicing religious beliefs, they will acquire the services of the Almighty in promoting enrichment of their overall quality of lives (Chapter – 2, n.d., [2][7][8]). In other words, they will be able to put into operation all types of tasks in a successful manner. For example, when students are going to give their exams and individuals are going for job interviews, they aspire to be successful in their tasks and activities. Hence, individuals are reinforcing religious beliefs to augment their information in terms of norms and values. These are the key in putting into operation different types of tasks and activities in a well-ordered and satisfactory manner. One of the important aspects is, the individuals will be able to cope with different types of dilemmas and impediments in a satisfactory manner. Furthermore, these need to be prevented from assuming a major form. Therefore, it is understood on a comprehensive basis that augmenting religious beliefs will be facilitating to the individuals in carrying out all tasks and activities in a well-ordered manner.

## II. RELIGIONS OF INDIA

The individuals, belonging to all age groups, genders, communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds practice religions. The main objective is to promote their well-being and goodwill. One of the important aspects is, individuals aspire to gain success in all types of tasks and activities. Furthermore, they aim to augment their competencies and abilities, accumulate financial resources and bring about improvements in their overall standards of living. Hence, this viewpoint has been reinforced that practicing religions will be facilitating in promoting enhancement of overall standards of living. The individuals follow different religions, i.e. Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Bahai. These are stated as follows: (Religions of India, n.d., [5][9][10]).

## III. HINDUISM

Hinduism is the most prevalent form of religion in India. In Hinduism, individuals acquire sacred knowledge through the Vedas and Upanishads. The religion makes provision of information to the individuals in terms of norms and values.

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They are required to augment their information in terms of morals and ethics. Hence, through practicing the religion of Hinduism, the individuals are generating information in terms of morals and ethics. Furthermore, they reinforce the viewpoint that these are fundamental in achievement of desired goals and bring about improvements in overall standards of living. In the performance of good deeds, the individuals are required to make sure, they should not harm anybody. In this religion, the individuals worship Hindu deities and make visits to religious places. In Hinduism, temples are the religious places of Hindus. Furthermore, they generate information in terms of morals, ethics, principles and standards (Hooker, 2013. [4][5][6]).

### A. Christianity

The Christianity emerged in India in the third century C.E. It includes some of the communities, who used Syriac liturgically. It is the possibility that the existence of the religion extends as far as the 1<sup>st</sup> century. It is also well-noted that Thomas, the apostle visited India in 52 A.D. He visited Muziris in Kerala. The main objective was to spread the gospel among Kerala's Jewish sentiments. San Thome Basilica in Chennai is built over the site where St. Thomas believed to be originally interred. Throughout the country, Christian communities are found. The individuals have their own values, norms, principles and standards on the basis of which they live their lives. Church is regarded as the major religious place of Christians, which is visited on Sundays. Christmas is the major festival of the Christians and is celebrated with joy and merriment.

### B. Sikhism

Sikhism is the monotheistic religion. It was found during the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the state of Punjab. Sikhs practice the faith that consists of the elements of Hinduism and Islam. In the state of Punjab, the population of Sikhs is highest. The individuals have their own values, norms, principles and standards on the basis of which they live their lives. Gurudwaras is regarded as the major religious place of Sikhs, which is visited by individuals, belonging to all castes, creeds, races, religions, genders, age groups, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. Within gurudwaras, meals are usually served 24 hours in a day. The individuals, belonging to deprived, marginalized and economically weaker sections of the society as well as other individuals are provided with free meals. The main objective of religion of Sikhism is to work diligently in promoting well-being and goodwill of others. Furthermore, all individuals are equal and there should not be any discrimination on the basis of any factors.

### C. Islam

Islam is the major religion promulgated by Prophet Mohammad in Arabia in the seventh century CE. The Islam is an Arabic term, which literally means to surrender. It illuminates the fundamental religious ideas of Islam and the believer is called Muslim, from an active participle of Islam. It accepts surrender to the will of Allah. The religion is taught by Muhammad to the small group of followers, spread rapidly through middle-east to Africa, Europe, the India sub-continent, Malay peninsula and China. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were more than 1.5 billion Muslims on a

comprehensive scale. Matters of jurisdiction involving Muslims in India, related to marriage, inheritance and wakf properties are governed by the Muslim personal law. The courts of law that ruled Sharia or Muslim law holds precedence for Muslims over Indian civil laws in such matters. One of the important aspects is, the individuals have their own values, norms, principles and standards on the basis of which they live their lives.

## IV. JUDAISM

Judaism is the monotheistic religion that is developed by the ancient Hebrews. Judaism is characterised by the belief in one transcendent God, who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses and Hebrew Prophets. One of the important aspects is, the individuals have their own values, norms, principles and standards on the basis of which the lives of the individuals are centred. In addition, the information that is contained in the rabbinic text is followed. Judaism is regarded as the complex phenomena of the total way of life for the Jewish individuals, comprising of theology, law and innumerable cultural traditions. The history of Judaism is considered to be of utmost significance in acquiring an efficient understanding of the religion. The individuals are required to reinforce the viewpoint that acknowledging and implementing norms and values will bring about transformations in their overall quality of lives. In this religion, the presence of the Almighty is within the natural realm. The other ancient communities also perceived the divine presence in history.

### A. Buddhism

Buddhism is regarded as India's main contribution to spirituality. Buddhism is the path of practice and spiritual development leading to insight into the true nature of reality. Meditation is regarded as the Buddhist practice, which enables the individuals in generating awareness in terms of kindness, wisdom and being informative. The experience developed by the Buddhist religion is referred to the incomparable resource for those individuals, who wish to follow the path. Furthermore, all individuals are equal and there should not be any discrimination on the basis of any factors. The individuals practicing this religion realize that individuals are different from each other in terms of number of factors and they are required to be given equal treatment. In this religion, individuals are imparted with information in terms of practical methods, which are facilitating in bringing about transformations in the expressions of individuals. As a consequence, individuals will be able to gain the responsibility for their lives. In this manner, individuals are able to contribute efficiently in promoting well-being and goodwill of community members.

## V. JAINISM

Jainism is the religion that is followed by followers of Lord Vardhaman Mahavira. Lord Vardhaman Mahavira is the founder of Jainism.

In the religion of Jainism, profound respect for life is emphasised upon. The Jains are pure vegetarians and refrain themselves from consumption of alcohol and non-vegetarian food. In this religion, individuals are imparted with information in terms of methods and techniques, which are facilitating in bringing about transformations in the lives of individuals. As a consequence, individuals will be able to promote enrichment of overall standards of living. In Jainism, there are 24 spiritual leaders known as Tirthankaras. Jain rituals are centred upon sacred images and mantras, i.e. chants. In this religion, individuals form the viewpoint that wholehearted faith in the Almighty will render an important contribution in achieving desired goals and promoting enhancement of overall living conditions. As a consequence, individuals will acquire prosperity and affluence. Furthermore, individuals will render a significant contribution in promoting well-being and goodwill of their families and communities. The individuals make visits to temples, which are termed as Jain temples.

#### A. Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is regarded as the ancient Persian religion that may have originated as early as 4000 years ago. It is regarded as the world's monotheistic faith. Furthermore, it is regarded as one of the oldest religions still in existence. Zoroastrianism is the state religion of three Persian dynasties, until the Muslim conquest of Persia in the seventh century A.D. Zoroastrianism refugees called Parsis escaped the Muslim persecution in Iran by immigrating to India. Zoroastrianism, in the present existence has 100000 to 200000 worshippers on a comprehensive scale. In the present existence, it is practiced as the minority religion in the parts of India and Iran. Zoroastrianism is thought to have been born in what is known as north-eastern Iran or south-western Afghanistan. There is a collection in the Zoroastrian religion scriptures. But there is one question regarding which the researchers have been unable to find the answer. This is the time period on which this religion has been initiated.

#### B. Bahai

The Bahai's faith is the world's newest independent global belief system. It teaches the oneness of God, the unity of humanity and the essential harmony of religion. Bahauall (1817-1892) is the prophet of the Bahai faith. The major concepts that are emphasised upon in this religion are peace, justice, affection, altruism, appreciation and unity. The Bahai's teachings promote the agreement of science and religion, the quality of gender and the elimination of all prejudice and racism. The teachings are followed of Bahauall. He proclaimed the Bahai faith during the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century, who taught the world of peace. In the kingdoms of earth and heaven, there must needs be manifested as being, an essence, who shall act as manifestation and vehicle for the transmission of grace of divinity itself, the foreign of all. In this religion, when there are organization of any functions and events, such as, marriages, the individuals are putting into operation their norms, values, customs and events. These are directing the individuals to live their lives in a well-ordered and disciplined manner.

## VI. UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECTIVES OF PRACTICING RELIGIONS

It is apparently understood that individuals, belonging to all communities have one of the primary goals of promoting enrichment of overall personality traits and standards of living. Furthermore, they need to make sure, they do not experience impediments within the course of achievement of desired goals and objectives. Hence, through practicing religious beliefs, they are able to contribute effectively in leading to up-gradation of motivation and concentration levels towards putting into operation all types of tasks and activities. The individuals are required to be well-versed in terms of different types of methods and procedures, which would be favourable and useful to them. The individuals, belonging to all communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds are required to be well-informed in terms of objectives of practicing religions. These are stated as follows:

1. Augmenting different types of skills and abilities.
2. Being well-informed in terms of tasks and activities.
3. Being well-aware of methodologies and procedures.
4. Making wise and productive decisions.
5. Utilizing various types of modern, scientific and innovative methods and materials.
6. Inculcating the traits of morality and ethics.
7. Implementing the traits of diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness.
8. Taking out sufficient amount of time for all tasks and activities.
9. Augmenting skills and abilities.
10. Implementing effective communication processes.
11. Treating others with respect and courtesy.
12. Depicting the traits of helpfulness and co-operation.
13. Reinforcing the traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness.
14. Coping with different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in a well-organized manner.
15. Forming positive viewpoints in terms of various factors.
16. Reinforcing a constructive approach.
17. Forming cordial and amiable terms and relationships with other individuals.
18. Putting in efforts to one's best abilities.
19. Possessing the abilities to work under stress.
20. Carrying out job duties in a satisfactory and well-ordered manner.

#### A. Factors Highlighting the Importance of Religion in India

Throughout the lives of the individuals, religion has rendered an important contribution in having an influence on the overall standards of living of individuals. This is irrespective of their occupations, categories and socio-economic backgrounds. The overall living conditions of individuals are centred on religions. The vast majority of Indians associate themselves with religion and religious tolerance. In other words, the lives of the individuals are centred on religious beliefs (Deshpande, 2010, [3]).

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It is apparently understood that individuals, belonging to all communities have one of the primary goals of promoting enrichment of personality traits and standards of living. Hence, through practicing religious beliefs, they are able to contribute effectively in leading to up-gradation of motivation and concentration levels towards putting into operation in all types of tasks and activities. The individuals, belonging to all communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds are required to be well-informed in terms of factors highlighting the importance of religion in India. One of the important aspects that need to be taken into account is, positivity needs to be reinforced in the implementation of all these factors. These are stated as follows:

### **B. Augmenting Information Regarding Morals and Ethics**

The individuals are required to be well-versed in terms of traits of morals and ethics. These are the traits, which are facilitating in differentiating between various types of appropriate and inappropriate factors. Furthermore, individuals will be able to do well in their job duties and generate desired outcomes. In addition, they will be able to carry out all types of tasks and activities in a well-ordered and satisfactory manner. The individuals are able to put into operation traits of honesty, efficiency, truthfulness and righteousness. Hence, individuals are able to cope with different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in a well-ordered and satisfactory manner.

As a consequence, desired outcomes will be generated. Within all communities, the individuals are required to make sure, they augment their information in terms of the factor that one should not possess the feelings of antagonism and antipathy against individuals. In other words, the mind-sets of the individuals are required to implement rational, logical and methodological thinking. Therefore, augmenting information regarding morals and ethics is regarded as one of the indispensable factors highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### **C. Possessing the Abilities to Work Under Stress**

The individuals are overwhelmed by different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in personal and professional lives. Hence, they are required to be well-informed in terms of the factor of possessing the abilities to work under stress. This is the factor, which is facilitating in identifying the causes of occurrences of different types of problems. After the causes are identified, the individuals are required to put into operation the methods to provide solutions to these. The problems are within as well as outside the homes.

Possessing the abilities to work under stress is a factor, which enables the individuals to overcome all types of setbacks. Furthermore, they will be able to carry out all types of job duties successfully. As a consequence, they will render an important contribution in meeting the expectations of others in personal and professional lives. In this manner, individuals will be able to form cordial and amiable terms and relationships with others. Hence, they will contribute efficiently in promoting enrichment of overall standards of living. Therefore, possessing the abilities to work under

stress is one of the significant factors highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### **D. Coping with Various Problems in a Well-Ordered Manner**

The individuals are overwhelmed by different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in personal and professional lives. The various factors in terms of which these take place are, job duties, responsibilities, methodologies, techniques, scarcity of financial, technical, material and information resources, lack of infrastructure, amenities and facilities and so forth. The different types of problems are experienced in a major or minor form. Hence, they are required to be well-informed in terms of ways of coping with various types of problems in a well-ordered manner.

Forming positive viewpoints and honing confidence levels are factors, which enables the individuals to overcome all types of setbacks. In addition, these will be prevented from giving rise to impediments within the course of implementation of tasks and activities. Furthermore, they will be able to carry out all types of job duties and responsibilities in a successful manner. As a consequence, they will render an important contribution in meeting the expectations of others in personal and professional lives. In this manner, individuals will be able to develop mutual understanding with others. Hence, they will contribute efficiently in promoting enrichment of overall standards of living. Therefore, coping with various problems in a well-ordered manner is an expedient factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

## **VII. PUTTING IN EFFORTS TO ONE'S BEST ABILITIES**

The individuals are overwhelmed by different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in personal and professional lives. The various factors in terms of which these take place are, job duties, responsibilities, methodologies, techniques, scarcity of financial, technical, material and information resources, lack of infrastructure, amenities and facilities and so forth. The different types of problems are experienced in a major or minor form. Hence, they are required to be well-informed in terms of the factor of putting in efforts to one's best abilities.

Reinforcing a constructive approach and honing confidence levels are aspects, which enables the individuals to overcome all types of setbacks. In addition, these will be prevented from giving rise to impediments within the course of implementation of job duties. Furthermore, they will be able to carry out all types of job duties and responsibilities in a successful manner. As a consequence, they will render an important contribution in meeting the expectations of others in personal and professional lives. Hence, they will contribute efficiently in achievement of desired goals and objectives. Therefore, putting in efforts to one's best abilities is a renowned factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.



### A. Implementing Effective Communication Processes

Throughout the lives of the individuals, they are required to put into operation effective communication processes with individuals within as well as outside the homes. The individuals are required to augment their information in terms of communication ethics, i.e. making use of polite language and decent words; treating others with respect and courtesy; maintaining eye contact, when communication takes place face to face; making provision of factual information; treating others with respect and courtesy; depicting the traits of helpfulness and co-operation and possessing an approachable nature and an amiable attitude. The individuals are required to augment communication ethics in personal and professional lives. When the individuals acknowledge the importance of religion, they make sure, they communicate with others in a respectful manner. Furthermore, one needs to ensure, they do not hurt the sentiments of others. Furthermore, one needs to focus on making provision of information, which proves to be favourable and useful to others. In this manner, the individuals not only develop mutual understanding, but also acquire appreciation and reverence from others. Therefore, implementing effective communication processes is a vital factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### B. Treating others with Respect and Courtesy

From the stage of early childhood, throughout the lives of the individuals, they need to ensure, they treat others with respect and courtesy. This is regarded as the key, when individuals aspire to be successful in personal and professional lives. As a consequence of recognizing the importance of religion, they make sure, they communicate with others in a respectful and decent manner. Furthermore, one needs to ensure, they do not possess any negative feelings in terms of anybody, i.e. antipathy and antagonism. Furthermore, one needs to focus on making provision of information, which proves to be favourable and useful to other individuals.

In this manner, the individuals not only develop mutual understanding, but also acquire appreciation and reverence from other individuals, including family and community members. It is apparently understood, when individuals will not possess any negative feelings and depict the traits of helpfulness, co-operation and efficiency, they will reinforce religious beliefs as well. One of the important aspects is, they will contribute efficiently in bringing about improvements in their overall quality of lives. Therefore, treating others with respect and courtesy is a crucial factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### C. Depicting the Traits of Helpfulness and Co-operation

From the stage of early childhood, throughout the lives of the individuals, they need to acknowledge the meaning and significance of traits of helpfulness and co-operation. Religions impart information among individuals in terms of importance of traits of helpfulness and co-operation. In cases of being overwhelmed by different types of dilemmas and challenging situations, the individuals may provide solutions to these on their own as well as through taking

support and assistance from others. These include, family members, relatives, friends, supervisors, educators, employers, colleagues, classmates, service providers, neighbours and other community members.

The traits of helpfulness and co-operation are regarded as vital in not only coping with different types of problems and challenging situations adequately, but also in forming cordial and amiable terms and relationships with each other. One of the important aspects that needs to be taken into account is, individuals acquire appreciation and reverence from others. As a consequence, individuals will incur the feelings of pleasure and contentment. Therefore, depicting the traits of helpfulness and co-operation is a notable factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### D. Reinforcing the Traits of Efficiency, Honesty and Truthfulness

Religions impart information among individuals in terms of importance of traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness. In cases of being overwhelmed by different types of dilemmas, the individuals understand that in order to cope with these in an effective manner and carry out all job duties successfully, the individuals are required to be well-versed in terms of these traits. Furthermore, one needs to ensure, they do not possess any negative feelings in terms of anybody, i.e. hatred and resentment. Furthermore, one needs to focus on making provision of information, which proves to be favourable and useful to other individuals.

In this manner, the individuals not only develop mutual understanding, but also acquire appreciation and reverence from other individuals, including family and community members. As a consequence, feelings of pleasure and contentment will be reinforced. Hence, individuals will render an important contribution in promoting family and community well-being. It is apparently understood, when individuals will not possess any negative feelings and depict the traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness, they will reinforce religious beliefs. Therefore, reinforcing the traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness is an advantageous factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### E. Carrying out Job Duties in a well-ordered Manner

It is understood on a comprehensive basis that in personal and professional lives of the individuals, they are required to put into operation various job duties. These are complicated as well as manageable, these are put into operation on one's own as well as through obtaining support and assistance from family and community members and these are implemented in less amount of time or can be more time-consuming. Through reinforcing religious beliefs, the individuals will contribute efficiently in reinforcing their confidence levels of carrying out all types of job duties in a well-ordered manner. In this manner, the individuals will lead to up-gradation of motivation and confidence levels towards putting into operation all types of job duties. As a consequence, feelings of pleasure and contentment will be reinforced.

Hence, individuals will render an important contribution in promoting family and community well-being. The main reason being, when the individuals are successful in putting into operation tasks and activities, they will contribute efficiently in making their family and community members feel pleasurable and satisfied. Therefore, carrying out job duties in a well-ordered manner is a favourable factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### VIII. PROMOTING WELL-BEING AND GOODWILL OF OTHERS

Promoting well-being and goodwill of others is an aspect, which individuals, belonging to all communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds need to be well-aware in terms of. One needs to work towards putting into operation this factor in an appropriate manner. Through practicing religion, individuals are required to be well-informed in terms of all the factors, which are necessary in the achievement of this goal. These are, being well-informed in terms of tasks and activities; being well-aware of methodologies and procedures; making wise and productive decisions; utilizing various types of modern, scientific and innovative methods and materials; taking out sufficient amount of time for all tasks and activities; augmenting skills and abilities; implementing effective communication processes; treating others with respect and courtesy; depicting the traits of helpfulness and co-operation; reinforcing the traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness; coping with different types of dilemmas and challenging situations in a well-organized manner and carrying out job duties in a satisfactory manner.

As a consequence, feelings of pleasure and contentment will be reinforced. Hence, individuals will render an important contribution in promoting enrichment of lives of oneself as well as others. When the individuals are putting into operation different types of tasks and activities in a well-ordered manner with the main goal of promoting well-being and goodwill of others, in such cases, individuals reinforce the viewpoint that other individuals who are implementing the job duties and responsibilities are religious-minded. Therefore, promoting well-being and goodwill of others is a useful factor highlighting the importance of religion in India.

### IX. CONCLUSION

India is a secular country. All individuals have the right to practice religion of their own choice. The individuals follow different religions, i.e. Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Bahai. Factors highlighting the importance of religion in India are, augmenting information regarding morals and ethics, possessing the abilities to work under stress, coping with various problems in a well-ordered manner, putting in efforts to one's best abilities, implementing effective communication processes, treating others with respect and courtesy, depicting the traits of helpfulness and co-operation, reinforcing the traits of efficiency, honesty and truthfulness, carrying out job duties in a well-ordered manner and promoting well-being and goodwill of others. Finally, it can be stated, religions of India have the main objective of promoting well-being of others.

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### AUTHOR PROFILE



**Dr. Radhika Kapur**, I am schooling from Loreto Convent, Bachelors of Arts in Sociology from Jesus and Mary College. Masters of Business Administration from YMCA, New Delhi. Ph. D from Delhi University. I have 15 years of work experience in the field of research and writing I have written more than 100 research papers currently working as a librarian in Delhi School of Journalism, University of Delhi.

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