

Hinduism and the Region

How did the religions of the region influence social life?

HINDUISM

The East Indian immigrants introduced this new religion to the region. It was different because of its doctrines and practices. First of all, the Hindus were polytheistic. That is they believed in many gods whereas Christians believe in One God. To make matters worst these gods were represented by images of animals. There was one god who was an elephant and another was part monkey. This was ridiculous if not sacrilegious to the Christians and those of the African religions.

They also believed in reincarnation and animism that is that all things have life. The Vedas was their scripture. It is these beliefs and practices that gave the immigrants the hope and strength that they needed to endure the harsh conditions that they faced on the estates in particular and in the Caribbean society in general. They buried their dead on a pyre. The Africans thought this was disrespectful.

They met to worship and formed important links and friendships. Some met their partners and got married.

But there was also another feature of their religion that sparked some positive connection with the masses. Their food and spices were adopted by a number of people.