Anthropological investigation on Theophobia and Religiosity in 21st century

In order to understand the theophobia and religiosity, we must first understand what is 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.

According to some anthropologists there are some definitions of religion:

According to Arnold Toynbee - “Religion is such belief that sets people apart from other animals.”[1]

James Frazer mentions in his book ‘Golden Bough’ that “Religion is to please someone stronger than man.”[2]

Anthropologist E.B. Tylor defines religion in his book ‘Primitive Culture’ as “Religion is the ultimate belief.”[3]

Sociologist Emile Durkheim says that "Religion is an organized belief, which is related to holiness." [4]

# Concept of religion:

The word religion originates from French ‘religion’, for example, "religious community" and comes from the Latin ‘religionem’ (nom. Religio) meaning "reverence for sacred things, devotion to God" and "obedience, which is a bridge between man and God" which is Latin found from ‘religiō’..[5]

Religion refers to the characteristics of an being or object. Every being and object in the universe has its own religion. Just as objects have basic properties, so do animals. In the case of animals, different characteristics of animals of different genera can be observed. However, in the case of "Homo sapiens" - the situation is a little different. Humans are the most influential being in the world today. Only in the case of human beings are there two types of this religion or feature; physical religion or characteristics and human religion or characteristics.

There are about a few thousand religions in the world, all religions have different characteristics. People usually think of religion in many ways. Some people take religion very naturally. In the 21st century, many people take religion in a very natural way, follow all the rules and regulations of religion, or use religion only in the name of religion, religion does not mean much, but may believe in religion. Many of them are respectful of other religions, and some of them do not have much influence even if they dislike them. There is another class of people who are also called religious class, they are very respectful of their religion, and they follow all the aspects of religion, they also accept the prophecies of religion, we can call their religious beliefs as piety.

Another topic of discussion regarding religion is theophobia, which is very influential in the 21st century.

# What is Theophobia:

Theophobia refers to a fear of a particular religion or a religious community. That is, fear of people of any religion, religious institutions, religious organizations, religious practices can be termed as theophobia. Theophobia can be explained in different ways. Fear of miracles related to religion in one way, fear of another religion in another way.

In the nineteenth century, a term called "Jewish Question" was prevalent in Europe. The phrase referred to the Jews as a troubled nation and raised the question of whether their presence posed a threat to European society. But in the 21st century, it has taken the form of 'Muslim Question'.

Anne Norton, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, says in her book On the Muslim Question: Discrimination has taken place, the chapter on Jewish deprivation has come to an end today, and judging by that, Europe has become a truly civilized country, but the same cannot be said about Islam and Muslims, which Western countries today hold to their democratic and pluralistic values. "The issue of Islam and the Muslim community can be brought to the fore as a litmus test to see if those values ​​really exist in those countries," he said. "Muslim Question" can be considered as a cause of Islamophobia

# Islamophobia:

Islamophobia, Islamophobia or anti-Islam or anti-Muslim attitude is a political term used in slander or satire which means fear of Islam. It also means hating Islam and Muslims. While many blame the terrorist activities of extremist Muslims as the cause of Islamophobia, many also blame the original religion. The use of the term has increased in recent decades due to the armed activities of extremist Muslims in various places and the increasing number of Muslim immigrants in the Western and European world. Many Muslims suffer in many ways for fear of Islam. We can mention some of its phenomena.

# Anthropological investigation:

We call this discussion anthropological because the point of view of anthropologists is different from all others. In general, followers of one religion may think that the beliefs or ideas of followers of other religions are wrong, but anthropologists generally give equal status to all religions. The main feature of anthropological discussion is **‘Comparative’, ‘Holistic’** and **‘Cultural Relativism’.**

Anthropology focuses on the study of a particular aspect (E.g. in economic anthropology or political anthropology) of human life, but it is not usually done in isolation, but seeks to see how one aspect of human life relates to other aspects (E.g. kinship with economics or politics, religion, etc.). Therefore, it is said that anthropologists try to follow a holistic perspective, that is, they try to understand man and his culture or any part of society in the light of the whole without looking at it fragmentally.

# Incident-1:

On October 21, 2020, 150 German police, including masks and boots, are investigating at the Mevlana Mosque in Berlin, Germany, for allegedly cheating on a coronavirus-related subsidy. However, the mosque authorities denied the allegations on the same day. From there, the three suspects were arrested and 8,000 euros in cash, data savers, various devices, computers and files were recovered. However, German journalist Fabian Goldman criticized the police operation on Twitter. He said: "Only 15 policemen were deployed in the search for the 5.5 billion euro income tax evasion of KamX." On the other hand, 10 times more police had to be deployed in that mosque to rescue only 6,000 Euros!

According to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the incident was motivated by Islamophobia. [6]

## Incident-2:

On March 15, 2019, 51 people were killed in the horrific attack on the Al-Noor Mosque in Christchurch and another nearby mosque. Scenes of the brutal attack were broadcast live on social media.

In addition to those two mosques in Christchurch, Taranto planned to attack another mosque. He wanted to kill as many people as possible. This information came up during the court hearing. "The assassination was well-planned," said New Zealand Prime Minister Jadinda Ardan.[7]

# Incident-3:

"Islam is creating a crisis around the world," Emanuel Macron said and backed a reprint of a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ published by the controversial magazine Shirley Hebdo not only did he provoke al-Qaeda or other such militant groups but also he wounded the entire Muslim world.[8]

# Incident-4:

A waiter at a Texas restaurant refuses to give him tips because he is a Muslim. Not only that, he also writes in the bill - he does not give tips to terrorists. [9]

# Incident-5:

A Hindu man hacked to death a Muslim in Rajasthan, India to prevent "love jihad" and he added that it was a warning to India's minority Muslim community. [10]

# **Incident-6:**

A Buddhist militant group called Ma Ba Tha has been waging anti-Muslim activities in Myanmar for many years. Ma Ba Tha activists incite ordinary Myanmar citizens against Muslims to kill and destroy their property. [11]

There have also been incidents of Islamophobia displacing the Rohingya Muslim community from Arakan. In Myanmar, A Buddha political party called 'Ma Tha Ba' who thinks that Muslims will harm them. So they formed an anti-Muslim movement.

Muslim mosques, homes and businesses have been attacked in the wake of allegations that a Buddhist man was injured in an attack by four Muslims in Kandy, Sri Lanka. The government declared a state of emergency in the country to deal with the situation. Besides, social media was shut down for 12 days This is because radical Buddhists, including an organization of monks called the Buddhist Force, have been campaigning on social media to encourage people to attack Muslims. There they also tried to say that Muslims were mixing 'contraceptives' in food and clothing to reduce the Buddhist population.

In October 2015, a popular Thai Buddhist monk said on Facebook that a mosque should be set on fire in response to the killing of a Buddhist monk.

"Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand are in danger" Michael Jarrison, a professor of religion at Youngstown State University in the United States, told Deutsche Welle. "The monks of these three countries think that Buddhism is under threat. They fear that Islam and Muslims will take over their country” he said. He thinks that the reason for the Buddhists' fear of Muslims is very old When Myanmar and Sri Lanka came under British rule, Buddhists in both countries were skeptical of the existence of Buddhism. Even though Thailand was independent at the time, neighboring countries were under British and French rule, and Buddhists in that country were also skeptical of religion. Because of these fears, nationalism and the protection of religion became synonymous in the minds of Sri Lankan and Myanmar citizens during the independence movement, he said. That section still exists As a result, it is still impossible to separate religious identity and national identity in those countries. He said "Being a true citizen of Myanmar means being a Buddhist".

In addition, the perception of Islam in the minds of many in the Western world is affecting the minds of Buddhists in the three countries, says Jarrison, a professor of theology. "Many people in the West consider Buddhism to be peaceful, and Islam to be a religion of conflict, which is not true," he said. (Source: 'Why are Buddhists in Southeast Asia afraid of Muslims?' March 26, 2018 dw.com)

Another part of theophobia is fear of self-religion. Such as the fear of life after death mentioned in the scriptures, the fear of heaven and hell, the fear of supernatural things, the belief in God and the fear. Fear of religious institutions or religious buildings (such as mosques, temples, churches) that represent religion is called ecclesiophobia.

# **Ecclesiophobia**:

Ecclesiophobia is the fear of the church or the fear of what the church represents.

1. A fear of the building itself
2. A fear of what the church represents

Most of the time it happens fearing one’s own religion. Pictures of suffering in the church that triggers fear of blood and death among many people with Ecclesiophobia are afraid of the church, and they are afraid of all the activities of the church. When they are in church they think God can see them directly.

Fear of self-religion is something that is associated with a lot of piety. If we want to know that, we must first know what is religiosity?

# Religiosity:

The fear of religion is not the fear of religion but the fear of losing religion. The word religiosity in most cases expresses righteousness of those who want to live by religion for most of their lives. We can call religious people religious in one sense. Because this class of people usually think of religion above all else, maybe rightly or wrongly. However, most of them hold on to religion. Religiosity is again somewhat connected with theophobia. E.g.

1. Fear of life after death - Religious classes, whose religious beliefs emphasize life after death, are very worried or afraid of life after death. He is very afraid of what will happen in life. That fear has been described by many as both religious and religious.
2. Many in Christianity believe that God can see everything while in church, so they are afraid of God there. What many have called theophobia and many have also called it religiosity.
3. In Islam, the religious classes are always anxious about the torment of the grave, the Day of Judgment, the Day of Judgment. Which has also been termed as fear of the hereafter or piety?
4. Fear of numbers - Christians usually fear or respect the 13th number. Because many believe that Jesus Christ had his last supper on the 13th day of the month and was crucified on the 13th Friday of the month. The Last Supper had 13 members and Jesus Christ took the 13th seat

On the other hand, there is fear in that number. This number is associated with the Book of Revelation (Chapter 13). Where the Beast is mentioned, which is similar to the devil. That number is called 'Number of Beasts' according to the Bible. Many Christians find that number ominous or fearful.

From all these fears or cowardice many good deeds are done and bad deeds are also done. E.g.-

1. **Militancy:** Some classes lead a person who is completely ignorant of religion to a completely forbidden path by giving wrong knowledge about religion for their own benefit.
2. **Pir Business or Religion Business:** Even in the 21st century, many people do not have the correct knowledge about religion, so many opportunistic people are capitalizing on religion and doing religion business to the pious people who are ignorant about common religion. This is having a huge impact on the present society.
3. **Priestly practice:** This practice is observed among Hindus Hindus are close to the priest in any religious problem, and they think that only a priest can solve the religious problem.

Even in the 21st century, people still use religion in many ways. Many opportunistic people are capitalizing on religion because they do not have proper knowledge about religion. This is having a huge impact on the present society. Again, various conflicts over religion have been taking place regularly even in this 21st century. Many classes are also working to destroy the society, the state and the world in the name of religion by spreading the message of peace in their mouths. Above all, a healthy religion applies to everyone, because human beings are religious animals. In the 21st century, religion is a political word, not just a word based on religion. Religion is cherished by all, even after many conflicts, perhaps with bad intentions or good intentions. Yet let there be religion, let there be peace in the world.

References

1. Toyenbee, A, 1956, An Historian's Approach to Religion, New York, Oxford University Press.
2. Frazer, J, 1890, Golden Bough, Macmillan and Co.
3. Tylor , E. B, 1871, Primitive Culture
4. Durkheim, E, 1912, The Elementary Forms Of Religion
5. Wikipedia
6. bbc.com
7. Headline "Birth of such a perverted and murderous mentality from Islamophobia: Erdogan" – BBC, March 15, 2019
8. Column, Emanuel Macron's Islamophobia and the New Secular Crusade, Prothom Alo, November 10, 2020
9. American wrote 'We don't tip terrorists' after seeing Muslim names after eating at the restaurant, Voice of Time, July 21, 2016
10. BBC News Bangla, 13 December 2017
11. 'Madrasa locked under pressure from Buddhist monks in Myanmar' May 1, 2018, dw.com