

CONCLUSIONS

Insofar as the comparative study presented in this paper has certain limitations concerning the samples, methodology, and quality of the empirical data, the findings should not be regarded as representative of the populations of India and Bulgaria as a whole. A future study of the issues we examined should employ one questionnaire for both countries and include similar samples from each. The empirical data collected has been used here only to trace religious and spiritual beliefs in postmodern times.

Four models of religiosity can be outlined on the basis of the analysis we have conducted. The first is the traditional model, whereby individuals adhere to their accepted values and beliefs concerning life and death. The second comprises a contrasting model of withdrawal, which typifies individuals who are skeptical about or in full disagreement with religious ideas in general. Very few people represent this model in either India and Bulgaria. The third is a model of resistance, in which religious feelings and concepts stand in opposition to other dominant ideologies, functioning as a tool for individual and collective self-enhancement. The fourth is the open culture model, which is represented by people who view religion as primarily a set of cultural or ethical principles. The fact that individuals whom this model describes are not members of any organized church does not mean that they are less religious than others since as many of them perceive themselves as religious. This model rather reflect a shift in consciousness from a more collective and institutionalized notion of religion to a more individualized set of beliefs.

This fourth model marks the de-institutionalization of religion that has taken place in certain societies in the postmodern world. This change makes it possible to embrace new concepts and ideas, which comprises the manner in which the postmodern world represents varieties of religious feelings and attachments. Within this broader context, such older ideas as life after death and rebirth are given new meaning and come to be redefined within both old and new structures.

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