

BHAKTI MOVEMENT- SEARCHING UPON COMMONALITIES & BELIEFS OF NIRGUN & SAGUN BHAKTAS & THEIR RELEVANCE IN PRESENT-DAY WORLD

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Abstract

Bhakti is a way we tend to show our emotions and beliefs towards our chosen deities or almighty god. Since times immemorial, forms of bhakti have evolved. In Ancient India, around the 8th century, the Bhakti Movement rose up which set up sects of Bhaktas. Different religions and sectors of belief emerged dividing society into d=various schools of thoughts. In Hinduism, people got divided into sects of various deities but some chose to believe in a formless god. This period and time impending saw various external religious forces entering India and changing the landscape of devotion. Through this paper, we are understanding the division of society on the basis of Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti and how this affected other religions that originated on the sacred land of India and external influences. We will also put Nirgun and Sagun Bhakti in the paradigm of the modern world with a more complex lifestyle that has evolved in human civilization.

Introduction: Evolution of Bhakti Movement

The period of 8-18th century in India saw the emergence of various divergences in the religious beliefs of the Indian population. Bhakti movement emerged as a movement portraying noble ways to portray devotion towards selected Hindu deities, initially in southern parts of India. Bhakti movement aimed to reduce the importance of Brahmins priests as intermediaries to initiate a bind with the mighty. They were against the Brahminical norms and unconventionally chose to devote themselves to God directly without any intermediary.

Bhakti was classified into Sagun and Nirgun. Sagun bhaktas believed that lord has a form and attributes. They believed in the devotion towards deities, idols, images, symbols and attributes associated with chosen deities. In contrast, Nirgun bhaktas believed that God has no form or shape. They are against idol worship. They are usually proponents of monolithic God.

Bhakti movement primarily has two types of Saint:

One, those who worshipped lord Shiva called Nayanars belong from the practice of Shaivism where the main deity worshipped is Shiva.

Second, those who worshipped lord Vishnu called Alvars belong from the practice of Vaishnavism where the main deity is Vishnu.

These bhakti saints moved with people from place to place singing hymns in the devotion of God. As they moved, more people kept on joining them. But how they were able to connect to the general masses? The main reason the bhakti movement flourished was the booming skepticisms towards Brahminical norms. According to brahmans, society was divided into four varnas under the varna system- Brahman, Kshatriye, Vaishya and Shudra. Brahmins were at the top of the varna hierarchy and controlled the social arrangement. People born in lower classes like Shudra and Vaishya have restricted or no entry in temples and were not allowed to perform devotion towards their deities as the upper classes. There also existed people from Jatis which were not classified under any varna and were treated as outcast. Untouchability was prevalent in the society Women also has a relegated position in matters of worshipping in this patriarchal society where temples were like the milikiyat of the male priest who wanted to dominate the society. So, as the bhakti movement emerged which allowed people from all segments and strata of the society to join them in this movement then people especially from lower classes, outcasts and women joined it. These bhakti saints condemned the caste system and accepted followers from various social groups.

This social classification of the society led to massive support towards the movement in southern India. The period saw the emergence of chiefdoms of Chola, Cheras , Pandyas and Pallavas in southern India. These kingdoms were supporters of Jainism and Buddhism which were newer religions in divergence to Hinduism developed due to complexity that existed in Hinduism. Chiefs also were patrons of artisans and merchants. Over time, these saints also got support from the contemporary kings. Chola rulers provided donations to the saints in cash and kind-like land. The personal devotion of the king might have differed but why were they keen to be patrons of various traditions that existed? The main reason was to win the popular mandate and attention of the masses of their kingdoms. Through these social services, they tried to establish a divine claim through their association with religious traditions. Kings facilitated the construction of temples. As the saints travelled to places, shrines were constructed on the places they visited which later became sites of pilgrimage for the devotees. Chidambaram, Gangaikondacholapuram and Thanjavur are examples of such temples constructed by kingship in patronage to Alvar and Nayanar Saints. Vellalar Peasants were an important class who revered these saints so as to win the support of this class, kings also showed their respect to the saints. Moreover, kings introduced the signing of the Tamil hymns in the temples which were composed by the moving saints. Bronze statues of the god were also created. A Chola ruler namely Parantaka-I consecrated metal images of Tevaram which consisted of three Alvar saints- Appar, Samdarar and Sambandar in the temple.

Another Shaivik religious movement was led by Bassavana in the 12th century Karnataka whose followers were called Lingayats or Virashiva. They also made poetic compositions about Lord Shiva. During this period, the Saiva Siddhanta tradition spread in southern India which draws its authority from the 28 Saiva Agamas, the devotional works of several saints of Saivism, and the writings of several thinkers and scholars. In Vaishnavism, the Sri Vaishnava tradition was formally established by Ramanuja (1017-1137 CE), a theologian and philosopher who

systematized the teachings of the Alvars and integrated them with Vedantic philosophy. In followers of Vaishnavism, Bhagavad Gita remained an integral symbol of teachings of Shri Vishnu.

Some saints succeeded to develop a culture amongst their followers leading to Sant Mat Bhakti movement where the teachings of the Sant or Saint or Guru were central to the idea of devotion and the path of living. Some notable examples were Kabir Panthis, Sikhs and Radha Soami. During this period, there were rising newer religions like Islam and Sikhism which spread over the Indian Continent.

Literature Review

Many published literature tried to examine Bhakti movements and related saints through different aspects of studying history. (Pande R.,2000) A study on historiographical critique of the Bhakti Movements mentions how different schools of thought formed their view on the Bhakti movement. Beginning in the 13th century and continuing for more than four centuries, the Bhakti Movement was a religious and social revolution that aimed to subvert hierarchical hierarchies through accessible spirituality and devotion, especially among underprivileged populations. While scholars of religious provenance highlighted its roots in both ancient Islam and Hinduism, early colonial Orientalists positioned it within reformist traditions. Marxist historians examined it as a reaction to socioeconomic shifts in medieval India, while reformist and protest readings saw it as a critique of orthodoxy. Rekha Pande draws attention to how much historiography is gender-biased and north-centric, frequently ignoring the achievements of women as the movement did not aim to change the social relationship within the family. While post-colonial and feminist academics like Romila Thapar and Vidya Dehejia highlighted regional variety and female saints like Andal, early South Indian histories depended on hagiographies that portrayed saints as heavenly. Philosophical interpretations, like Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita, connected Bhakti to theological democratization. Subaltern viewpoints, comparisons with Sufism, and critiques of protest literature, including Chokhamela's writings, are all incorporated into contemporary study. In order to adequately represent Bhakti's regional diversity and challenged historical construction, recent critiques, most notably by Hawley, challenge the notion of a single "movement" and suggest a "network" model.

(Shafiulla K.,2019) Another research on the cultural aspect of the movement tells that the region's culture is still shaped by the enduring cultural legacy of the North Indian Bhakti Movement, which is based on tolerance, diversity, and the quest for spiritual fulfillment. It took intellectual inspiration from South Indian schools including Madhva's Dvaita, Nimbarka's Dvaita-Advaita, and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita, and it promoted rich interreligious discourse through exchanges with Islamic and Sufi traditions. The two main kinds of Bhakti were Saguna Bhakti, which practiced god worship and was less critical of caste, and Nirguna Bhakti, which disregarded form, condemned caste systems, and promoted social equality. Bhakti also significantly improved vernacular writing by substituting regional tongues like Awadhi, Kannada, Brij, and Marathi for elite languages like Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic. This enhanced both

literary culture and popular religious expression. Bhakti was by no means a monolithic movement; rather, it showed considerable regional variability.

(Dinesha V.,2025) More recently, a scholar threw light on influences of the movement on other religions like Christianity. Between the seventh and tenth centuries, reformers like the Alvars, Nayanars, Ramanuja, Vallabha, Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, and Akka Mahadevi spearheaded the Bhakti Movement in South India. Later, under the influence of Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Surdas, and Tulsidas, the movement moved northward. It was revived as a philosophical and ideological force by the eleventh century under the leadership of Ramanuja. The movement's emphasis on divine benevolence, selflessness, and personal emotional devotion resonates closely with Christian devotional traditions in India, fostering a spiritual connection between Christian communities and their ancestral Hindu heritage. This interreligious affinity has shaped daily religious practices and influenced socio-economic life. Beyond its spiritual dimensions, Bhakti significantly impacted India's socio-cultural and political spheres, promoting inclusivity and inspiring transformative devotional practices that transcended religious boundaries and shaped community life across the subcontinent.

Methodology

This paper examines the similarities in the various divisions of the Bhakti movement and their links. We will look into beliefs and paths of various saints and drew on commonalities in the way of their devotion. We analyse the impact of Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti on Hinduism and other religions which spread throughout the country. We primarily used the secondary data to put forward our point through an approach to analyse historical writing and literature from ancient Indian texts of the subcontinent. We are also analysing the understanding and relevance of Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti in contemporary human civilisation through gathering primary data using Google forms. Through this we throw light on what path of worship do people follow in the current world and what are their practices and beliefs.

Results and Discussions

In the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of South India, the Āḷvārs (Tamil poet-saints) were devoted to Vishnu/Narayana in deeply emotional and poetic ways. Among the 12 recognized Āḷvārs, only one was a woman—Āṇḍāl. However, we can also consider other female Vaishnava bhaktas, such as those from the later Sri Vaishnava tradition.

Āṇḍāl and Meera Bai, two iconic women saints of the Bhakti movement, transformed devotion into a deeply personal and revolutionary act. Both envisioned God as their divine husband, reimagining marriage not as a social contract but as a spiritual union rooted in love and surrender. Their bhakti was marked by emotional intensity (prapatti)—a wholehearted surrender to the beloved deity, prioritizing inner longing over external rituals. In doing so, they boldly rejected social expectations: Meera, as a royal widow, refused courtly norms and Āṇḍāl bypassed the idea of human marriage altogether. Both worshipped Sagun forms of God, Meera

found Krishna in every heartbeat, and Āṇḍāl adored Ranganatha as her beloved. Their devotion flowed through songs, hymns, and poetry, where the divine was not distant but intimately present. Through their love and rebellion, these women saints also transcended gender roles, asserting equal if not greater spiritual authority than many of their male counterparts.

Krishna-bhakti saints demonstrated their devotion to the Lord in a variety of ways across India's many areas and ages, including as child Krishna (Baal Gopal), young Vrindavan's lover (Shyamasundara, Radha-Krishna), cosmic guardian (Giridhar Gopal, Govardhan Nathji), and empathetic companion (Vithoba). From Vallabhacharya's Pushtimarg and Andal's Tiruppavai (Tamil Alvar poetry) to Surdas's Sursagar, Meera Bai's padas, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's ecstatic kirtans, the emotions varied from Madhurya rasa (romantic devotion) to Vatsalya (parental love) and Sakhya (friendship). The Bhagavad Gita (9.22: "To those who are ever devoted... I carry what they lack"), the Bhagavata Purana (Book 10's Rasa Lila), and the Gita Govinda of Jayadeva, which influenced emotional devotion across sects, were referenced in the philosophical underpinnings. The absolute, personal, and approachable Divine, Krishna, is the ultimate commonality despite variations in form, ceremony, and language. He reciprocates love in every way that is presented, mirroring the Bhagavata Purana (11.14.15), which states, "I am attained only by unfaltering devotion." Saints from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Bengal were united by their mutual opposition to orthodoxy, which revealed Bhakti as a common spiritual stream rooted in eternal biblical values rather than a homogenous movement.

The three women Nayanars—Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Mangayarkarasiyar and Isaiganiyar, embody diverse archetypes of feminine devotion within the Saṅg Bhakti tradition to Shiva, each carving a unique spiritual path. Karaikkal Ammaiyar is remembered for her extreme renunciation, even shedding her physical beauty to serve Shiva as a disembodied spirit, symbolizing mystical, otherworldly devotion.

She prayed for deathless devotion blissful and she

Prayed again: "I seek birthlessness; should I be

Born again, then let me never, never forget You;

Also let me pray for the boon to hymn in delight,

O Holy One, near beneath Your feet when You dance."

~An English translation of an excerpt by Karaikkal Ammaiyar from Periya
Purnam

In contrast, Sundaraththar or Sundervalli or simply regarded as Shiva devotee found divinity through the everyday roles of wife and homemaker, expressing her faith through domestic dharma and acts of loving service. Expressed that serving God's devotees is equal to worshipping Shiva himself. Not much information is available about all such women part of the Alvar sect and this reference could be formed in the oral traditions. Similarly, Mangayarkarasiyar

embodied all the qualities of an ideal wife who with her patience, determination, love and above all great devotion to the glorious feet of the Lord opened the eyes of her husband.

Isaignaniyar, the mother of the saint Sundarar, represents a third path—where motherhood itself becomes a sacred offering, raising a child devoted to Shiva as her own form of bhakti. The great mother, Isaignaniyar, lived in the town of Tirunavalur, in the kingdom of Tirumunaipadi. There is an old adage saying, "As the thread, so the saree. As the mother, so the child". This devotee led a sincere life with Sadaiyar to give birth to the renowned devotee Sundara Murti Nayanar, who always took pride in saying he was the servitor of the servitors of Lord Shiva.

Sundarar began his first poem (Tevaram VII.1.1) by addressing Shiva as "Pittaa pirai chudi" meaning O mad man...

O madman with the moon-crowned hair,
God of grace,
O Lord, how can I forget you?
You dwell forever in my heart,
In Arutturai, shrine of grace,
in Venneynallur on Pennai's southern bank,
you took me for your own—
how can I deny you now?
– Translated by Indira Peterson

Though their lifestyles and expressions of faith varied, what unites them is their unwavering love for Shiva, their willingness to sacrifice worldly attachments, and a shared rejection of empty ritual in favour of emotional, inner purity. Through their lives, they expanded the boundaries of devotion, showing that bhakti could be lived through mysticism, duty, or motherhood alike. Mangayarkarasiyar, Isaignaniyar and Sundaraththar both chose a path of household devotion through their societal roles and obligations to cast their worship of the lord. They didn't renounce the world but believed that this world is the place of God.

Kabir Das and Guru Nanak emphasised on a path of bhakti of a formless god. They were Nirgun spiritual teachers. They were against Brahmanical norms. Kabir was in favour of iconoclasm, a practice where idol worship should not be done. They both believed in one god, i.e. monotheism and the path they suggested primarily focused on naam jaap or continuous recitation of the name of God. When Sufism came in India especially the Chishti Silsila, they also had similar beliefs of Nirgun God i.e. Allah but they were against materialism in Islam and perceived the Quran on their own interpretations. They too were of the belief of oneness of God where these spiritual teachers that might be Kabir, Guru Nanak or Shaikh of Kanqah were all just teachers or mediums to connect to God whose followers were expected to follow their paths and teachings.

It might be Sagun bhaktas like Alvars and Nayanar or Nirgun teachers like Guru Nanak or Kabir, Spiritual hymns and songs remained an integral part of their journey to spread religious ideas amongst the general masses. Many places these saints visited or stayed remained in the textual

stories and later shrines were developed there. These saints that rose during the Bhakti movement were against brahmanical ideas of devotion and entrenched caste-hierarchies. They welcomed people from all castes and genders. Devotion was seen as a path of liberation.

The Sagunization of Nirgun Traditions & Contemporary Practices

While Nirgun Bhakti focuses on an abstract and formless divine, modern practices in traditions like Sikhism and Sufism show a shift toward Sagun-like expressions of devotion. Sikhism, which is based on the Nirgun idea of Waheguru, now includes ceremonies around the Guru Granth Sahib and visual respect for the Gurus. Similarly, Sufism, rooted in Islamic belief and mysticism, has developed popular practices centred on shrines (dargahs), honouring saints, and emotional musical forms like qawwali. This blend shows a human need for clear expressions of the intangible, mixing philosophical ideas with forms of devotion.

In the contemporary world, people are either devotees or atheists. But under the umbrella of devotion, there are many bifurcations too. Hinduism has both Nirgun and Sagun Bhaktas.

In Sikhism, guru Nanak never wanted to establish a separate religion but later the followers established Sikhism- as a religion separate from Hinduism. It was joined by people from other religions and various social groups. Those people who came in Sikhism, brought their thoughts and ideas from past experiences. Sikhs, today, worship both Hindu and Sikh festivals like Diwali, Holi, etc. Guru Nanak proposed a path of Nirgun bhakti of Rabb/Waheguru who is formless, abstract and omnipresent through naam jap and kirtan. Many Sikhs on Mahanavmi worship the divine goddess and their nice avatars which is a Sagun practice. Guru Nanak taught about monotheistic and one good. Furthermore, people started to worship the idols and images of sants or founders like the ten Gurus of Sikhism and related people who stood against cruelties of Mughals in the early stages of Sikhism. Religious texts such as Guru Granth Sahib which are like symbols of the religion are also revered. The religion started with the idea of Nirgun bhakti developed into a combination of Nirgun and Sagun practices due to its followers.

Tawhid, the idea that God—Allah—is wholly formless and incomparable to humans, is central to Islamic religion. This is in line with the concept of Nirgun Bhakti, which holds that the divine has no form, attributes, or boundaries. Sufi traditions, however, offer a stunning fusion of profound thought and sincere devotion. In addition to writing about laws and religion, poets such as Rumi, Bulleh Shah, and Hafiz put their hearts into their poetry, expressing a desire to immerse themselves in God's boundless love. They spoke of a strong and intimate connection that was like merging with the holy.

However, people's experiences and expressions of this vision frequently take shape, despite the fact that it is metaphysically formless. People can be seen praying, tying threads, lighting candles, and presenting flowers to the tombs of Sufi saints when you visit any dargah. These behaviors resemble the Sagun Bhakti of Hinduism, where God is revered in a tangible, approachable form. Along with Qawwali, which is deep, potent music that not only speaks of

God but also helps you experience God, people view these saints as more than simply mentors; they are bridges to the divine. Sufi poets and musicians convey heavenly love as though speaking to a beloved, much like Meera Bai did when she sang to Krishna. Therefore, although while Sufi theory is fundamentally Nirgun, the way individuals live and celebrate that love.

In Buddhism, Gautam Buddha stressed upon enlightenment or nibhana to cross the river of materialistic world and urged his followers to be lamp unto themselves. His teachings were only recorded into texts after his death or mahaparinibhana. The older form of Buddhism was considered Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism or lesser vehicle. These followers emphasised on liberation through asceticism, self-discipline and meditation in a life monk or nun. Buddha was believed to be a teacher and his suggested path was religiously followed in a Nirgun manner.

However, over time Mahayana or Greater vehicle Buddhism developed where Buddha was seen as a God and the concept of Bodhisattva developed who were enlightened men seen as deities. Worship of Buddha, Bodhisattva or avatar of Buddha, Female nuns as Goddesses, etc. also started. In Hinduism, Buddha was perceived to be the Avatar of Shri Vishnu which associated Buddha with Viashnavites. These days Buddhism has evolved more Sagun practices with Buddhist idols worshipped at homes, and monks believing in not a distant sacred but materialistically indulged life. The notion of monastery and ascetic life has become less prevalent amongst the followers.

In the present era, Guru Bhakti is being explored enough by people. Different spiritual speakers and self-proclaimed God-man and even God-woman have created a newer movement to connect with God, similar to the creation of sects at the time of Bhakti movement where initially those who were spiritual teachers later became revered. People see them as messengers and servants of God but sometimes a form of God as well. Even when the ideas of a spiritual teacher focus on Nirgun Bhakti, often it has been seen that later in time, the Guru himself is being revered as God-like creating a Sagun Sense. Yet there are many practices of worship taken into propagation of religion where a direct link is established between Devotee and the deity in the contemporary world as well.

Survey Analysis

Through the survey a set of questions were asked to the general public assumed as respondents. The survey was conducted online to facilitate easy access and paper saving. There were more than 70 respondents irrespective of caste, race, religion, age, belief, etc. Most respondents when asked "Do you believe in the existence of God- the Supreme and Almighty?" responded in affirmative (90% approximately). To understand the existence and importance of Nirgun and Sagun Bhakti, it was asked " If God exists, what form of God do you worship?" to which there were mixed reactions, however, most respondents confirmed that they believe in both- Nirgun and Sagun form of God. Now, to get a better view about contemporary practices used in propagation of the belief in the society, we tried to investigate how people practice spirituality at personal levels in their day-to-day lives. The majority preferred idol worship and worshipping formless supreme beings, reconfirming that more people are inclined now to a mix of both Sagun and Nirgun practices of Bhakti or devotion. The question allowed selecting

multiple choices among idol worship, formless worship, image worship, Guru Bhakti, Nature worship and rituals or Karam Kand. The least preferred was the Guru Bhakti. Further, an attempt was made to throw light on the importance of sacred places in the lifestyle of humans. Most consider that we can connect with God at any time and at any place while others believe that God is omnipresent and could be found in self. Less people preferred sacred places as the right medium to connect with the almighty. However, in current times too in practice religious centres are major tourist sites and an integral element in the economic sphere too. Moreover, it was asked if respondents think spirituality increases our morale and material benefit while also leads to personal growth and self-awareness. A high number of respondents replied in affirmative (83% approximately) throwing light on how religion has been practiced through histories for spiritual, moral and material benefits that are associated with it in the beliefs of the general masses. In conclusion, most responses assured a belief in the philosophy of Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti in the contemporary world.

At last, a subjective question was asked about what bhakti means to the respondents or their stand on Nirgun or Sagun Bhakti to which there were varied answers where some believed Bhakti is a profound spiritual experience characterized by deep devotion, emotional connection, and inner peace while other one said that Bhakti fosters a sense of spiritual growth, self-realization, and bliss. Many different understandings, beliefs and paths were discussed in responses aligning with the idea of love towards God.

Conclusions

Through this paper, we examined the system of belief that formed centuries ago and still persist in the core practices of spirituality in India. While Sagun Bhaktas personalized God in the form of Krishna, Rama, or Shiva, and Nirgun Bhaktas spoke of an attribute-less, infinite presence, they were united in practice by their emphasis on devotion from the heart, egalitarian ethics, poetic expression, and inner purity. For them, true worship was less about form and more about feeling which has a longing to connect with the divine beyond boundaries of caste, creed, or theology. Saints became channels to create a ripple in minds of people to connect in a particular way emphasised by them. People diversified their thoughts of how they perceive and worship God. We found out that Bhakti and devotion is still an integral part of Indian society through the survey though it might be taken into consideration that the sample size was small (70 approximately) and scope of responses over a question was restricted to given choices. The survey may include biases of respondents. The aspect of how deep impact has been created by the movement on the contemporary world may be considered in the future studies. The smaller sects and divisions of Bhakti saints may also be reflected upon in further research. In conclusion, Bhakti movement is a diverse walk of people from different stratas of society choosing different long paths which ultimately end in the lap of the God.

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Appendix

Table 1: Timeline of Bhakti Movement

Period (CE)	Region(s)	Major Teachers / Saints	Tradition / Philosophy	Significance
500–1100	Tamil Nadu / Kerala	Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar, Nammalvār, Andal	Saguna bhakti, Tamil vernacular hymns	Early Alvars & Nayanars; devotional poetry challenging ritualism
1000–1100	Tamil Nadu	Ramanujacharya (1017–1137)	Vishishtadvaita, inclusive bhakti	Integrated bhakti with Vedanta, popularizing devotion across classes
1100–1200	Karnataka	Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, Akka Mahadevi	Lingayat Shaiva bhakti, social reform	Anti-caste, egalitarian devotional movement in Kannada
1200–1300	Maharashtra / Punjab / Delhi	Jnanadeva, Namdev, Muktabai; also Chishti Sufi saints like Khwaja Muinuddin, Fariduddin	Saguna bhakti, early syncretic exchanges	Bhakti in Maharashtra; parallel Sufi devotional impact
1300–1400	North India / Kashmir / Bihar	Ramananda (c. 1300–1400), Nizamuddin Auliya, Lal Ded, Chokhamela	Nirguna bhakti, inclusivity	Ramanandi lineage and cross-cultural spiritual currents

1400–1500	UP / Punjab / Gujarat / Bengal / Assam	Kabir (1440–1510), Guru Nanak (1469–1538), Surdas, Raidas, Mirabai, Vallabhacharya (1479–1530), Sankardeva	Inclusive nirguna & saguna bhakti; Achintya- Bheda- Abhed a (Gaudiya Vaishnavism)	Major Sant tradition, bridging Hindu–Muslim devotion, regional sects
1500–1600	Bengal / Rajasthan / Maharashtra	Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534), Mirabai, Tukaram (1598–1650), Tulsidas (1532–1623)	Sankirtan Gaudiya devotion, vernacular bhakti	Institutional crystallization of Krishna devotion, poetic literature
1600–1700	Punjab / Haryana	Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Miyan Mir	Reformist Sufi and mystical revival movements	Renewal of mystical traditions post-Bhakti peak
1800–1900	North India	Tulsi Sahib (Hathras), Shiv Dayal Singh (Soami Ji Maharaj)	Early Sant Mat, Surat Shabd Yoga, Radha Soami tradition	Formulation and institutionalization of Sant Mat inner path
1838–1914	Bengal	Bhaktivinoda Thakur	Revival of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, name-hatta preaching	Modern reform and Western outreach foundation
1900–Present	India & Global	Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, ISKCON (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami), Radha Soami satsangs, Kirpal Singh, Faqir Chand	Universalized bhakti, meditation-based inner path	Global Sant Mat and Bhakti movements rooted in earlier streams

Figure 1: which age group were respondents to the survey belonged?

Your Age?
73 responses

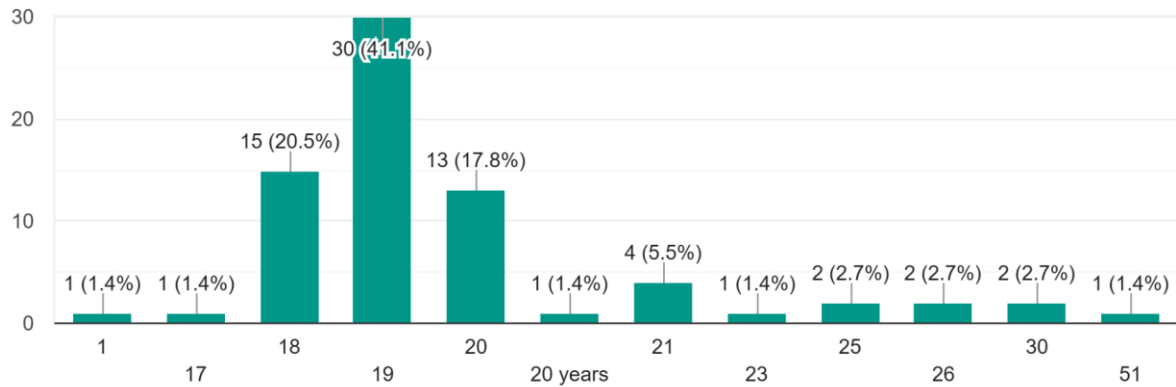


Figure 2: Understanding religious alignment of respondents

Do you believe in the existence of God- the Supreme and Almighty?
73 responses

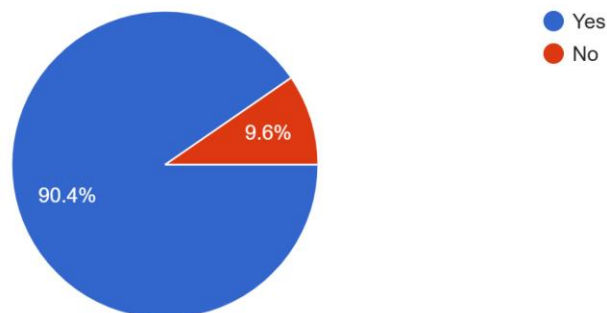


Figure 3: Worship God with or without Attributes

If God exist, what form of God do you worship?

73 responses

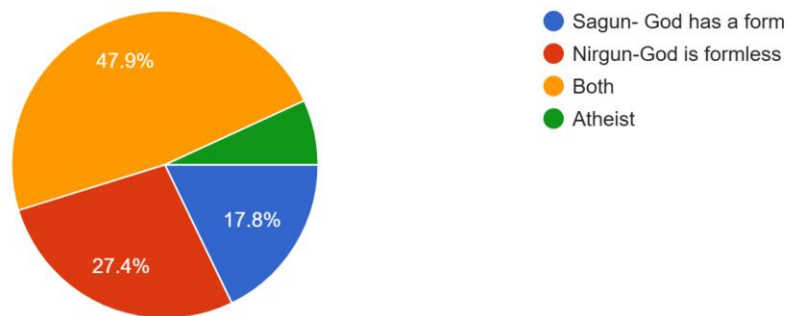


Figure 4: Various practices of worship

How do you practice personal spirituality and devotion in your daily life?

73 responses

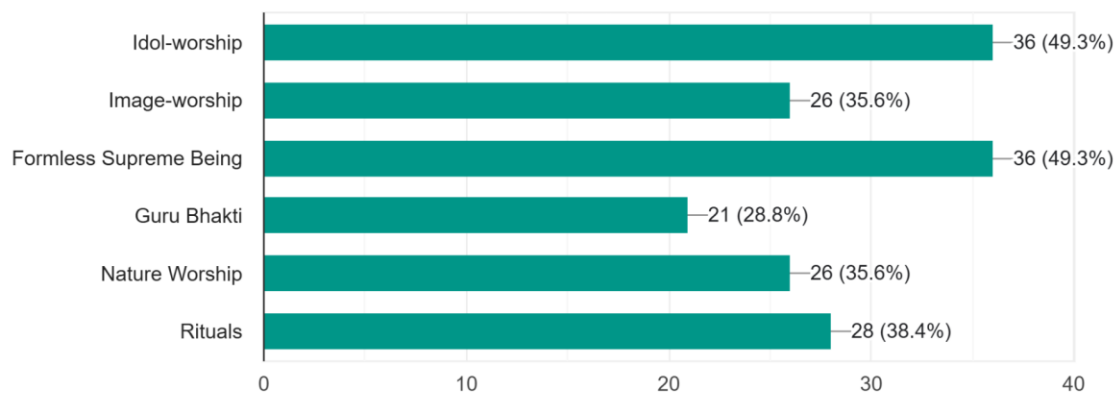


Figure 5: ways of devotion

What is your preferred way of devotion?

73 responses

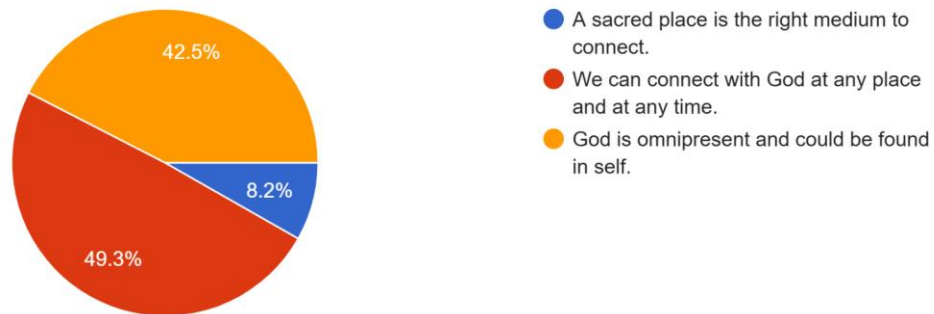


Figure 6: Why society prefers spirituality and religion?

Do you think our spirituality increases our morale and material benefit while also leads to personal growth and self-awareness?

73 responses

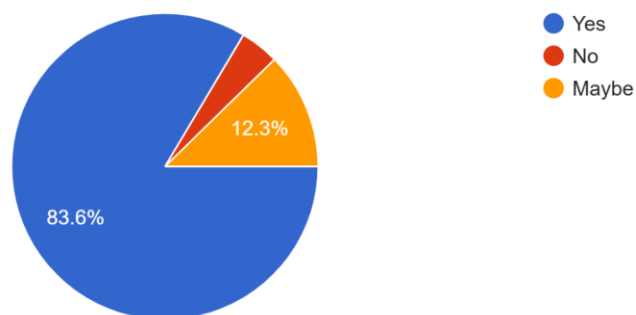


Figure 7: Contemporary view about Nirgun & Sagun Bhakti

Do u think philosophy of Sagun and Nirgun Bhakti is relevant in today's world?

73 responses

