

Women-Rituals and Cultural Practices

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Certificate

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis entitled “Women-Rituals and Cultural Practices”

Submitted by Ms.Balamani.M for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History &Aesthetics, incorporates the results of independent investigations carried out by the candidate herself.

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Investigator

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Section-1

1.Chapter

Introduction-

Andhra region follows certain conventions in Brahmanical worships and ritual practices. Women apply *Kumkum* on the forehead, flowers in the hairdo and turmeric on the feet. This practice is traditionally followed on all the regular and auspicious occasions.¹ Turmeric, *Kumkum* and flowers are used for worshipping the gods and goddesses. Turmeric should be applied to the entrance doorjamb and later on women's feet as a regular or special ritual practice. Wet turmeric small mound is installed to worship the gods and goddess on the family rituals or on the rituals of women alone. It is also believed that feet, whether of women or men, should not touch the doorjamb and also these items of worship. I was startled by the visual and sentimental comparison between all the applications and visual comparison of these materials. Women's decoration is loaded with sentimental and comparative value. She adorns those special items that are used for worships. That was the thought led me to investigate the voice of women in their practices. The idea of looking into the household rituals and their importance began long back when I was working on my dissertation for masters degree on the 'Phot-Images' of Personal albums and my family photographs.

These questions of my unconscious about the 'women's identity and their voice' are surfaced when I attended the discussions, arguments, conferences, work-shops related to Cultural Studies and New Art History. I was ignorant about the feminist writings on the patriarchal domination that make the women aware of their recessive, submissive positions. Radical

¹ Tamilnadu and Karnataka regions of south India also follow the traditions similar to Andhra region but the Kerala region is different in following.

French feminism and American feminism talks about the oppression of women and the Post Euro-American feminist writers² like Rajeswari Sundarajan, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Spyvak Chakravathy talk about the various positions of patriarchal strategies, different kinds of oppressions and patriarchal position that categorizes the women of South Asian countries in to a monolithic category by western feminists. Western feminists viewed all the South Asian women as one category having similar kind of life, where as every country, state, region offers different civil rules and regional oppressions to the women. Those arguments led my thoughts further to locate and search the different positions of Indian women, to be specific, about the regionally different positions within India itself. I have chosen to discuss about the cultural strengths and weaknesses of Andhra region, that I belong to, and their heterogeneity comparing at times within the state/region.

Awareness about one's own potentials, achievements, identities and recognition are the necessary booster for the individuals to protect their self-respect. Many a time women are made to become ignorant about their individual identity, by the patriarchal system, irrespective of their participations in the familial and social responsibilities. Whether it is a Pre-modern practice or in recent new cults, 'Social Exclusion'³ kept the women in an unequal status. That inequality structured to function favorable for patriarchy.

If the popular phrase says "Ignorance is a bliss" then the sequel of that phrase should be "Awareness is a 'bless'". Women are one of those less privileged categories in the society whose awareness and identity is snatched to make them believe that ignorance is a bliss. Very

² Post Euro American feminism deconstructs the monolithic understanding of western feminists who view all the South Asian women as one category of oppressed women to place themselves as one upward category.

³Amartya Sen-"Social Exclusion-Concept Application and Scrutiny" Critical Quest. New Delhi. 2004.

many strategies are played to achieve that by dominant groups. Men effectively silence the women in the name of protectiveness and stereotypically represent women as timid, quiet, submissive and even if the women are courageous and want to participate in the decision making. Intelligent enough women are represented as dumb and do not understand the strategies around. Women of household, non-professional, non-working women, in specific, are left with little space and at a dead end on position and desire to achieve.

This study discusses about the *Brahmanical* rituals of women of Andhra region⁴ of this century. Caste specification in the discussion is not to prioritize the upper caste, but to discuss how the preferred castes and classes' norms of patriarchal system work inversely for the women and pushes them to 'politically secluded' location and towards the lack of their identity.

The intention of this thesis study is not to discuss about the patriarchal domination and the strategies that are played to oppress the women. This study is after processing all those questions, whether the women remained as vegetables and inactive as per the wish of the patriarchy when the patriarchy push them to a non-recognizable corner, or did they find different ways to cope up with the requirements to meet their pleasures, what is their voice, method, how did they manage to express themselves in that little space that was left by the patriarchy which has a dead end. What is their reciprocation to reply, visually, verbally or in the actions, to assert their identity?

⁴ I belong to Andhra Pradesh, Telugu speaking land. My parents belong to coastal Andhra region but they migrated to Warangal in Telangana region of same state due to my father's lawyer profession. I was brought up and studied in Warangal married to a family in Guntur of coastal Andhra region, moved around in North and Western India due to my Husband's profession. I tasted change of cultures living in different environments. I married in to a family who takes it as a strict rule to restrict the women's even day to day activities and pushes them to take pleasure only in cooking and serving and force the daughters-in-law to take pride in projecting a demeaning self image to their commands. It took decades for my husband to understand about individual likes and dislikes.

Ritual worships are one of the important activities of women in the household festivals, and conventional cultural practices, practiced day in and day out. If one can observe critically, rituals of women are a kind of self-expression and helps women on their cathartic acts. Ritual practices seem more meaningful than seen on the face value. Women made the rituals as necessary crucibles to fulfill their emotional baggages and many a time to meet the necessary requirements like spiritual and aesthetic pleasures, spending meaningful time, pleasure of caring their family health and nutrition, etc. are fulfilled through these ritual practices and made supportive platforms.

“I” in shifting positions of self/other-

There is a danger of constructing the voice for Indian women which is not their own by western feminist writers. Heterogeneity of women’s lived experiences cannot be addressed appropriately by feminist political strategies that assume a “Universal sisterhood”⁵ or who view all the women of third world/minorities as one category. India otherwise has different practices and cannot be viewed as one monolith. There is a difference between ‘a voice for’ and ‘a voice of’.

Many a time different researchers and scholars posed a question on the lines of authenticity of my writing that I am a researcher and a ritual practitioner on the other hand. How can I sincerely speak about the women’s space? Doubts were raised that whether I am celebrating the ritual space of women becoming blind to the oppressions of the patriarchy⁶. This writing sounds autobiographical. Women in the household rituals do not remain in one position. They

⁵ Flora Annie Steel A Voice for Indian Women? By Karyn Huenemann. Ed.Mandakranta Bose. “Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval and Modern India” Oxford University Press. New Delhi 2000.

⁶These were questions raised in my presentation on ‘Body decoration’ at Udaipur International Conference by the co presenters and scholars. Such questions surely twisted my thoughts further.

become performers, receivers and onlookers on other women's rituals. 'I' here as an insider/outsider shifts positions to observe every possibility if one is aware of scholars' discussions and knowledge bank. 'I' in the discussions denotes more than the own 'self'. Technical knowing of material practice is of insider's understanding. 'I' become the observer when one understand the abstract and concept of the practice and keep oneself away from the materiality of the rituals. That understanding can reach the level of knowledge objectifying the subject of rituals.⁷ My writing analysis about the women's ritual space is 'a voice of' an Andhra region's woman who practices rituals and writing about the rituals, unlike the western feminists' strategies who write for the Third world women. As such the society of knowledge has already tasted the modern thought in earlier century itself and that enabled to twist the traditional thinking to evaluate the conventional practices critically today.

However the rituals of women neither can be explained through the theories of French feminism, nor on the transformation theory of American feminism. Kamala Bhasin explains that feminism is articulated in different ways depending on local situations, issues and based on historically culturally concrete realities and levels of consciousness, perceptions and actions. Previous critical theories offered a critique about the unequal social status of women. The scholars who had been engaged with the cultural politics also did not critically look at the women's strategic voices and never looked at the household women's space as sites of subjectivity. Arjun Appadurai did talk about the religion as cultural identity but could not notice that one of the bases of the cultural identities do remain in women's household ritual space.

⁷ Judith Butler. "Undoing Gender". Routledge. 2004.

Dipesh Chakravati's writings about Subaltern studies, Satya Mohanty's Post-Positivist Realism⁸ studies reinforced the ideas of this thesis study to watch beyond radical feminism. Many of such writings further nurtured my thoughts to understand about the heterogeneity within Indian cultural practices and regional differences. The endeavor of this study is to bring women's voice from invisible spaces to the visibility.

Is this thesis a celebration?

This thesis appears like a celebration on the face value. But this celebration is of other way round and defensive. Women celebrate their available space of household in the rituals to mark over the patriarchy. They create space for their activities to take pleasures also play strategically to mark their identity through the rituals. Highlighting their space and their strategic acts in the rituals are to devalue the patriarchal oppression by these ritual practitioners as well as it is true for the writer also.

The way of discussing the rituals in this thesis is different from the earlier writers approached the women's rituals.⁹ The earlier article about the ancient references of women's marginalization in the *Hindu Dharma-Hindu* religions noted about the *Vratas* that women undertake as parallel worships to *Hindu* religious practices of men. Writer says those practices of women are the practices that are in tandem with men's expectations of women's purity and chastity and the rituals are the methods women adapted to become pure to conquer the expected norms. Writer has not found the women's point of view in the writing what they want and what they achieve out of these rituals at full length. Writer says women perform the

⁸ Postmodernists say 'objectivity' is never possible. Post Positivist thinkers say that is what is outmoded is specifically the positivist conception of objectivity, a conception based on a denial of the role of theory as per Satya Mohanty.

⁹ Samjukta Gombrich Gupta

rituals to live up to the role model expectation of the society and also writes *Hindu Dharma* advises all the people to follow their own(Sva) *Dharma*, women should follow *Stree-Dharma*. Because she is branded as basically impure 'Sudra'¹⁰, she has to undergo rigorous ritual penance to regain their ritual purity, says writer. In a way writer observes correctly and writes that they found out these rituals because they don't have access to the scriptures of *Brahmanical* practices. Study of the rituals of household women in this thesis can find some similarity with the study of early personal narratives of Bengali women in a book, 'Voices from Within'.¹¹

There are references about women's space in the household, available in *RG Veda*, *Manavadharma Sastras*, *Griha Sutras*.¹² Women's appearance in the public assembly, some references about their ruling in the household and in their in-laws house is mentioned in those scriptures. It is obvious that there was a watchful guarding over their behavior. One cannot say there is no power given to them but it is different from the complete power hold of ruling in the household. They are treated neither as equals nor as un-equals. Similar state of women is continuing as per the information delineated in the conventional rituals practiced today. They created a space of their own expressions away from the oppressions of patriarchy that helped them and not left with blank and empty rooms of identity.

Caste and class differentiation-

¹⁰ Women are impure because of their periodical menstrual cycle and child bearing. She is treated as untouchable in her menstrual cycles. When a young girl attains puberty a ritual is performed providing her with a surrogate bridegroom in certain tribes. Widow is a most inauspicious woman in the conventional societies.

¹¹ Malvika Karlekar, Oxford University press.1991.Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras.

¹² I attended a work shop conducted by Kumkum Roy and Jaya Tyagi about Manu Smriti and Griha Sutras in Forum of Contemporary theory in the month of March 2009.

Some of the rituals followed by women do not follow commanding restrictions on the caste and class differentiation. Some of the ritual stories narrated as a part of the procedure inform that class supremacy and complacency is discouraged and propagated to inform that modesty is more pleasant. There are few aspects to be noted even if all the castes of women perform the same rituals at the same place in a similar way. *Laxmi puja* rituals are followed by the women of all the four castes. But one observes that 'Sudra' community is not active in the participation. There are procedures in the rituals that say women are supposed to offer auspicious objects to each other and invite each other to their homes to offer or to receive those auspicious objects. Casts of equivalent rank only can offer and receive from each other. They can receive the offerings from the superior casts but not from the inferiors. Though women of all the casts come together as a gesture of solidarity there is a thin line of unuttered demarcation in the women's ritual practices following the caste system than creating uneasy discrimination. That is different from men's *Vedic* rituals where the caste system followed as a strict discrimination. Most of the women's rituals are outside the terrain of men but on some of the rituals they make sure men become part of their rituals as participants.

Andre' Beteille¹³ writes about "India's destiny not caste in stone" talks about the changing caste discriminations in Modern India. Writer says a great many things have in fact changed in the last 60 years of democratic India both in our political perceptions and social reality. But the electoral politics are taking advantage of caste discrimination of hierarchal society of earlier social structure of castes. Elections are playing upon the caste politics strategically and bringing that to the floor.

¹³ The Hindu, daily news paper. 21st February. 2012. (Centre page article).

Locating the rituals in 'Culture'-

The term culture folds in patriarchal meanings of intellect, adaptation, Aesthetic sensibilities, classical arts, religious practices and regional identities, etc. Rituals of women are left for lesser meanings along with anti-modern terms of traditional and stereotypical, and on the meanings of materiality, etc. But the conceptual outcome of the women's rituals is assimilated into cultural identities of community, state, national boundaries. People living out of their native, regional, state, and national boundary depend on these religiously followed rituals as a root adherence of their cultural identity. [Fig.1.66; 1.67; 1.68] [Fig.1.87; to 1.90].

Are the rituals folk or popular culture practices?

Development of culture is evaluated in 19th C.¹⁴ in a Euro-centric way. All the existing cultures in the colony were to be evaluated in terms of their similarity or dissimilarity with the culture of Europe.¹⁵ In the process British classified Folk and tribal arts lesser to Indian classical arts and these arts as lesser to Western art. Studies did not place any value of social worth on those cultural outputs, like the arts of households. These arts were and are out of the purview of the theoreticians. But in the post colonial times when theories are reassessed one can also say those arts of other than elite order are becoming the message conveyors of the indigenous culture, even if they cannot take the position of elite order in a comparative position. Household aesthetic practices like making the *Rangoli* designs or preparing the goddess form needs a focussed study. Such colloquial local styles lean to allow the personal experimental space in household creative activities. Probably these household practices have escaped the liability of

¹⁴ Sumantha Banerjee

¹⁵ Ibid.

codification like classical arts and their colloquial status has become their asset to experiment and to allow the elastic space.

Household practices are very different in style. Neither, they belong to the complete folk cultural practices nor to the classical art practices. Women in the household observe the men's practices and rituals of ecclesiastical versions of the rituals. At the same time they are and not part of exact *Vedic* rituals of men. Folk traditions of lower order of the society have their own version of the gods and myths. They domesticated the major deities, gods and goddesses like simple human beings of this earth, while coupling serious classical myths with their earthly version of the gods. Many times they created abusive parodies of major gods and goddess pantheon to offer a non official version to comment on those practices of hierarchy.

Women's practices are an amalgamation of the above both. They understand the official classical *Brahmanical* practices. Neither, they reject the practices of higher order of the families' to create the myths of parody, similar to Folk cultures, nor they want to disrespect their family traditions where their fabric of life and culture belongs to. They created a curious amalgamation of 'accepting and non-accepting'. They adjusted some bits with *Brahmanical* practices and borrowed a few from folk practices. Themes are taken from the *Brahmanical* practices. Direct expression and concept of subverting the higher order is from the folk element. They created parallel practices on the same major gods' pantheon of *Brahmanical* practices that are practiced by *Vedic* practices of men. They formulated the verses of colloquial language to supplement their requirements of worships in the form of sentences, songs, proverbs, etc.

At this juncture Akeel Bilgrami's¹⁶ discussion is not a misfit, about 'Being hostile and being indifferent'. Both men and women of same class and caste belong to one family or community and are not different to each other. As Akeel Bilgrami discusses, hostility is inclusive of involved respect in the approach. Probably the man-woman relation in the society is based on hostility and the relation between the orient and the occident, first world and the third world should be the example of indifference.

As Biswarup Sen defines the popular culture. Popular culture is a phenomenon of modern age and exists only within the context of contemporary industrial society. In the times of globalization and the migrations of Indians to different countries, this popular culture acts acrobatic acts. Such Indian popular culture has globalized and outcome of processing that indigenous culture through global filter is known as *Desi* culture.¹⁷ *Desi* is a lesser term to acquire the uneasy status which could be even a strategy or may not even be tolerated in the status of modernity. In the times of globalization and migrations inside or outside the country, household ritual practices have become roots of adherence to tie with their culture. Household culture is simultaneously becoming local and global. If the local subjects/culture articulate through global and the essence becomes '*Desi*', in that sense household rituals are falling into the tunnel of popular and '*Desi*' both, to become a base for the roots of the families and communities to connect with.

Social history of Andhra region—

Though this study focuses on contemporary times' practices and the scholarship, it is inevitable to look back into the textual and historical references, because these rituals are conventional

¹⁶ He discussed about this issue in Forum of Contemporary theory, Baroda.

¹⁷ As Biswarup sen defines the popular culture, popular culture is a phenomenon of modern age and truest sense can be said to exist only within the context of contemporary industrial society.

practices followed along with the faith of following the tradition. It is unavoidable to observe how far these rituals were followed in the previous times and how far they have been modified in the recent times. In the process thesis needed to compare the women's rituals with men's rituals also at some juncture. "Social History of Andhra region" authored by Suravaram Pratap Reddy¹⁸ is brought in for the references of previous eras' in every chapter of this study whether it is on rituals and practices or references on *Rangoli* designs or designs of ornaments.

History of Telugu language and its Grammar can be found from the period of Nannayyabhatt. He was a courtly priest of Eastern Chalukyan king Raja Raja Narendra who ruled from 1022 A.D to 1063 A.D. *Mahabharatam* was written in Telugu and Nannayya was the first poet to began that and later completed by Tikkanna and Errapragada. 11th century was almost the beginning of Grammar in Telugu literature. Suravaram Pratap Reddy in his book "*Andhrula Sanghika Charitra*" (Social History of Telugu) in 1949 compared both the Tsexts *Mahabharatam* in Telugu and *Sanskrit*. He observed that certain social practices that are written in Telugu *Mahbharatam* were not mentioned in original text written in *Sanskrit* language. He says some of the practices and customs are taken from the day to day practices of that time in to Telugu writing by these writers trio. That became a reference point to understand then practices. He quotes certain examples like- Arjun, one of the brothers amongst *Panchapandavas* married Subhadra his cousin. Marrying one's own cousin is the practice seen in Telugu land.

Chapterization-

¹⁸ Late Suravaram Pratap Reddy was adept at Telugu, Sanskrit, English, Parsi, Urdu and Hindi languages. He was an advocate by profession but left for becoming an editor of daily news papers. He was a patriot, extensively written about Epics, a poet and a researcher. This book is a collection of essays, he had written in a monthly magazine 'Sujatha' and 'Sobha' from 1930 to 1950 and published in 1949, received national Sahitya Academy award for this book.

I.First section

1.Chapter-Introduction in the first chapter discusses the context of this thesis study.

2.chapter-Rituals and worships in traditional practices (with reference to women's participation)-

This chapter looks into many of the family rituals that women alone participate and along with other members of the family, extended family members and friends. There are rituals performed at ceremonious occasions like weddings, *Upanayanam*-Thread ceremony, everyday in the personal home shrines of the houses, special rituals on the auspicious days and months, etc. '*Streela Vratalu*' are the ritual data and information given about the rituals followed by women and the data about those rituals is available in popularly found booklets. Discussions involved in this chapter look in to the documented examples also. There is a brief discussion on textual and historical references in this chapter are to enter the discussion rather than committing any discussion on the related issues. This chapter becomes a reference point to open up many issues for discussion involved in the further chapters to come.

II.Second Section-

Drawing Aesthetic pleasures from Rituals-

3.Chapter-Rangoli Practices-Understanding Rangoli on 'Visual and Public Culture' practices.

Understanding about this subject, *Rangoli*, is not restricted only to house hold ritual practices, the design styles and patterns as a holistic approach. This study analyzes the references of this name and practice at different spaces in the society such as 1.Visual culture-to discuss

household conventional practices and *Rangoli* designs on mass media images, 2.Public culture- to discuss *Rangoli* painting exhibitions as a case study to understand this category. In the process, re-investment of *Rangoli* in public space and how it is becoming an able subject to designate the 'cultural Identity' is also discussed. The discussion explains that *Rangoli* forms possess symbolic meanings. Direction of this chapter is to unveil the interaction between the public and the private spaces.

4.Body decoration in Customary practices.

Decorating the body is one such practice that is religiously followed on every ceremonious occasion and ritual celebrations. Body decoration is culturally integrated but not enjoyed the status on the knowledge analysis. This chapter is to talk about women's decorations and the un-surfaced meanings and issues involved in this practice- 1.How women are making the aspect of body decoration an expressive platform to fulfill their aesthetic sensibilities 2.Importance of acquiring the jewelry and the material as '*Stree Dhan*' 3.Subdued political tones to assert themselves and achieve an identity and social security on economic distribution through such materials' acquisition.

5.Prodigious Aesthetics-Day to Day-(Household) Aesthetics-

Our everyday activities like making *Rangoli*, cooking, packing, daily worships and decoration of the living space, seasonal celebrations, amateurish singing and playing indoor games, etc. are distinct from the celebrated art media like paintings and sculptures. These activities are the most easily dependable cathartic acts for many people. In contrast, actions prompted by everyday aesthetic judgments are often un-reflected. Sometimes they are like knee-jerk

reactions. This chapter takes a note of such un-noticed (neglected to notice) aesthetic pleasures.

III. Section-Spiritual pleasures in the Ritual recitations-

6. Chapter-*Saundaryalahiri*

This chapter consists of two sections of discussions and infers how spirituality is an important meaning for the women whether one is a middle class woman or a princely class woman.

First section is on the present day ritual practices of reciting *Saundaryalahari* verses mostly recited by women. Second section is on an illustrated manuscript of Adisankara's *Saundaryalahari* text and comparing the style, meanings and similarities of the illustrations' of the manuscript with other Indian painting styles to find the dating and patron of the manuscript and purpose of patronizing this manuscript in then specific socio-political situations.

IV-Section-Socio-Religious Politics -

7. Chapter-Strategic statements in the women's ritual worships.

There are subdued political statements wrapped up in religious authority of ritual worships. Religious politics are played under cover to make their presence felt against hegemonic dominations. That can be read on the keen observation of those statements made sometimes as symbolic visuals and at times as performances to make their potentials visible. Extensive and analytical discussions about any worship in this chapter do not mean that that discussion is pertaining only to that goddess worship and that particular case study as a holistic study. This is a general discussion about the various locations of women as a performer, receiver and on-looker in their ritual practices. There is a close fit and compatibility followed in between the

tradition and modernity, religious practices and secularism in the women's rituals. Some of the effective symbols in the women's rituals made the society to adapt the essence of those symbols to circulate in the society as a communicative message in mass media and Indian political parties.

8.Chapter-Writers on Culture & Identity Politics-

Western feminist writings-

This chapter deals with the writers Chandra Mohanty, Pratibha Parmar who counters the western feminist writings and says such discussions are to be challenged.

Analyzing Post Euro-American Feminist writers like Rajeswari Sunderrajan who speaks about the issues of *Sati* and European writers' reactions and critically analyzing Gayatri Spivak's words, 'doubly subaltern women' is part of this chapter' discussion.

There are supposed links between 'Identity' and 'Recognition' as explains by Charles Taylor.¹⁹ His explanations about our identity and arguments by contemporary feminism are noted in this chapter to discuss the premise of Recognition. Also noted down, Dipesh Chakrabarty's point about the postcolonial project of subalternity and the writings by third world researchers.

9.Chapter-Epilogue-

It is difficult to make any binary opposites on the discussions like male/female, minority/majority, self/other, etc. after processing all the data of rituals. If men are on the dominating positions women negotiate their available space skillfully, play the same dice coined by the patriarchy and bring out the results of their interest many a time. It is difficult to state

¹⁹ Charles Taylor "Politics of Recognition" from 'Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition. Ed. By Amy Gutmann, Princeton, Princeton University press, 1994.

that they remained in the voiceless recessive position even if they have not reached the dominant positions.

2.Chapter-

Rituals and Worships in traditional practices. (With Reference to women's participation)

Day to day rituals and worships are performed everyday in the personal home shrines of the houses where as special festivals and occasional rituals like ceremonious weddings, *Upanayanam*-Thread ceremony, etc. are performed on the auspicious days and months while making the special arrangements for the worships. Festivals and occasional celebrations that are involving different rituals practiced in coastal Andhra region are listed in this chapter. '*Streela Vrata kathalu*' is a category of rituals performed only by women. Such ritual's data and information is noted down from the popularly found booklets. Data given in this chapter also look in to the documented examples.

Textual References-

Reddy kingdom ruled from 1324 to 1434 AD. Hemadri has written a text on customs and traditions 300 years before their ruling. Reddy kings followed his writings, donated extensively and it was mentioned by contemporary poets of those rulers. Palkurki Somana, 15thc, has mentioned in *Panditaaradhya Charitra* that women were performing various rituals anticipating well being and desire to bear children.²⁰

Srinatha's *Kridabhiramam* mentions that observing good and bad omens is followed right from *Manu Smriti* or *Purana* days and that is continued till the day. Somasekhara Devudu was a Western Chalukyan king written '*Abhilashitardhachintamani*' in 1130 AD in *Sanskrit*. He listed

²⁰ Suravaram Pratap Reddy.

non-*Vedic* practices of south India.²¹ He wrote about Karnataka land practices, the region he belongs to, but that text is relevant for Telugu region's practices also. People used to take vows of specific gods and goddesses in their difficult periods, he writes, and they clear off later in the form of rites and rituals. *Abhilashardhachintamani* also gives references to the architecture and *Vastusastra* about the '*Vastupuja*' rituals that are to be performed while constructing the house or/and after the construction.

Historical references-

There is a stone inscription of Mauryan period dating back to 2nd century B.C in Dhauli elephant site in Orissa. Archaeological Survey of India has displayed a translation of the inscription at the site. The ninth rock edict mentions-[Fig.1.69]

- A) King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.
- B) Men are following various rituals.....
- C) But.....women are practicing many various vulgar and useless ceremonies.

These sentences in the inscription inform that there were rituals prevalent and practiced in ancient times by men and women. The women's rituals were not identified on the decent and intellectual practices. Probably the rituals continued for ages to come, right from the ancient period.

Men alone following rituals-

There are textual references on 'men-alone-following' rituals. Thread ceremony is the ritual of '*Agnikaryam*'-fire ritual of *Vedic Brahmanical* ritual where the men alone are involved. Son

²¹ Ibid.

receives '*Brahmopadesam*' from his father who becomes his first *Guru* to teach *Vedic* chanting-*Gayatrimantram* which is the first step to learn *Vedas* and to perform the *Vedic* rituals further. At the end of this ritual boy is supposed to leave home for *Gurukul* for further education where he would live with *Guru*-teacher who teaches him *Vedas*. He would be a student and a *Brahmachari* leading ascetic life at that place. Temple rituals are one category where men alone become priests,²² giving the chanting authority of *Gayatri mantra* to his son, performing fire god worship-*Agnikaryam* or *Havan* as a Daily *Sandhyavandan* ritual or on special ritual at marriages or *Upanayana vidhi*, offering worships and rituals to the forefathers, offering funerals to ones' own parents, offering *Abhishekam* ritual worship to Lord *Shiva* is performed only by men in Andhra region and women are only accompanies on that worship. Reciting *Mantrapushpam*, a process in the ritual worships, in the verses of *Purusha Suktam* is a lengthy recitation performed only by men, where as women follow *Sri Suktam* a simpler version. [Fig.1.92; to 1.100].

'*Rg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*' and '*Sama Veda*' are the ancient texts refer to the methods and procedures. People follow one of these methods as per their lineage. Vedic rituals had been translated in to *Puranas*. They have *Smritis* included in the later periods to come. '*Puja*(Worship), *Vrata*(Ritual), *Tirtha*(Pilgrimage), etc' are included in *Smriti* chapters.²³ There are numerous chapters in the *Puranas* mentioning the duties of wives and the glories of the chaste wife. Checking women from accepting asceticism of Budhists and *Svetambara* Jains is

²² R.C.Hazra, 'Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs.' Motilal Banarasdas, Delhi, 1975. One can find the information that women were temple administrators from Kumkum Roy's edited book but it is not evident anywhere that women priests were present at any point. There was one recent news paper information that there are women priests coming up to conduct the rituals like Satyanarayana katha in the present times.

²³ Ibid. Pg.228.

necessary, as per *Smritis*, which allowed more freedom to women and *Sudras*.²⁴ R.C.Hazra while talking about the *Brahmanical* elements in the *Puranic* teachings brings in the referred words “The control of women and *Sudras* was a difficult problem”,.... “Service to their husbands achieves highest attainments for women and for *Sudras* by serving the *Dwija*-the *Brahmin*.”²⁵

Regularly found rituals and festivals-

Seasonal festivals-

Indian calendar has 12 months and the Telugu pronunciation of those months are-*Chaitram*, *Vaisakham*, *Jeshtam*, *Aashadam*, *Shravanam*, *Bhadrapadam*, *Asweejam*, *Karteekam*, *Margasiram*, *Pushyam*, *Magham* and *Phalgunam*. There are 6 *Ritus*-seasons-*Vasantha Rutuvu*, *Greeshma Rutuvu*, *Varsha Rutuvu*, *Sarad Rutuvu*, *Hemantha Rutuvu* and *Sisira Rutuvu*. Time span of one *Ritu* is two months. For example, *Chaitram* and *Vaishkham* is the period of *Vasantha Rutuvu* and the sequence follows. Days and the months are calculated according to the rotation of the Moon and its movement. Month begins with new Moon day and first fifteen days are known as *Sudh Paksh* and second half begins along with full Moon day and next fifteen days are known as *Sukla Paksh* or *Krishna Paksh*. There are 14 days in every half of the month excluding new Moon and full Moon days. Most of the festivals are classified and organized according to the seasons, months and the *Sudha* or *Sukla Paksh* division. Beginning of the every new-year is a festival known as *Ugadi*.

***Ugadi*-**

²⁴ Ibid, pg.231.

²⁵ Ibid, Pg.237.

Ugadi or *Samvatsaradi* is a festival celebrated in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on the first day of first month *Chaitramasam* of Indian calendar. This festival falls usually at the end of March or beginning of April according to English calendar. People believe that one should taste all the six tastes on this day to keep the balance of every experience of forthcoming year. All the six tastes are represented by mango, tamarind, jaggery, salt, red(chilli)capsicum and *neem* flowers for bitter taste. *Neem* tree tender leaves and flowers have medicinal value. Its breeze is healthy and keeps the surroundings a fresh. *Neem* tree is supposed to be the symbol of prosperity representing goddess Laxmi if it is planted in the courtyards²⁶. Probably its medicinal qualities must be the reason for such faith developed. The six taste mix is the special offering to the gods and goddesses of the household shrines on '*Ugadi*' day. *Neem* twigs and leaves are hung at the door jambs on this day instead of mango leaves' twigs that are usually hung on rest of the festivals as auspicious symbol. [Fig. 1.1;1.2]

***Uttarayanam* -**

Months of April, May and June carry the auspicious dates for wedding, *Upanayanam* rituals, temple constructions and installing the dieties. There are auspicious dates for marriages in the rainy and winter seasons also but summer being the *Uttarayan* period-Sun is in his northern hemisphere, this half of the year is known as auspicious time and *Upanayanam* is performed only at this half of the year and it is an advised time for wedding rituals also. Procedure of the wedding ritual is followed on the *Vedic* rituals of '*Agnikaryam*'- worshipping fire. One of the few

²⁶ Women apply turmeric and Kumkum to *Neem* tree possibly on Fridays believing that tree represents goddess laxmi. *Peepal* tree represents Lord Vishnu and for few believe that *Peepal* represents Lord Shiva also. People take circumferences to *Peepal* tree. If the *Neem* and *Peepal* trees are together they are believed as Sri Laxmi and Narayana are together. Telugu Gemini television has a '*Subhalagnam*' program in every mornings to inform certain spiritual information. Vakkantham Chandramouli informed on 11th March 2011 that taking circumferences to *Peepal* tree is one of the rituals of childless women who is longing to have children. It seems its breeze is good for them.

rituals that bride is supposed to follow is worshipping the goddess *Gauri*. Hours before her wedding rituals to begin, she worships goddess *Gauri*. *Rukmini Kalyanam* an epic story narrates the wedding episode of *Rukmini* with lord *Krishna*. She performs the ritual of worshipping goddess *Gauri*. (That ritual time was informed to lord *Krishna* by her so that he can elope her against the wishes of her brothers.)

Goddess *Gauri* is represented by a grinding stone used in the kitchen on present day wedding rituals. Women pound the raw turmeric on the grinding stone on a pre-decided auspicious time and it is a gesture to begin the preparations for the auspicious celebrations like weddings or *Upanayanam*. Women take the pride to flag off the *Vedic* rituals through this ritual of pounding.²⁷

Mangala Gauri Vratam-

Month of *Ashadam* is not considered as an auspicious month in Andhra region unlike Tamilnadu region. Women follow many kinds of rituals in the month of *Shravanam*. Worshipping goddess *Gauri*-‘*Mangala Gauri Vratam*’ is one of the important rituals for the newly married girls. They are supposed to perform this ritual for five years, if possible in continuity or at least in discontinuity. It is performed on every Tuesday of *Shraavanam*. This worship is performed for the longevity of one’s husband. A small conical mount of wet turmeric represents goddess *Gauri*, placed in a dry coconut half in a plate or in a box to worship. Women are supposed to offer auspicious items like turmeric, *Kum-kum*, fruits, beetle leaves and nuts, soaked Bengal

²⁷ There is a convention that married women-Suhagan and young girls are believed as auspicious omen to invite or sendoff people who are coming home or leaving as a symbolic gesture. They are supposed to invite the new objects, vehicles, expensive house hold items while applying turmeric and Kumkum to those new objects.

gram, which is supposed to represent germination and growth, to other women-*Suhagan*²⁸ to conclude the ritual procedure. These are known as auspicious items regularly included in the offerings along other specific items for specific rituals. Young lady who ever is performing the mangala Gauri ritual would prepare '*Kajal*'-collyrium, a black ash on a metal knife and that is supposed to be the auspicious symbolic item of this ritual. Applying and offering of that *Kajal*-collyrium becomes an auspicious procedure of this ritual. After performing this ritual for five years women are supposed to conclude the ritual, known as '*Udyapanam*' a finale of conclusion. They collect the items of auspicious nature, small two lockets of *Managalasutram*, black beads, toe rings, blouse piece, sweet pan cakes made of rice flour and jaggery in a brass vessel and are given to a bride at her wedding time or it is preferable if one can give it to her own daughter at the time of her wedding time ritual-*Naagavalli* when she is given black beads-*Mangalasutram* by the groom.

Varalaxmi Vratam-

Worship of Goddess *Laxmi*-'*Varalaxmi Vratam*' is performed by the married women throughout their life for the prosperity of the family and longevity of their husbands. Women prepare the icon of goddess *Laxmi* by using coconut, turmeric, *Kum-kum*, flowers, blouse pieces or sarees as costumes, a pot or vessel as a base of the body and decorate that idol with their own jewellery. This ritual is performed by all the four casts of women. Women invite each other to visit their houses and gift each other the auspicious items. Goddess configurations, resulted appearances and formatting of the goddess form differ from each other's making. The decoration of the idol is made as per their creative sensibilities and the interest they possess. [Fig.1.4]

²⁸ Married women whose husband is alive.

Ganesh Chaturdhi-

This festival falls approximately at the end of August month or more frequently in the first half of September. It is the family festival to worship lord *Ganesha*. Children take pleasure in decorating the place and the pedestal where the *Ganesha* idol is installed. Pedestal roof is decorated with various flowers and garlands of Marigold, lotus flowers, garlands of mango leaves, various twigs of different leaves, etc. The worship place appears as if it is a bush of herbs. Lord *Ganesha* is worshipped with various kinds of leaves and foliage like, ficus, banyan, basil, jasmine, etc.²⁹ Elephant god is made to sit in between that bush. Children and the students also worship Goddess *Saraswati* by placing the books along with Lord *Ganesha*.³⁰

The story narrated as a part of ritual procedure that worshipping is supposed to remove all the hurdles and also by not worshipping might cause misunderstandings and hurdles in the path of every work.³¹ [Fig.1.3] [Fig.1.63]

Early 19th century brought in a great momentum on *Ganesh Chaturthi* festival. Freedom fighter Balgangadhar Tilak inspired the society for a nationalist-*Swadeshi* movement while making it a community festival. It is continued till today.

²⁹ Few decades back clay idols of Lord Ganesha were installed were not colored. It was followed religiously some time even if one had installed colorful plaster of paris Ganapati idol. Now a days colorless clay idols are not available. Recent years state government of Andhra Pradesh is insisting on environmental friendly materials to make idols and competitions are held for such makings.

³⁰ Baroda witnessed heavy floods in 1994 at the time of Ganesh Chaturthi festival. We were living in Baroda at that time and not able to reach the markets to buy the idol of Ganesha because of the water loggings in the city everywhere. I prepared a Ganesh idol using Bengal gram flour and turmeric because clay was also not available to make the form. I used tooth picks for tusks Kumkum and Kajal to get the facial features.

³¹ Story line says that Moon laughed looking at Lord Ganesha's big belly and Ganesha cursed him for that insult. The curse was who ever sees him would have to face the consequences and people would misunderstand on every deed in their life. Ganesha rescued Moon on his request and he was told that who ever worships him on Ganesh Chaturdhi day will be out of every hurdle and difficulty. Even lord Krishna could not escape the consequences when he saw moon in the milk vessel without worshipping lord Ganesha. He could come out of misunderstandings only by worshipping lord Ganesha. Many epic characters like Pandavas in Mahabharatam could come out of the problems by worshipping lord Ganesha.

Second half-*Krishna Paksh* of *Bhadrapada Masam* that comes 10 days after the *Ganesh* worship day are the inauspicious 15 days. Those days are considered as the days of ancestors and late fore-fathers are worshipped on these days.

Bhadrapada Laxmi Vratam-

Women worship Goddess *Laxmi* for 15 days starting from *Sudha Ashtami*-8th day before full Moon day of *Bhadrapadamasa*m to *Sukla Ashtami* of the same month that is 8th day of second half of that month after full Moon day. It is believed that Goddess *Laxmi* is born at this time. This is not a popularly known ritual.

Dushehara- festival of 'Ninenights'-

Asweejamasam is the month of goddess worship who demolished devil *Mahishasura* fighting with him for nine nights. Goddess is worshipped and believed that these days are ferocious nine nights of '*Navaratri*'. Mostly the worships are performed at the temples.³² Very few houses are seen installing the goddess with coconut and blouse piece on a vessel, known as *Kalasam*, to represent goddess symbolically. Few people at their home shrines would perform little more than the regular daily worships and recite the various verses of goddess elaborately.

Smt. Maheswari hails from coastal Andhra region but presently lives in Baroda for the last two decades. She religiously follows the worship of goddess on these nine nights in the similar way how it was practiced decades back at her parents place, Narsaraopet in coastal Andhra region.³³ She sprinkles nine varieties of grains in the mud filled cane basket or earthen pot on

³² Dushehara festival is differently worshipped in different regions. Durga puja is one of the important worships in Bengal and the whole state moves actively in various activities and decorations. Gujarat follows 'Garba' nine nights of dance. Navratri nine days are the days of goddess worship in the temples of south India, and Ramleela is celebrated in north India because it is believed Lord Rama won over Ravana in Lanka on this day.

³³ Her elder brother continued the family tradition living in their ancestral house where as her eldest brother and sisiter-in-law, working professionals, do not believe in following the similar method living Chennai.

the first day. All the nine days, both the times in the mornings and evenings, she worships the sprouts and saplings of grains as a symbolic form of goddess placed along with her home shrine. She recites *Lalithasahasranamam* three times a day on these days as a special worship. Conclusive day of tenth day, that is the festival day, *Dushehra* or *Vijayadasami*, those saplings are sent for immersion in a lake or river. [Fig.1.45] There is a practice recently seen amongst south Indian women that they get to gather in the mornings or afternoon hours of these nine days and recite goddess' *Slokas* like *Lalithasahasranamam*, *Khadgamala*, etc.

In Nellore, Kurnool, etc districts in down south of Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka, women arrange '*Koluvu*' at this time where as women of coastal Andhra region would follow this procedure of '*Bommala-Koluvu*' at the time of *Sankranti* comes in the month of January. *Koluvu* or *Bommalakoluvu* are the same in character only the difference is change of time in the following. Women collect the dolls and place them on the steps of various pedestals to worship them as goddess *Gauri* in this ritual.³⁴

The celebration of Nine-nights' festival '*Navaratri*' is little more different at *Telangana* region in Andhra Pradesh. *Telangana* regions starting from Adilabad, Nizamabad, Warangal, Hyderabad etc. celebrate '*Batakamma*' worship on every evening of '*Navaratri*' festival time. Goddess *Batakamma* is represented by *Tangedu Puvvu* in Telugu, Acassia, a yellow flower is symbolic flower of this festival. As per the information given by Sri V.B.N.Sarma³⁵, this festival was compiled by Bhaskaracharya in 18th century. *Batakamma*³⁶ is no other than the goddess *Peetambareswari*, goddess of purity who wears yellow costume, one of the sixty four

³⁴ Bommalakoluvu is discussed in detail in Sankranti festival.

³⁵ Sri V.B.N.Sarma is a doctorate in Astrology guided few students of Ph.D. One of his students is an ophthalmologist worked on the thesis how to detect eye sight problems through the science of Astrology.

³⁶ Batakamma must be a changed term of Batukamma, means, 'long live young lady' a blessing to a woman.

goddesses of *Sri Chakram*. Sri Bhaskaracharya a spiritual guru of this region established this ritual of worshipping *Batakamma* a couple of centuries back.³⁷ Everyday fresh flowers are collected and decorated in a plate in the evenings to worship '*Batakamma*'. A small lump of turmeric placed at the centre of that plate is the place for goddess '*Batakamma*'. Young girls and women come to gather at one house or at any public place like temple, lake in the evenings along with their decorated plates of flowers. This worship of '*Batakamma*' could be a folk tradition in character, must have adapted by *Brahmin* women also.³⁸ They conclude the ritual everyday by narrating a story of '*Batakamma*'. There are variations in the story also. A couple of stories are prevalent in the practice. Variety of rice dishes are made to offer the goddess at home before leaving for immersion in the waters.³⁹

Deepavali-

Festival of lights, *Deepavali* follows *Dushehra*. This festival is celebrated on new moon day falls at the end of *Asweejamasam* or the beginning of *Karteekamasam*. That falls approximately in the first half of November or at the end of October once in a while. Many lamps are lit on the evening of this festival day. People of Andhra Pradesh believe that lighting the lamps with cotton thread and sesame oil in earthen lamps would bring prosperity and wade away the evils of Saturn planet for the people of that house where these lamps are lit. Not only on that festival day evening, the whole month of *Karteek* of 27 days,⁴⁰ a couple of lamps are lit in the evenings and kept in the courtyards, at the home shrine and near the *Tulasi* plant. It is one of the major

³⁷ I received this information from V.B.N. Sarma, 82 years old, an astrologer and a learned scholarly person from Warangal.

³⁸ There are few popular books printed on these songs and one of the textile shop owners at Warangal city published booklets on popularly found Batakamma songs and gifted those booklets to those women who ever bought the sarees and new clothes for the Dushehara festival.

³⁹ Women decorate themselves wearing new clothes and jewelry as a part of celebration.

⁴⁰ Moon calendar indicates 27 days in Indian months calculation

festivals where the extended family prefers to come to gather to celebrate. Goddess *Laxmi* is worshipped on the evening hours of festival day.⁴¹

Dipa-Alika means a row of lamps. This is an autumnal feast attributed to the celebration of various divinities *Laxmi*, *Bhavani* and also in the honour of *Krishna's* slaying of the demon *Naraka* with the help of his wife *Satyabhama* and the release of 16000 maidens, his prisoners. In Bengal, this festival is known as *Kali Puja*, a mid night festival by feasting, gambling and sacrificing goats, sheep and buffaloes, as mentioned in the article 'History of *Diwali*'.⁴² It is the information collected and written in early 20th century.⁴³ Buffalo worship is observed in

⁴¹ A plate is specially decorated as 'Pujathali' with the symbols of temple ascribed to Laxminarayana, the Sun, the Moon, hanging lamps, Sankha, the conch, the mace, the lotus, the wheel, the Swastik, the Sesha or thousand hooded cobra, the cow's foot print, the sparrows which indicates the abundance and forth coming prosperity of sale of grains and crops, the mango, the Bel (wood apple) tree and the foot-prints of goddess Laxmi. These are known as auspicious symbols to be decorated on the plate used for the worship of goddess Laxmi, symbol of prosperity. The tradition of decorating the plate of worship is seen traditionally in North India and it is a rare practice but presently popular in South India also.

⁴² Gode.P.K. mentions that B.A.Gupte observed greater number of folk stories correspond to the higher stage of development in the society.

⁴³ One of the stories based on historical data is king Vikramaditya of Ujjain, a scion of Gupta dynasty was crowned on 16th of Aswin that is Asweejamasam, next day of Saratpurnima, full moon day of that month projects 16 kinds of illuminations. Next day of this full moon day is considered as a new years day in Indian calendar of north India. There are multiple causes for the celebration of this festival as mentioned by Mr.Gupte, change of season, the death of the rice crop harvest, the time to manure the soil for second crop, the Sun reaching Libra, seventh of sign of Zodiac, the coronation of Lord Rama, etc. P.K.Gode further listed down the westerners' reflections on this festival. E.W.Hopkins mentioned in his article on 'Hindu festivals and fasts' in the encyclopedia of religion and ethics, 1912, vol.V, classifies Hindu festivals. Deepavali is classified as one separate section. According to Hopkins festivals are classified in to I. Ancient festivals, 1. Moon festival (Seasonal), 2. Four month celebration (Seasonal), 3. ceremony of first fruits, 4. Soma sacrifice, 5. Consecration ceremony, 6. Horse sacrifice, 7. Solistice feast, 8. Twelve nights celebration, 9. Sacrifices at Tirthas by pilgrims.

II. Modern festivals- These festivals are new in effect though old in general character. Modern festivals are self sufficient to devoid of priestly rituals.

III- Lamp festival- The same festival is held in honour of different gods. Thus the lamps are lighted in every direction. Floating lamps are left in the river. Some celebrate this festival for Lord Vishnu or Laxmi or others may celebrate for Lord Shiva or his consort Parvati and her various forms.

IV- Spring festival of North India- (As per P.K.Gode)- Some of the modern festivals are sectarian and seasonal. Many of the festivals must not have been originated from religious rites of ancient times. They must have been formed on the festive and feasting moods and must have worked as the unifying elements and events in the society amongst different groups, casts and races. Certain festivals like Deepavali are celebrated by many communities but there are few differences in the celebrations of different religious sects. For example, Jain community, as per P.K.Gode, celebrate this festival when Mahavira attained Moksha, the enlightenment. The eighteen confederate kings and others who were present at this moment

Hyderabad on Diwali festival time, and recently political groups use banners to Diwali greetings while painting buffalo on the banners.

instituted an illumination saying “Since the light of intelligence is left, let us make an illumination of material matter.”(As per Kalpasutra, sacred book of east, XXII 266). Being a mercantile community, Jains assign a special celebration for worshipping goddess Laxmi, goddess of prosperity at this festival time as this is the beginning of a new year. New accounts books of business are opened on this day writing first word as ‘Sri’ representing goddess Laxmi. G.E.gerini records the Siamese festivals of greater India. They are traceable either to Hinduism or Buddhism. One can find the Buddhist Deepavali is traceable somewhat on the Hindu or Brahmanical celebration.

Antiquity of Deepavali festival-

As per P.K.Gode’s references about Hemachandra’s Desimala that text mentions a Desi word Jakkaratri that is ‘Yaksharatri’ and equates it with Deepavali or Deepalika. If this explanation is dependable he says, we can take the antiquity of this festival to Vtsayana’ Kamasutra that mentions ‘Yaksharatri’ in its list of festivals. That was performed on the new moon night, beginning of Kartikamasam, as Deepavali is performed today also. Bengal region celebrates goddess Kali puja on this new moon festival night. Goddess is Kali is worshipped on new moon nights and goddess Laxmi on full moon days as the conventional understanding goes. Bali Chakravarty of nether world ascends throne on this day.

Neelmat Puran composed in Kashmir dated 500 to 800 A.D described in detail about Deepmala festival illuminations and various festive celebrations. The play Naganand by Sri Harsha of Kanauj dynasty, 606 to 648 A.D. refers to this festival. Somadevasuri in his Yasashtilakachampu composed during the reign of Rashtrakuta king Krishna of Manyakhed described Deepotsav in 959 A.D.The astronomer Sripati refers to Deepavali in 1030 A.D. Hemachandra of Gujarat refers to Jakkaratri and equates with Deepavali festival in 1088 to 1172 A.D. Abdul Rahman, 1100 to 1200 A.D., Mulatan refers to Deepavali in Punjab in his Apabrahmsa work. A Kannada inscription of 1119 A.D. mentions that king Tribhuvanamalla of Chalukyan reign gifted Neeleswar Dev for his services on new moon festive day. Gnaneswar, a saint from Maharashtra refers to illuminations of Deepavali festival in 1290 A.D. Prabandhachintamani of 1305 A.D. of Gujarat region refers to Deepavali night. Nicoloi Conti, an Italian traveler who visited Vijayanagara courts in 1420 or 1421 A.D. described the festivals such as Varshapratipada, Mahanavami-Dushehara, Deepavali, Holi, etc. were celebrated in Vijayanagara dynasty. Aini-I Akbari of Abdul Fazl describes Deepavali festival. There are references about this festival from 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th century European travelers and the references are listed down by P.K.Gode.

Naagulachavithi-

Fourth day after *Deepavali*, that is *Sudh Chaturdi* of *Karteekamasam*, is the day to worship snake god *Subrahmanyeswara* for Andhra region women and that day is called '*Naagulachavithi*'. Few of *Telangana* region people worship this god on fifth day of the first half of *Shravanamasam*, and that day is called '*Naagapanchami*' usually falls in the month of August. Few people would not follow this ritual if it is not followed in the family lineage. Women worship this god, whether that is on *Naagulachavithi* or *Naagapanchami*, to seek blessings of lord *Subrahmanyeswara* for their children's health and well being. It is also believed that lord *Subrahmanyeswara*, a warrior god is supposed to help the work done in a faster way. Iconography of *Subrahmanyeswara* is king Cobra and he is also known as *Shanmukha*, *Kartikeya*, second son of Lord *Siva*.

Documentation-4th of November of 2005 was the day of *Nagualacahavithi*. There is a small snake hive within the compound wall of municipal water supply tank of Hyderguda region of Hyderabad. There is a small shrine also present there, approximately of two feet height and an icon of twin snakes coupling together made of stone installed in that shrine. People offered worships to that shrine along with the hive. Women reach the hive to pour milk into the hive hole with that faith that *Subrahmanyeswara* is none other than a cobra who lives in the hives. They collected all the auspicious things of worship, fruits, flowers, '*Prasad*'-offerings prepared with sesame, jaggery, rice flour, etc. It is the worship where Non-vegetarians offer eggs to the snake god. It seems in East Godavari district of coastal Andhra region, eggs were offered by *Brahmin* community women also to worship this god almost 2 to 3 decades back.

Three school teachers Sarada, Indira and Bharatamma visited the hive in their school recess morning hours and offered worships. Sarada is a music teacher. She recited Slokas in the tune of reciting the *Vedic Mantra* recitation. They followed a fasting on that day. One of the processes of ritual of this god's worship is keeping a fasting for a day. Next day a *Brahmachari* (*Dwij-Brahmin* boy whose thread ceremony-*Upanayanam* is performed but not married) would be invited home in the name of *Subrahmanyeswara* and offered a feast. Nannapaneni Koteswaramma is another worshiper at the hive, had put Rangoli of lotus design with rice floor in front of the hive, lighted 365 cotton threads equating 365 days in a year, in an earthen lamp and offered '*Prasadam*' to everybody around. Surisetty Yashoda Devi reached that place to accompany her niece who was worshipping. She sang many songs at the hive to add to her niece's worship. There were two men Mr. Purushottam and Mr.Subrahmanyam came to worship the snake god because they have taken a vow to fulfill. There were around 30% men are seen at this time but that was not the number 3 to 4 decades back.⁴⁴ Men also followed the simple procedure of non-vedic ritual worshipping at the hive what the women followed. [Fig.1.5; to 1.13]

Textual sources on *Naga* Cult-

Sanskrit term '*Naga*' means serpents. In myths, legends, scriptures and folklore the term *Naga* refers to all kinds of snakes. '*Varuna*' *Vedic* god of storms is considered as the king of *Nagas-Nagaraja*.⁴⁵ All *Nagas* are considered to be offspring of sage Kashyapa. In *RgVedic Samhita* the serpent appears some times as a demonical creature and at times as a divine being. Various

⁴⁴ One young boy rode his mother on a two wheeler to that place but refused to follow her to the small mound where the hive is and did not want to offer the worships.

⁴⁵ In a popular understanding Nagaraja is a mythified god who can fly and disappear.

passages of *Yajur Veda* and *Athar Veda* pay homage to Serpents. *Griha Sutra*, Epics and *Puranas* refer to serpents as malign deities. Most of the scholars agree that by the *Sutra* period (600-700 B.C) *Naga* worship had become part and parcel of *Vedic* religion.⁴⁶

Sankranti, Uttarayan or Pongal-

[Fig.1.14; to 1.27]

This festival falls on 14th of January to celebrate the crop reaping season.⁴⁷ Various celebrations are packed at various levels at this festival time. Celebrations of children, women and men are different from each other and there are common family and social festivities. The festivity moods of *Sankranti* would begin a month in advance around 15th of December on the onset of *Dhanurmasam* and that is the month to worship *Sri Maha Vishnu*. Girls make '*Gobbemma*' known as goddess *Katyayini*⁴⁸ or *Gauri* made of cow-dung and place them in the *Rangoli* designs for the whole month starting from 15th of December to *Sankranti* festival day in coastal Andhra region where as in Telangana region women make *Gobbemma* only on the three days of festival time 13th, 14th and 15th and put them on the door step.

Temples of lord *Vishnu* would perform special worships for this whole month. 13th of January is the day before *Sankranti* is called '*Bhogi*'. In the early morning hour, people make fire with all

⁴⁶ J.N.Benerjee

⁴⁷ Once in a while that falls on 15th of January also.

⁴⁸ According to Gopinath Rao, "Elements of Hindu Iconography" vol.II, partII, Indological book house, Varanasi, Delhi.1971., *Katyayini* has ten arms,partaking of the natureof the 3 gods, *Brahma*,*Vishnu*, and *Siva*, *Jatabhara* on head tucked up the crescent moon, resembles the splendor of the fullmoon, She is known as '*Neelakuntala*, *Deerghakuntala*, *Sugndhakunatala*, etc. because of her long hair. The color of her body is of *Atasi* flower, freshness of youthful appearance represented killing *Mahishasura*. As per his discussion *Mahisasuramardhini* and Goddess *Katyayini* are the same.

Another discussion says that *Katyayini* is one of the goddess of *Nava Durga* and she is the daughter of *Katyayini Rishi*.

the waste material of wood, hay, etc. Lord *Vishnu*'s procession would take place making him to be seated in a palanquin in few temples.⁴⁹ On 14th of January Sun god changes his direction from southern hemisphere to northern hemisphere. That time is known as '*Sankramanam*'. Sun moves in northern hemisphere from January 14th to approximately 16th or 17th July. Northern hemisphere movement of Sun is called *Uttarayanam* and the southern hemisphere movement is called *Dakshinayanam*. One of the reasons of celebrating *Sankranti* festival is for the change of Sun's direction and moves nearer to our part of earth. Women make a *Rangoli* design of Sun's chariot on *Uttarayan* day in their courtyards. *Mala Dasara*, name of that particular caste and profession, would come to every house singing Lord *Vishnu*'s chanting and lady of the house would offer him rice and grains as alms. There is a change in the direction of wind also happens at this time and that is celebrated and enjoyed by young boys by flying the kites.⁵⁰ Rice crop brings heart filling happiness to the farmers at this time. Festive recipes include the newly reaped rice of that season.

Southern Andhra Pradesh districts Nellore, Kadapa, etc follow a different tradition at this time. It is believed that every year Sun travels on a different animal as *Vahana* while changing the direction. Women collect that clay animal form, known as '*Sankurumayya*', from the potter, install at home to worship. Women of Krishna, Godavari, Guntur, districts would put up '*Bommalakoluvu*'. All the dolls and the toys of various kinds are collected and are gathered up to put on the pedestals or stands and worshipped as goddess *Gauri*. The practice of putting the

⁴⁹ I have witnessed the procession of lord Vishnu in Rajuhmundry when I visited that place for my documentation during Sankranti time in January 2006.

⁵⁰ Gujarat celebrates kite flying on this Uttarayan day and it is a major festival and people celebrate with lot of fun and frolic. Every region celebrates this festival with different names, Tamilnadu calls it as 'Pongal' festival and their way of celebration differs a bit from Andhra region.

dolls for worship would begin when the daughter is born in the family. Those dolls are daughter's property and she is supposed to carry along with her to her in-laws house after her marriage. It is believed that every year a new toy is supposed to enter the worship pedestal. Women are becoming agents in encouraging the craft works in the process of collecting and in the name of '*Koluvu*' or '*Sankurumayya*' to acquire the craft works. Women bring out many of their creative abilities at this juncture and they decorate the dolls and arrange with special interest.⁵¹ Few women they even stitch the dolls according to the theme thought over for the *Bommalakoluvu* of that year. For example if they choose the theme of a garden and a park where children are playing or even the themes from mythology, they create the mini model of that context and recreate those settings. This worship of '*Bommala Koluvu*' continues for three days and women invite other women to visit their house. It is a process in continuity and reciprocation. Their ritual is complete only by offering auspicious items like turmeric, *Kum-kum*, fruits, beetle nuts and leaves, soaked gram, etc to other women who are invited home. New crops sugarcane, sesame, and jaggery are also added in the offerings at this time.

Berry fruit is abundantly available in this season and this fruit, it seems, has a quality of attracting the Sun rays, as explained in one of the commentators in one of the Telugu channels on *Sankranti* day of January, 2011. Children are given a special blessing by pouring this fruit on their heads by elder women on '*Bhogi*' day. That ritual is known as '*Bhogipallu*' to keep out all the bad evils away from children. This is a ritual similar to '*Nazarutarna*.'⁵²

⁵¹ A television channel given an information by a commentator on 14th of January 2011 that there is a method of putting up the dolls thematically on the pedestals, for example, second step should be arranged on water animals and related toys and the last step should be with the toys on Srimannarayana, etc.

⁵² They take the mix of raw rice, berry fruits, coins and flowers etc in the hands and circularly rotate it over the children in clock wise and anti clock wise directions. That act is known as '*Nazar utarna*' warding off bad evils away from the children. Many women are invited home from this ritual to perform and it is followed on 13th of

On 15th of January that is the day after the *Uttarayan* day known as '*Kanuma*'. Animals are decorated on the third day [Fig.1.44] and they are worshipped because they are the main help for the agriculture and animal husbandry. The animals are decorated with turmeric, *Kum-kum*, flowers, etc after giving them bath. Decorated ox with flowers and colorful clothes known as '*Basavanna*' brought to beg the alms. They train the animal how to nod to their heads for their singing along with musical instruments '*Dhol*', pipe, etc. [Fig. 1.70; to 1.73]

Documentation at Alugubilli village near Vijayanagaram –

Sankranti of January 2006- Huge and big designs of *Rangoli* were laid out in the courtyards of every house right in the early hours of that day. Agricultural labour and workers, *Harijan* community men for asking alms went door to door along with the Sun rise singing songs of gods and goddess in the colloquial tunes. Women of the houses gave them grains and sometimes even some currency coins. A priestly *Brahmin* visited every house of that village in the morning hours. Rice grains, few vegetables, pulses and few coins, fruits and flowers were offered him for the purpose of worshipping fore fathers. Few farmers converted their religion to Christianity. Those farmers' houses kept both, *Hindu* gods and Christ pictures at their homes for daily worship. They too followed the same ritual of offering the priest in the name of fore fathers at the same corner where their home shrine is and the images of both *Hindu* and Christian gods are put-up. They offered all the *Hindu* ritual process of offering to Christ also as they offered to *Hindu*⁵³ gods.

January that is earlier than *Uttarayan* day. If one could not perform on this day would certainly perform it on 14th or 15th of proceeding that day.

⁵³ I am using the term *Hindu* to indicate a general understanding about those follow Brahmanical worships in this study. The community of this village also worship folk goddesses like *Pentamma* along with Brahmanical iconography.

The farmer' community women worship a big tree trunk out side the village boundary on 'Kanuma' that is on 15th of January. Women wear new sarees that day after keeping that as a special offering to that goddess. That goddess of tree is known as 'Pentamma' temple. That tree worship looks like a totem worship of this village. They had a community get together on that evening by conducting a street play near that tree trunk by a professional group invited by them from a nearby village. *Brahmins* houses are very far away from the vicinity of these *Harijan* and farmer's houses.

***Savitri-Gauri Vratam*(Ritual)-**

Women commence 'Savitri-Gauri Vratam'on 16th of January⁵⁴ immediate and next day of *Sankranti* festival. This worship is followed for 9 days every year and performed for nine years.

The ritual of everyday is initiated by a priest in the morning hours with a *Vedic* procedure but the ritual is formally concludes only by singing songs by women. Every day they offer goddess different offerings like 'Pongal, Chana-Bengalgram, Payasam, etc as per the procedure communicated through the ritual songs. Varieties of flowers are brought by every women and elaborate worship is performed. Women are supposed to apply *Parani*⁵⁵ on the feet along with other costumes of regular decorations on such special rituals. Kalluri Rama and Subbalaxmi of Tenali town performs *Savitri-Gauri* ritual. When one enters both the houses at the ritual time to visit, one finds the difference in sensibilities of arranging and how both the women are drawing

⁵⁴ Some times date of Sankranti-Uttarayan falls on 15th of January then the Savitri-Gauri worship falls on 17th instead of 16th of January.

⁵⁵ Parani is made of mixing lime and turmeric of proper proportions to get the right red color. That is applied on the feet as lines surrounding the feet and on the feet. Yellow turmeric applied feet along with red color lines applied upon would enhance the beauty of the feet along with the anklets. Application of Parani is believed to be auspicious. It is applied on the feet of bride and the groom's feet also.

different aesthetic pleasures. Setting the platform for the ritual is different at both the women's houses. Rama enjoyed arranging scenes of *Ramayanam* that she made toys out of clothes along with this ritual as *Sankranti Koluvu*. Subbalaxmi took pleasure in performing the ritual along with many women moving on the ritual platform. Rama took pleasure in recreating Epic Ramayana in her imagination as if that is a dolls play.

Josyuala Parvati, on 27th January 2011 concluded the ritual of *Savitri-Gauri Vratam*. She lives in Malkajigiri area of Hyderabad. She used to get the idols previously from the potter's house for the worships. Because of the increasing distances and the increase of the cost her aunt Yanamandra Saraswati prepares idols for her bringing clay from a farming land at her backyard. Those idols appear like small lumps with minimum indication of bend for facial features and a bend at the back. There are 9 idols of Lord *Shiva's* family-*Ganapati*, *Shanmukha*(*Kartikeya*), *Siva*, *Parvati*, *Nandikeswara*, *Brungeswara*, *Yamaraj*, *Chitrugupta* and *Panchanga Brahmin*. She immersed those idols in a well at nearby house.⁵⁶

Maha Sivaratri-

February is the month of *Maha Sivaratri* festival and lord *Shiva* is worshipped on this day. People keep the fasting and visit the temples of Lord *Shiva*. Twelve months of Indian calendar end with *Phalguna Masam* and the full moon day of this month, approximately falling in the month of March, is the festival of *Holi* but it is celebrated only in Telangana regions but not in the coastal Andhra regions. [Fig.1.91]

⁵⁶ Women go to rivers and tanks for the immersion if it is not inconvenient on distances.

Regular worships-Everyday worships in the home shrines are one regular ritual of lighting the lamp and at times certain houses have decorations at the doorjambs and hanging pumpkins at the doors as good omens hung on the walls. [Fig.1.56; to 1.60].

Occasional rituals-

There are worships celebrated like festivals and take place occasionally when the specific wishes are fulfilled or after the wedding rituals, etc. *Satyanarayana Katha* of lord *Vishnu* worship [Fig.1.65], Lord *Shiva's Abhishekam*, etc are such kind of ritual worships. Lord *Hanuman* is another deity with or without any reason of specificity and for the sake of feel good factor, people perform the worships. Lord *Hanuman* is worshipped with beetle leaves and that is the most preferred worship of this god. [Fig.1.64]. Goddess *Santoshimata* worship is one popular worship and women perform it on Fridays. They take the 'owe' of five to eight weeks.⁵⁷ Previously *Sheetala Devi* goddess worship was very prevalent to get rid of small pox and chicken pox in earlier days when those contiguous diseases were very prevalent almost 4 to 5 decades back. Presently this worship is seen less because that disease is also seen rarely and eradicated. There is a temple of *Santoshimata* at *Koti* area of Secunderabad. The priest in that temple is from Rajasthan, Siva Kumar Vora and his wife Seema Vora actively conducting the Friday worships of the people in the temple. He recites the ritual story of *Santoshimata* in Hindi in a mike to be audible loudly and the Telugu women also listen to the story religiously whether they understand that story or not. Because listening to the ritual story is one must procedure to conclude the ritual of the owe they accepted. Men are also seen taking the 'owe' of that ritual of *Santoshimata* ritual in the present times. Couple of decades back such rituals were not to be

⁵⁷ Who take the owe of Santoshi Mata will not eat sour tasting food items on specific Fridays. Children are fed on the conclusive day of this ritual.

followed by widows and it was believed so. One can see the change in present days that widows are also participating in these rituals.⁵⁸ [Fig.1.46]

There is one more ritual seems to be a practice from Tamil Nadu region and spread very fast recently amongst Telugu women also. That is the worship of *Mangadu Kamakshi*. Women get together in the afternoons of Tuesdays at 3 P.M to 4.30 P.M in *Ashadamasam*(around July) and *Pushyamasam*(January). Every Tuesday has its *Raahukalam* time counting from 3 to 4.30 P.M. supposed to be the powerful worship time for this goddess. The whole worship is performed only through certain songs that would offer the process of worship in sequence giving bathing, decorating the costume and ornaments to offer food 'Prasad'. The songs are written in many *Kritis* of Carnatak music. Only milk is offered as 'Prasad' on this worship. Hyderabad *Skandagiri Durga* temple has become popular for that *Raahukaala Puja* in present days. [Fig.1.61; 1.62]

Gode.P.K studied and⁵⁹ wrote about the 'Indian Cultural History'. He opens the topic mentioning "All the festivals have a unifying influence in social and national life." In India we have quite a few variety of religious and semi religious festivals celebrated.

Streela Vrata Kathalu-

⁵⁸ There is a Kanaka Durga temple at Ameerpet area of Hyderabad, has Sheetala Devi and Santoshimata shrines also in the same complex. Santoshimata is carved in marble stone statue and granite for Sheetala Devi and Durga Devi.

⁵⁹ P.K.Gode studies-Vol.5, Studies in Indian Cultural History Vol.II by P.K.Gode. Published by Prof. P.K.Gode collected works publication committee, Pune. 1960. He further brings in references that according to RgVeda the Hindu festivals can be roughly classified as-1.festivals originating from R'tus or seasons-Vijayadasami, Deeapvali, Makarasankranti, Vasantapanchami, etc. 2.Historical festivals-Sree Ramanavami, Dushehara, Sri Krishna Jayanti, Hanumatjayanti(probably this category should be titled as Epic festivals rather than historical festivals.) 3.Saiva festivals-Mahasivaratri. 4.Vaishnava festivals-Nrisimha Jayanti,Mahaekadasi,Ananta Chaturdasi,VaikunthaEkadasi,Dolotsav, etc. 5.Kautimbika festivals-mangala gauri,(Varalaxmi Vratam),Guru Purnima.6. Sakta festivals-Gauri utsav, Devi Navaratri.7.Saura festivals-Rathasaptami.8.Ganapatya festivals-Ganesh Chaturthi.

There are certain rituals performed only by women under their authority and surveillance. Men are occasionally made part of those rituals. Those rituals and worships are known as '*Streela Vratulu-Nomulu*', which has different sections.⁶⁰ [Fig. 1.48; 1.49; 1.50]

First section-

Rituals are performed on different days, for example Sundays that falls on new moon day or Sundays of *Maghamasam* that is approximately in February. Then rituals of other week days like Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, new moon and full moon day rituals, second and third days of moon calendar days that are known as *Vidiya/Dvitiya* and *Tadiya/Tritiya Vratam*, etc are listed in this section. Donating lamps for appeasing *Navagrahas*-nine planets is also one of the rituals followed.

Story narration is an important procedure to conclude the ritual. Most of the stories would follow a similar pattern. For example there is a ritual of offering sixteen varieties of fruits to sixteen different women. All the fruits are to be chosen with care. A complacent king's wife

⁶⁰ There are two booklets published on this subject that I have come across. One is by Smt. Bommakanti Rukmini published in 1996, and another is by late Marisetty Nageswara rao seems to be later version and date is not given. Both are published by Gollapudi Veeraswamy Son, Seetarama Book depot, Rajahmundry-1 and contain the procedures, types and varieties of rituals. There is a claim written on the book cover of second one that this book is well received by women for the last 50 to 60 years and a claim mentioned at the end by the publisher that they procured all the patent rights from late S. Appalaswamy. First book cover has only women images. A young lady is performing the rituals in front of the Tulasi plant with folded hands an older lady is instructing the younger one and preceding the ritual. There is one goddess image at the back looking down and blessing both from the clouds. She is probably goddess Parvati, wearing Sivalinga in her neck along with lot of jewellery. There is a stone sculpture of goddess form at the background. The artist name P.S. Achary is mentioned on the cover page of first book. Second book is thinner and cover page has Lord Vishnu's bust size image set in the background of blue color of water bubbles indicating that he is standing in the great oceans-Ksheerasagaram. Inset picture depicts that a woman is sitting in front of Tulasi plant and performing a ritual. She is offering coconut halves, beetle leaves, bananas, flowers and offering Haarathi-camphor flame. A lamp is lit in the niche of Tulasi pot. There is an ascetic image, could be a preist preceding the ritual. Artist of the image is unknown. Title of the book is "Pracheena Sampadaya Streela Vrata Kathalu"-Ancient traditional practices of rituals of women. Back side of the cover page has nine varieties of offerings made at worships-Vandanam, Atmanivedanam, Archana, Sravanam(listening), keertanam(singing), Smaranam-chanting, Paadasevanam, Dasyam(slavery), Sakhyam(friendship), Dhoopanivedanam. Ambika Darbar bathi has advertised its product with its incense sticks as dhoopanivedanam. First book has 197 rituals list without any classification where as second book has 117 rituals divided in to 3 sections.

chooses all the sixteen varieties to offer at a time ambitiously. She suffered the consequences because she gifted such fruits that are unfit for consuming. At the same time a minister's wife did the ritual with utmost care and commitment and enjoyed every fruit of life, as per the ritual story narration. Another ritual explains about the complacency of a *Brahmin* woman and the consequence of bad results she suffered. Some of the ritual stories explain about the lower and working class women who perform the rituals and demonstrated the people around, how that woman attained the '*Moksha*'-final attainment because of her committed '*Bhakti*'- performing the rituals with sincerity and respecting the orders of the elders. A story of a washer woman whose name is *Poli* went to heaven alive because of her committed faith in god and commitment in performing the procedure of the ritual. Women of every caste would follow the rituals with same procedure.

Most of the narrations would explain that lord *Siva* explains to goddess *Parvati* about the bad ritual performance, the cause for the suffering and how they should perform it again to get away from that trouble. Goddess *Parvati* comes to those people's rescue, as an old lady wearing human costumes and advises the victim how to come out of that problem by performing or re-performing the ritual. There is a dramatization in the plot of the ritual stories.

Such rituals of women do not follow any specification of *Vedic* recitations. These story narrations are narrated for and by themselves. Mostly these ritual stories are revolved around the women's emotional attachment and their care for the family. Sometimes the stories explain very frightening themes also.

Second section-

This section's ritual stories are little more pleasant stories than the first section and deals with all the rituals named after *Gauri*. The themes of the rituals could be on *Sringara*, *Alamkara*, prosperity, happy married life, health related rituals like vegetables are named after *Gauri* such as *Mulaga*(Drum stick) *Gauri*, *Kanda*(Elephant foot) *Gauri*, *Gummadi*(Pumpkin)*Gauri*, *Velaga*(Wood Apple) *Gauri*, *Regula*(Berry fruit) *Gauri*, *Chikkulla*(Beans) *Gauri*, *Bacchali*(a kind of Green leaf vegetable) *Gauri*, *Uppu*(Salt) *Gauri*, etc. Fruits are worshipped as *Gauri* and distributed among the women as auspicious omen and there could be 16 or even 1000 variety of fruits involved. [Fig.1.35; 1.36] Turmeric, *Kum-kum*, sandal, flowers, bangles etc. are named after *Gauri* and given every day to one woman or some times to many women as per the different ritual procedure. This section deals with all those aspects of happy life and to avoid or to overcome the hurdles, troubles. There are certain rituals stories narrated that by performing those rituals one can change their communication skills, can gain confidence in dealing and how to be pleasant in conversation.

Third section-

Ksheerabdidvadasi-This is a ritual to worship goddess *Tulasi* on 12th day after *Deepavali* in the first half of *Karteekamasam*. This is marrying goddess *Tulasi* to lord *Krishna*. His image or figure icon is kept at the *Tulasi* pot to worship. In coastal Andhra region women alone perform this ritual. In western India in the places like Baroda, follows this ritual on 11th day of first half of *Karteekamasam* after *Deepavali* that is on *Ekadasi*. This is a community festival performed in a big way in the temples. In North India this ritual is followed on Full Moon day of *Karteekamasam*. Both men and women participate in this ritual. [Fig.1.47]

Lord Shiva's *Vahana Nandi* is named after one of the rituals '*Nandikeswara Nomu*' is performed for wealth. *Bilvadala Vratam*-(worshipping god with wood apple leaves) and a ritual of *Annadanam*-gifting food, *Chitragupta* ritual for reaching heavens (paddy is given to the elder brother or *Grama Karanam*-Village administrator in this ritual), Gifting green vegetable (*Totakura*), paddy to a *Brahmin* everyday are the rituals followed aspiring to avoid troubles on acquiring daily food. There are rituals that would direct the worshipper for gifting dairy products also. Few of the rituals are performed for the content feeling, to increase the natural perfumery of the body scents by gifting turmeric, sandal, flowers, gifting beetle leaves and nuts to a couple(wife and husband) everyday for one's own happy and togetherness of marital life, gifting toiletry kits to the women as a part of ritual for her own beauty and compactness, worshipping goddess *Parvati* with 13 flowers everyday aspiring all the 13 pleasures of life like beauty, marital happiness, good children, broadmindedness, *Moksha prapti*, etc. *Savitri-Gauri Vratam* also known as *Bommala Nomu* performed immediately after and next day of *Sankranti* that is on 16th of January(that we referred in the festival section while discussing *Sankranti* festival.) This ritual was performed by Goddess *Parvati*, as per the story, to achieve *Sivasanidhyam*, proximity of *Shiva* and *Ashtha Aiswaryam*-eight kinds of prosperities. There are rituals that explain daughter-in-law can convince her in-laws to visit her parents after performing that specific ritual. Worshipping Sun and Moon to remove the poverty of the family, rituals also to get blessed not to get step mother's nagging. There are moral stories involved in the ritual stories explains good conduct and behaviour. There is a ritual that narrates, by visiting Lord *Venkateswara* at *Tirupati* may not gift as much prosperity compared to worshipping Lord *Shiva* on Monday. There is a ritual practiced on the reference to *Tantric* practices also. That

ritual story narrates the incident that goddess *Parvati* and lord *Shiva* helped a young lady to perform a ritual who lost her husband and weeping in the funeral ground when all her relatives deserted her. Goddess *Parvati* performed '*Jyotirbheemeswara Vratam*' a ritual for that young lady in the funeral ground, to get back her husband's life, made Lord Shiva the priest to precede over the ritual while using the bones and the skulls as vessels for the process. Women today who ever are performing this ritual at home have to light the lamps in clarified butter while reading this ritual story. There is a ritual for ascetic-*Sanyasi* and widow who have to control their food and supposed to take regulated food. On the whole these rituals are revolves around goddess *Parvati* and promote *Shaivite* faith.

Documented rituals and worships-

Smt.Chakravadhanula Visalaxi lives in Saidabad area in Hyderabad performed many rituals.

Kumkuma Gauri Vratam-13 little pots of *Kumkum* containers made of silver, turmeric, blouse pieces, black beads that are recognized for *Mangalasutram*, *Lakkajollu*-beads of orange color looks like corals, etc are distributed to the women of married status. Smt.B.Suvarchala performed this ritual on March, 2012 at Hyderabad. [Fig.1.28; 1.29; 1.30]

Lakshavattula-Nomu-This ritual is performed only in selective months *Maghamasam*(February), *Phalgunamasam*(March), *Vaishkhamasam*(May) and on Full Moon days. As the title of the worship is indicated one lakh cotton threads are made to light the lamp in clarified butter(Ghee), throughout the night of the worship day. '*Kalash*'-many pots are made of copper and silver are installed. *Godanam*-gifting cow is performed, lot of *Bhajans* and verses are recited throughout the night. This is a ritual of mega expenditure and mega celebration. Husband is supposed to sit along with the lady who is performing the ritual, a woman would

perform this ritual after her menstruation is seized, and performed for the *Moksha*-ultimate attainment. When Visalaxi had performed she performed this ritual as a major celebration inviting relatives and friends and organized a feast.

Dampata Tambulam-Every day one couple are given beetle leaves and nuts for a year by the performer and the conclusion is performed by feasting a couple and gifting them new clothes, 365 beetle leaves and nuts.

Udaya Kumkuma-Everyday early in the morning even before taking the bath one lady is given *Kumkuma* by the performer. To conclude the ritual one saree, blouse and container of a *Kumkuma* is given to one lady, *Muttaiduva- Suhagan*.

Nitya Sringaram-Everyday evening Smt. Visalakshi combed one lady's hair and gifted her turmeric, *Kumkuma* and she should be displayed the mirror to see her face.

Chitti Bottu- One lady is given sandal paste and 'Akshat'-Turmeric and *Kumkum* applied rice used for worshipping, are applied on that lady's forehead every day by the performer.

Magha Gauri- In the month of *Maghamasam*-February goddess *Gauri* is made with clay and immersed into the well where it is prepared every day. It is done for four years. One and half Kilos of dry coconut are gifted one day in the first year. Second year one and half Kilos of jaggery, third year one and half kilos of *Jeera*, fourth and final year a saree and blouse is gifted to a lady-'*Muttaiduva*' to conclude the ritual.

Cheruvu Vijayalaxmi had performed *Kailasa Gauri Vratam* on 7th November 2005 in *Sankaramatham* of Nallakunta region in Hyderabad. There is a *Sarada Devi* temple in that complex and she performed the ritual in front of that goddess shrine which is at one corner of

the complex.⁶¹ The woman who performs this ritual will not speak till the ritual is concluded on that day. Lady is supposed to gift around 25 kilos of turmeric and 25 kilos of *Kumkum* to the women-*Suhagan*, along with fruits, blouse pieces, beetle leaves and nuts as auspicious items. *Brahmin* women are supposed to present these items only to the *Brahmin* community woman. [Fig. 1.31; to 1.34]

Vaibhavalaxmi Vratam- is followed popularly nowadays by many women. Eight Fridays are followed fasting and worshipping and offering auspicious items to eight women. R. Madhavi and Smt. Mangatai followed this ritual. [Fig.1.37; 1.38; 1.39]

Winniwer offering along with auspicious items is one important ritual followed in the wedding ritual offering to newly married bride as well as it is followed on other times as one another ritual. [Fig.1.40; to 1.43]

There are certain traditional rituals followed in the family lineage and followed even today-

Gurnadhudi Pongallu-This is a family ritual followed only by those families who ever follows in their family lineage. All the family members, immediate and extended, who bear the same Sur-name would meet to perform this ritual. Men and women equally participate in the ritual. This ritual is performed after the marriage or thread ceremony of the son's in the family. It is a *Shaivite* worship lord *Veerabhadra* is worshipped on this day. [Fig.7.10] A huge fire place is organized in the centre of the main hall of the house to boil the milk and to cook the sweet rice-

⁶¹ Sankaramatham witnesses such rituals like Kailasa Gauri vrat regularly and main hall of that complex is provided regularly to perform. That day when Vijayalaxmi was performing another important ritual of Bhagavat saptah of Vedic preists was happening and the women were not allowed to sit in their usual place of central hall which was given to readers of Bhagavatam.

'*Paramannam*' and offered to the god. All the members, men and women, participating would pour the rice into the boiling milk in a big vessel kept on the fire.

Kameswari Vratam is another family tradition followed in some other families in the similar context. This *Vrtam* is performed by women alone. This is also known as the story of seven sisters. [Fig.1.51; 1.52; 1.53; 1.54; 1.55]

Miscellaneous rituals-

There are different kinds of rituals followed by women. When the girl menstruates for the first time, while confirming the bride for the marriage for their son, protecting the womb in the early pregnancy of third month and late months of 7th and 9th months, when the child is born and bathed on 11th day, when the child enters in to third month, etc., women follow specific rituals and occasional celebrations to suit the situations. References from *Grihyasutras* inform that there were rituals in ancient days for selecting the bride, protecting the womb, etc.⁶² Ancient day practices were following the Vedic practices and were reciting the verses for such rituals also. Women were on the lead while selecting the bride, etc, in those days but they were not the ones on lead role. They were allowed to perform but they were under constant observation. Today *Vedic* verses are not recited on every ritual like ancient days, but the practices seem remained. [Fig.1.74; to 1.83] &[Fig.1.101]

References on Art and craft-

After an auspicious ceremony like son's weddings in the family, goddess *Kameswari* worshipped in certain families. Goddess is prepared at home with a *Rangoli* design format and installed to

⁶² Sankhayana Griha Sutras of Rg Veda period were discussed by Kumkum Roy and Jaya Tyagi in February 2009 work shop at Forum of Contemporary Theory , Vadodara.

worship. *Nimma-Gauri Vratam* is one of the rituals involves carving of thick root of lemon tree as goddess *Gauri*. This ritual is performed by childless woman who wishes to have progeny. *Magha Gauri Vratam* in *Maghamasam* is the ritual to make a *Gauri* figure with clay at the well every day for a month to perform the ritual and it is done for four years. *Varalaxmi Vratam* performed in *Sravanamasam* also involves the procedure of making the idol of goddess *Laxmi*. *Savitri-Gauri Vratam* at *Sankranti* time, few women like Yanamandra Saraswati, would prepare idols for the worship.

Devi Kavacham-⁶³

Devi Kavacham of *Sri Durga Saptasati* explains that *Devi* adored with the name and the fame of *Mahakali*, *Mahalaxmi* and *Mahasaraswati*. *Durga* is a divine mother who wards off all the obstacles of life. There are nine forms of goddess *Durga* known as *Nava Durga* possessing nine different energies. This description of *Nava Durga* is a section of *Markandeya Purana* and this *Purana* is multi dimensional in spirit and throws light on '*Jnana, Karma, Bhakti* and *Yoga*.

Nine-Durgas;

1. *Shaila putri*- She is the rock of spiritual standing and she is *Mooladhara Sakti*. She is the physical consciousness of mother Devine. She is the manifestation of earth and its color is crimson.

2. *Brahmacharini*-Cosmic energy of *Brahma* is felt through our meditation and it is to feel the intangible heights through our meditation of tangible practice. She is the period of spiritual planning. She abides in *Svadhishthan chakra*.

⁶³ Sri Durga Saptasati-Facets of Shri Chandi Nava Durga. Introduction, Commentary and English Translation by Chamanlal Raina. Sharada Publishing House. Delhi, 2004.

3. Chandraghanta-She is the beauty par excellence. She is the cosmic sound to be felt through our *Sadhana* that gives us inspiration to understand the absolute and feel the vibrations of the eternal within our being. She abides in *Manipura Chakra*.

4. Kushamanda-She is the universal seed remains in ever consciousness. We find this energy during *Sadhana* within our Psycho-physical existence. She abides in *Anahat Chakra* situated in cardiac plexus. Its nature is *Shiva* and *Shakti* aspect.

5. Skandamata-She is the power of existence. She is swift, joyful and perfect. She is the purification for rejecting the impure. She is the mother of *Skanda/Kartikeya* who killed *Tarakasura* for the welfare of *Devas*-gods. She helps transcending ignorance-*Avidya*. She abides in *Vishudha Chakra*.

6. Katyayini-She is the daughter of *Katyayini Rishi*. She is the mother of excellence, inner beauty and supreme understanding. She is inherent within the human soul, can be achieved through meditation.

7. Kalaratri-She is the time eternal. This is the hour before *Devatas* are born. She is the manifest of unit of time from moment to eternity. She abides in *Sahasra-ara-Chakra*.

8. Mahagauri-She is of golden hue. She has the triple aspects of *Shakti* for maintaining the balance of *Satyam* and *Ritam* on the basis of *Dharma*. She activates *Kundalini Shakti*.

9. Siddhidhatri-She is the perfection. She is the *Prakasha* and *Vimarsha* woven together in the inner recesses of *Yoga* and *Bhakti*. She is indefinable, un-ageing, unborn and her grace is in every breath of life.

The themes involved in the women's rituals, recitations or '*Streela Vrata Kathalu*' could be based on these concepts that are in *Nava Durgas*. *Shilpa* text *Aparajita Prichha* informs that

“*Nava Durga*” is represented by nine different flowers. “*Batakamma*” festival of *Navaratri* of *Dushehara* time in *Telangana* region must be celebrating the goddess with flowers could be that concept of different flowers to equate with *Nava Durga* on nine nights festival time. Women at homes prefer to collect different variety of flowers for daily or special ritual worships. Probably concept and the meanings of *Nava Durga* are merged in to the practices to suit the day to day worship materials of availability- “*Varija, Saumya, Vaayuvya, Parthiva, Vaanaspathya, Prajapathya, Sivapushpa, Aagneya, Ahimsa. Avanti Khanda of Skanda Purana* informs the meanings of offerings in “*Manasa Puja*”. It is a daily worship. Some of the offerings in that are *Varija*-means water as well as *Ahimsa*-non violence. *Saumya*-means *Indriya Nigraha*-control on the senses and it is represented by honey, ghee, water or milk offered to bathe the gods and goddesses, *Aagneyam* means lighting and perfume used in the worships represents kindness.⁶⁴ Most of these material meanings and offerings in the women’s ritual worships show a direction towards the abstract meanings about the goddess.

Most of these rituals are religiously followed by the Hindu communities who follow the *Brahmanical* practices. It is not the worships alone that are to be noted, many other aspects are involved in such rituals such as decorating the houses, surroundings and the self, making various Prasad-offerings while enjoying the culinary sensibilities, drawing aesthetic pleasures from the decorations, enjoying the expressions like recitation of *Slokas*, singing ritual songs, organizing and participating in special programs of classical dances, music concerts, *Harikatha*⁶⁵, *Burrakataha* and street plays, friends and relatives meeting each other and inviting

⁶⁴ Collected information from the discussions with Dr.Vaijayanti Shete.

⁶⁵ Previously men alone were narrating Harikatha as special programmes now a days women are also seen narrating. There are women priests also performing Vedic ritual procedures as professionals that was only men’s activity till yesterday.

each other. Many secular aspects of mixing of community and races are happening in these new ritual procedure developments. Some of the conventional rituals are systematically designed to put forward the gender assertions also.

Inference-This chapter instead of concluding on one point opens up many issues for discussion further.

Section-II

Drawing Aesthetic Pleasures from Ritual Practices

3.Chapter-

Rangoli designs- Understanding on ‘Visual and Public Culture’ Practices.

Rangoli designs are laid out at the household thresholds, courtyards or on the walls as a part of ritual practices or displayed as decorative motifs. They are termed differently at different regions and practiced in most of the regions of India.⁶⁶ These designs are part of daily and special rituals in south India. They are termed as ‘*Rangavalli or Muggu*’ in Andhra region. [Fig. 2.1; to 2.6; & 2.10; to 2.16] For the sake of convenience commonly understood term ‘*Rangoli*’ is used in these discussions. Approach to understand this subject in the discussion is not restricted only to house hold designs, patterns and the styles. It is released from such holistic approach to analyze the references of this name and practices at different spaces in the society such as 1.Visual culture-*Rangoli* designs at household conventional practices and application of these designs on mass media images are discussed under the visual culture category. 2.Public culture is discussed on the case studies of *Rangoli* painting exhibitions. In the process of this discussion significance of *Rangoli* in nationalist⁶⁷ agendas, *Swadeshi* movements of pre and post-independent times and in *Hindutva* politics of this period is discussed. Direction of this chapter is unveiling the interaction between the public-the social space and private-the household space. Both these spaces appear different at the exterior level. Private space of household is understood as less thoughtful and expected to be more introvert space. Endeavor

⁶⁶ The term Rangoli practice carries a broader reference and different names at different regions. Gujarat and Maharashtra calls it as Rangoli, Andhra region as Rangavalli or ‘Muggu’ in colloquial understanding, Kolam is the name given in Tamil Nadu, Mandala in Rajasthan, M.P, U.P, Alpana in Bengal region, etc.

⁶⁷ National freedom struggle comprised many practices like aggressive and sentimental movements. Indigenous culture was one of the representations of that resistance and nationalist sentiment was an important and dominant feature of its politics.” Pg. 8. Rumina Sethi. “Myths of the Nation-National Identity and Literary representation.” Oxford University press. 1999.

of this chapter is to display how potential is this subject of *Rangoli*, meaningfully and effectively making links between private and public space.

European classification placed domestic arts, folk and primitive arts in a lesser position to Indian classical arts. On the other hand Indian classical arts are put under the marginal status in colonial times. British made it explicit in their explanation that Indian arts are feminine and materialistic and placed western art in the higher position as elite, masculine and intellectual. Euro-centric 'popular/Elite' module of above classification categorically pushes the subjects like *Rangoli* under folk and popular practices as mere signs while evacuating the symbolic meanings involved.

This chapter's discussion might sound on the face value that it is methodologically discontinues in leaping from one region to another region's *Rangoli* designs, erasing the differences on regional practices, taking liberties to discuss *Rangoli* as one continues practice in India by ignoring the material differences and the different design patterns practiced at different regions. Different regions practice the ritual of laying out the *Rangoli* designs at different times of the year. Such materialistic variations on the practices of time and design patterns are found not only on the political state boundaries of different states Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, etc. but there is a difference with in the state boundaries, locally too.

If we study Andhra Pradesh state itself as an example, traditional *Rangoli* designs are differing in coastal Andhra and *Telangana* regions also. *Naagabandhana* motif is a popular design in coastal Andhra and *Rayalaseem* regions where as in *Telangana*, designs are straight lines, small mound like projections and geometric forms. One could infer symbolic meanings of those

designs. *Telangana* being a dry and Deccan plateau, may be those lines and mounds appear as projections similar to that landscape. Prevalent snake worship of Lord *Subrahmanyeswara-Kartikeya*⁶⁸ must have raised the symbolism of *Naagabandhana* motif in Coastal Andhra region. New patterns [Fig.2.3] have similar floral and foliage motifs and Persian patterns in any region whether it is in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra or Gujarat, etc. Probably this change can be understood because of *Islamic* cultural interventions in medieval times.

The differences in traditional patterns or the similarity in new patterns are only material differences because the conceptual understandings behind these practices are similar throughout India where ever it is practiced and whatever the style is practiced. Studying the material details like patterns and styles does not mean that that study necessarily become a materialistic study behaving blind to the meanings and concepts. The material, patterns and style becomes a vehicle to communicate the meanings. Different regions may differ on habits and habitat, language, but there is an unseen and unbroken thread of cultural identity that relates one region to another in Indian nation. The faith involved in the cultural identity transcends the local, materialistic differences to connect one region to another region whether it is a floor or wall designs of *Rangoli* or east or west of India or within the state boundaries.⁶⁹

A brief note on symbolism in *Rangoli* designs.

Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa[Fig.2.34] regions lay out permanent designs for a period of one season on the walls. Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu regions in South India practice this tradition as a daily ritual to put the designs on the wee hours at the household thresholds and

⁶⁸ Kartikeya son of lord Siva is believed in south India is none other than lord Subrahmanyeswara whose iconography is serpent, snake worship.

⁶⁹ Norman Bryson."Looking at the Overlooked". Harvard university press, 1990.

home shrines. Women who practice this as a daily ritual make sure *Rangoli* designs are laid out before the Sunrays enter their courtyards. That is symbolically a good wish visually conveyed to her family members who are leaving the house for work. Also it is a welcome message to the guests who are entering their homes.⁷⁰ On special worship days of rituals and festivals specific *Rangoli* designs⁷¹ like *Sankha*, *Chakra* and *Padma* are laid out at the worship place at one of the corners of the house to install the gods and goddesses[Fig.2.36]. Inauspicious times are no exceptions. At the time of death and funerals or when the offerings are made to the fore fathers, *Rangoli* of specific mat like formats are laid on ground where the fire god 'Agni' is lit or edible offerings are placed. Specific *Rangoli* designs laid out at auspicious and inauspicious occasions make that space pure as it is believed. There is a traditional practice at Maharashtra that goddess *Laxmi* and *Ganesha* forms are designed with *Rangoli* powder on a wooden plank where worships are offered on *Diwali* and *Ganesh Chaturdi* festivals. Orissa region or *Mandala* of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh regions also practice *Rangoli* but they are put as wall designs. *Pithora* paintings of Chotaudepur of Gujarat are similar practices of wall designs. They draw narrative story of a god *Pithora* on the walls as an auspicious ritual at the time of weddings and

⁷⁰ When I was presenting this paper during a seminar there was a query about the authenticity of laying out these designs in the contemporary times. Whether the working women have busy schedules to make these designs daily? I am explaining that the percentage of working women in India is very less (even at the metro cities). If a maid servant is making the design at the court yard, whether that woman of that household is a working professional or not, ownership of that space belongs to the lady of that house. She herself puts that design and does not leave it empty in the absence of a maid servant. In the growing urbanization women at house hold too have to cope up with the brisk time schedules of the family members who leave for schools and work. She is taking the assistance of maid servants to match the fast growing city life. Woman artists like Sakuntala Kulkarni takes the help of her maid servant to do the needle work of her art work on a quilt to display and says "concept is mine. I am only taking the help of my maid servant to complete the stitching work of a quilt." Why the lady of the house is put for questioning on taking the assistance? Is that question based on a bias that house wife is lesser to the professional woman? Then the Euro-centric project of masculinity and the elite understanding is marginalizing the house hold space and women's work at home.

⁷¹ Ed. Mandakranta Bose. "Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India." Oxford university press. New Delhi,2000.

auspicious occasions. As far as Bengal is concerned these designs are known as *Alpana*⁷² [Fig.2.7] decorative motifs that are laid out at various women's rituals. These designs are lotus flowers, rice grains of paddy, Sun, Moon, children, house, birds, etc. made of rice paste. Motifs change as per the theme of the ritual. If it is a worship of goddess *Laxmi* the designs consist of *lotus* diagrams, rice plants and ears of rice and small foot prints of the goddess at the inner door thresholds, *Shringara* of the goddess, goddess of children is drawn, at times designs of spatula/spoons are laid out in the aspiration of the prosperity of kitchen. Ritual stories are also narrated at another time on the *Alpana* drawings.

Regular secular spaces of living rooms are transformed into sacred spaces through *Rangoli* designs, whether it is in the practice of Andhra region or Bengal or any other region. Probably that design work as a visual boundary to separate the secular and profane spaces. On drawing such motifs that space is modified in to a pious space in a make shift arrangement. Mundane space transforms in to a holy place.

Dhanurmasam falls from 15th of December to 14th January of *Sankranti* festival day. Elaborate *Rangoli* decorative motifs are laid out at the courtyards of every house and temple complexes in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. The continuity of these designs at every courtyard one after the other house appears like a decoration of the whole street. It is a visual treat offered by the women at the time of *Dhanurmasam* worships and festival month of *Sankranti*.⁷³[Fig.2.8; to 2.11] Present decade is witnessing a change. These designs are laid out

⁷² Samjukta Gombrich Gupta, "Goddess, Women, and their rituals in Hinduism."

⁷³ It is a practice of 'Hindu' tradition widely, but I noticed in Kadium village near Rajahmundry of Andhra Pradesh that a converted Christian woman named Nookaratnam is also practicing this tradition. She has designed an elaborate Rangavali –Muggu at her courtyard on [13th January 2005] the previous day of Uttarayan below a big Christ wall painting on the walls of her mud house. Stephen Huyler also documented a photograph in a magazine

also on the new years day eve of 31st December.⁷⁴ It is a newly added visual celebration on the Sun calendar' new-year along with traditional festival celebrations of *Sankranti*. [Fig.2.33] Similar kind of visual celebration is offered at Gujarat and Maharashtra on their new year's eve that falls immediately after *Diwali* festival day. There is a symbolic message of wishing the well being of people around for the forth coming year through these designs. These designs greet an auspicious feeling that is expressed aesthetically. Raymond William explains that whether it is a verbal or visual statement customary behavior of ritual is a meaningful act.⁷⁵

Symbolism in *Rangoli* designs-

Indian symbolism⁷⁶ and symbolic sources of our customs and believes, are worth noting for a parallel and supportive statements. Images of deity in India itself are a visual symbol of a particular aspect of god that devotees wish to worship. Feelings of fear, hatred, surprise, attraction, love etc, affect the human mind and find ways to express, to cope up or combat with those feelings. Manifestations of those feelings would find the countering forms in various ways. One of the ways could be finding solace in supernatural powers, spiritual meanings and searching symbolic resemblances in the worldly acts and forms.

***Rangoli* designs have similarity with religious and spiritual Motifs -**

Purnakumbha is a decorated pot placed on a pedestal, filled with water or rice and the leaves of *Asvattha*, *Bata*, *Amra*, *Panasa* and *Bakula*, etc are placed inside the pot, pepping over its mouth and a coconut is placed over it. It is supposed to be the harbinger of good fortune and success

called Span-no.3, March 1995 in his article "Painted Prayers" that a Christian woman is decorating a kiln's courtyard in Tamilnadu.

⁷⁴ I was informed at Alugubilli village near Vijayanagaram that new years of 31st December witnesses colorful huge designs to invite new year in the recent past.

⁷⁵ Pg. 181. Raymond Brady Williams, "An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism". Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁷⁶ Rai Gibind Chandra

of life. Such *Purnakumbha* is invariably placed as auspicious symbol in many household rituals. As per Rai Govind Chandra we have references of *Purnakumbha* placing at the doors of the houses is found in *Skanda Purana and Matsya Purana*. *Purnakumbha* is worshipped today for lord *Varuna* in our marriages and ceremonial functions. At *Rameswaram* temple in Tamil Nadu a decorated pot full of water is placed during the temple ritual to represent *Varuna* every day even today. The earliest reference of *Purnakumbha* is in *Rg Veda* where the pot is full of water and appears to be representing Lord *Indra*, the rain god who brings agricultural prosperity. Full blooming and over flowing contents of life comparable to the plants and foliage luxuriating from the mouth of a jar filled with the life giving fluid-Jivana is present in our *Vedic* literature and continued to exert its influence on the Indian mind ever afterwards.⁷⁷ *Purnakumbha* is a symbolic representation of mother goddess also. Earthen pots bearing lotus design is found on the seals of Chanhudra *Purnakumbha* of pre history and Mauryan period. But such references are absent on Indus valley seals. A decorated pot placed on a pedestal filled with leaves, buds and lotus flowers found at Sanci, Bharhut, Mathura, Begram, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda of early period. Similar kind of motif like *Kalash* or *Purnakumbha* is found on the *Rangoli* designs also as a figure of *Kalash* as a lone figure or along with other design motifs.

Svastika-Serpent is represented in the form of letter 'S' and if we place two of these letters in vertical and horizontal positions we will arrive at the rough form of a *Svastika*. Such intertwined serpents as *Mithuna* was a conception existing in the Indus valley art.⁷⁸ This age old adoration of serpents is supposed to create the world, ward off all evils, bestow long life and bring prosperity. *Svastika* denotes two serpents entwining a tree which suggests the birth of the

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ ibid

cosmos. In certain parts of Bengal a design of intertwined serpents looking almost like the *Svastika*, is still drawn as a floor design and worshipped on the auspicious occasions. Many serpents almost looking as many *Svastikas* are intertwined in one of the *Rangoli* designs put regularly in the courtyards of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

This symbol is abundantly found in architectural designs also. For example in Badami temple, both regular and reverse *Svasik* formats are found on the ceilings. A book “Basis of decorative element in Indian Art”⁷⁹ informs that *Swastik* in regular form is a symbol to represent a male and Sun and reverse form is a symbol of female and moon.⁸⁰

Chakra-symbol represents a weapon of lord *Vishnu* or as a disc of Sun-a solar deity, *Dharma Chakra* of *Buddhist’s* canon or *Sidhha Chakra* of *Jaina* symbol. This form is very well represented in architectural designs. *Chakra* symbol is commonly found *Rangoli* design.

Matsya or *Matsyayugma* symbol-Fish is the symbol of fortune among present day Hindus.⁸¹ This symbol also finds a mention in the description of 108 auspicious signs in *Harivamsa of Vishnu Parva in Mahabharatam*.⁸² *Matsya Purana* represents Lord *Vishnu’s Matsya Avatara*. Symbol of fish appears on ancient pottery started in stone-age. Description of fish in the texts represents the secret of creation of life on this earth.⁸³ *Svetambara Jainism* considers the fish symbol *Ashtamangala*, as an auspicious symbol. *Lalitavistara* text mentions fish as an auspicious symbol represented on lord Budhha’s palm. God of love, *Kama* or *Manmadha’s* banner has a fish symbol-*Makaradhvaja*.⁸⁴ *Rangoli* designs have fish motifs as one of the formats.

⁷⁹ K.C.Aryan

⁸⁰ Page 39

⁸¹ Rai Gobind Chandra

⁸² Rai Givind Chandra.

⁸³ Rai Gvind Chandra

⁸⁴ ibid

Vaijayanti-The triangular headed staff like symbol seen on the punch marked coins has been called *Vaijayanti*. V.S.Agrawal calls it as *Indra Yasti*. Such forms or *Trishul* like figures are very much found on the *Rangoli* designs as space fillers or as border designs.

Kalpataru and *Kalpalata*- Adoration of sacred plants is a deeply rooted faith in all the old religions of the world. As per that faith trees and creepers are the manifestations of the Divine spirits. Especially in India, tree-worship is connected with the worship of *Yakshas*-minor deities. Creepers and foliage are abundantly found on the *Rangoli* central and border designs and very commonly found formats on architectural designs whether they are *Hindu, Buddhist or Jain* temples.

Brief historical note:

It is difficult to assign a historical date to house hold practices of *Rangoli*. But a hypothesis can be made while observing the motifs of *Rangoli* that are similar to temple architecture designs or the motifs that are similar to Stone-age pottery, Pre-History civilization. Probably these *Rangoli* designs existed right from early ages and continued further. Peripheral designs of *Devakoshtas* and architectural decorative patterns of medieval temples display a similarity with house hold *Rangoli* patterns. For example, Badami region of 6th and 7th centuries Chalukyan period of present Karnataka region display a similarity with *Nagabandhana* motif on *Peetha* that display a similarity with *Nagabandhana Rangoli* motif of coastal Andhra and Tamil Nadu regions.⁸⁵ [Fig.2.37; 2.38; 2.39]

⁸⁵ The ceiling panels of the same complex decorated with Swastika designs in regular and reverse that we took a note already discussing the symbolic meanings. Images are available in the Archives of Art History Dept. Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.University Baroda.

There are literary sources that can provide historical references on *Rangoli* practices. *Vatsayana's Kamasutra* text referred to '*Chatushashti Kala*' or sixty four branches of fine arts. The text was written in 1st Century A.D as per the date given by the scholars; but *Vatsayana* probably was from 4th C B.C and he was a contemporary to Chanakya of Magadha. One of the branches in 64 arts is about decorative arts. One of the sections in decorative arts is named as '*Tandula-Kusuma-Balivikara*'. This section describes about '*Naivedyas*' edible offerings to god that are beautifully arranged in design formats on different plates. Concept of *Rangoli*, *Kolam* of south India, *Alpana* of Bengal, etc. designs come under this category.⁸⁶ While describing the details about 12th C. Kakatiya period social history of *Telugu* land and the fine arts over there, Suravaram Pratap Reddy writes that courtyards in front of the houses were decorated with beautiful designs of *Rangoli* powder. He cites an example and describes the front yard decoration of Machal Devi's house, ruler Prataparudra's keep. That was decorated by sprinkling sandal-wood water, *Rangoli* was laid out and filled with saffron-dust and pollen delightfully and door was decorated with a *Torana* of lotus flowers.

Torana is an arched or straight format mounted over two columns and making a sacred and ceremonial entrance, is found right from rock cut cave temples of Sanchi period. Toranas have various designs. Flowers and foliage is known as *Patra Torana* that is continued in the household traditions of decorating the door jambs with flower or foliage or *Rangoli* designs. This is also seen in the present day *Rangoli* formats as a design beneath the doors or as a border line designs. Structural temples have different designs of *Torana*, frieze of animal figures, known as

⁸⁶ A.B.Ganguly- "Sixty Four Arts."

Chitra Torana, *Gana* figures known as *Vidyadhara Torana*. Forms of *Kumuda*, series of lotus petals carved on *Adhistana* or *Kapota* are known formats of temple architecture.

Rangoli designs of lotus flowers and petals are specially laid out where the gods and goddess' are placed at household are flanked with *Sankha* and *Chakra* is somewhat similar to the *Peetha* of temple architecture. These designs are similar to architectural embellishments and bring in a feeling of *Garbhagriha* of temple like enclosure format. Designs of animals and birds, elephants, peacocks and swans or commonly found on *Rangoli* designs. Such complex designing in *Rangoli* is done by making a grid of dots initially to avoid the mistakes in bringing out the right formats and forms.⁸⁷ [Fig.2.17;to 2.32]

Vidyasankara temple at Sringeri of late medieval times has a ceiling design format of four parrots that are perched in topsy-turvy position. This unique example is a symbolic representation of Sun god also explains the ascetic *yogic* position of penance or *Sadhana* of Indian practices.⁸⁸ Lotus of many petals in full blossom and hanging parrots are very commonly found designs in the *Rangoli* formats also.

On *Uttarayan-Sankranti* day Sun changes his direction from South-pole to North Pole - *Uttarayanam*. This movement is celebrated by women by designing a Sun's chariot made of *Rangoli* in their courtyards that is rolling towards north from south. *Rangoli* chariot formats have the parrot images drawn hanging on the side of the *Kapota*. Chariot designs of *Rangoli* seem to be popular in Andhra[Fig.2.4; & 2.15], Karnataka, Tamilnadu and also in

⁸⁷ Yet another time sign board painters are engaged to lay out such complex designs at special occasions like wedding ceremonies.

⁸⁸ K.R.Srinivasan-“The South Indian temples.”

Orissa.⁸⁹[Fig.2.12; 2.13] Probably *Rangoli* chariots are designed based on the Sun temple Konark of 12th C. That temple is a huge chariot of architectural marvel carved on the basic design of imaginary chariot of Sun god.

Different and regional architectural features, as K.R.Srinivasan says, are borrowed from, far and near and are cleverly homogenized to make it a sort of universal amalgamation. He opined that while keeping the Indian spirituality in view along with eclecticism in the sculpture too, designs of fish, peacocks, butterflies, *Sankh*, *Chakra of Sri Vishnu*, folk style of anonymous animals are incorporated on the architectural designs. *Shilpasastras* and classical texts were the basis for the sculpture and architectural designs carved in the medieval art practices. The medieval period texts were written on the basis of practices existing in then society. One can make a hypothesis, also looking into Srinivasan's argument, that these house hold designs were part of the data collected, when these texts were written. In the process of legitimizing such classical texts, the data of designs collected were probably distanced by these texts in order to transform these motifs as architectural designs and designate a distinguished position for the texts.

There are different printed booklets available in the market on popular *Rangoli* designs of different regions in these days. They display various designs like *Kalasha*, stars, moon and Sun, lights and lighted vessels on stand, elephants, pigeons, snakes and cobras with many hoods, *Nagadevata*, eagle design representing *Garudavahana of Vishnu*, *Human* faces and figures, many petals of lotus, *Tulasi* pot and the plant etc. Availability of printed popular designs on

⁸⁹ Kalyani Kanungo from Bhubaneshwar made a chariot Rangoli design and Puri temple of Balarama Krishna Subhadra images inside that chariot as if they are on Rath Yatra procession. This Rangoli design is published by Orissa Lalit Kala Academy in a booklet, Chitra, when that academy had organized a Rangoli competition and exhibition in September 1989.

mechanical reproduction, itself is an indication of modern period's interaction with *Rangoli* practices and one can assume a change of designs because of the interaction of one with another region, also circulating fast from one region to another region normalizing the regional differences.

Display sensibilities -

The places chosen to lay out these designs are visible and evident places of open courtyards, worship places, etc. It is obvious that one is making the design for perceptibility. Designs are exchanged and can be learnt from the courtyards from one another and no authorship or ownership is declared by the women as they share them with each other. No secrecy can be expected on the new designs. Tradition verses modern dichotomy is not an easy narration neither the rural verses urban is possible to explain in this case of *Rangoli* practices. There is no distinction found that older women only make the traditional designs and the younger women make the modern designs or only rural women and house wives or non working women alone practice this ritual of making *Rangoli* and working/professional women do not practice. The ritual of making *Rangoli* designs is comfortably accommodating both modern and tradition and old and new designs on the practices. This practice is not rejected by women by saying that *Rangoli* is a conventional practice. Even if she is a working woman, young girl of school going age, girls on the busy schedules of their professional colleges, many women and girls take pleasure in making such designs. There is every possibility that women must have imbibed the

modern designs found on the big hoardings or commercial and consumer product designs in to their *Rangoli* forms, though practiced as conventional practices.⁹⁰

***Rangoli* on Nationalist agendas: *Rangoli* on artistic practice.**

Technique of making *Rangoli* with colored powder is explored further to make art forms and art exhibitions by few artists. Those exhibitions are showcased right from 1940's to till today. A group of people in Baroda display *Rangoli* exhibitions every year at the time of *Diwali* festival. This has become not only a regular feature, many groups have started exhibiting at many venues. They draw the figures and compositions on the boards or on the floor and fill it with *Rangoli* color powders. They are adept at the Western technique to bring the effect of light and shade chiaroscuro and perspective drawing because most of them are qualified in Art school education. They make life like portrait paintings and various compositions.

Mr. Manohar Khedkar (Janardhan Ramachandra Khedkar)⁹¹, who was born in 1934, visited *Rangoli* exhibitions of Mr. Athavle at Baroda.⁹² Mr. Athavle must have exhibited *Rangoli* paintings before and after the independence period for about 30 to 40 years. He used to display *Rangoli* exhibitions on festival eves like *Deewali* and *Ganesh Chaturdi*, etc, at places where public gatherings called '*Mela*' happened. He traveled through out Maharashtra and the neighboring state and larger towns of Gujarat state also. People of that generation do remember his exhibitions but no other detail about that person, not even his name in detail. He used to make a carpet out of loose *Rangoli* marble powder that appeared as real as possible.

⁹⁰ One of my border *Rangoli* designs that I regularly make in front of my home shrine has a design taken from a calendar design of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

⁹¹ I had discussions with Manohar Khedkar and Sadasiv Fadnis pioneers in Baroda *Rangoli* painting exhibitions revealed certain information on 1940's *Rangoli* exhibitions.

⁹² Athavle used to exhibit behind Maharani Santa Devi hospital in Rajmahal road of Baroda it seems. Khedkar remembers viewing those exhibitions right from his 7 to 8 years of age. Mr. Khedkar assumed that Maharaja Sayaji Rao must have invited to make *Rangoli* exhibitions.

Few other traditional motifs and compositions were also made a part of his display. Manohar Khedkar was fascinated by the real looks of that carpet and inspired to practice the technique of *Rangoli* paintings with *Rangoli* powder. Mr.Khedkar⁹³ is a self taught artist started practicing perspective painting with *Rangoli* powder. He did lot of compositions on *Rangoli* paintings looking into Mr. Dalal's painting compositions on Krishna leela themes, portraits of Swami Vivekananda, Jivraj Mehta, then finance minister and made 125 ft. length of carpet of real looks with *Rangoli* powder. He continued to exhibit for six years in 60's.

He made a symbolic composition, including a performative aspect along with *Rangoli* designs. On the special occasions and rituals of traditional practices, food is served on banana leaf, *Rangoli* motifs are decorated on the edges and the brass lamps are lighted besides that leaf. He made a painting composition of food on banana leaf with *Rangoli* powder technique which looks as if it is a real food on leaf and he added traditional *Rangoli* motifs and real brass lamps on the edge. He sat down in front of it, as if he is supposed to consume the food, to display a real feeling to that painting of food on banana leaf. The exotic feeling of reality is not because of the technique of giving a real look to that banana leaf and food spread on it or not by his presence. It is a dynamic play between the reality and the fiction, changing the traditional *Rangoli* to an art form, making both, reality of the objects and fiction of painting, tradition and modernity exist as neighbors. There is a fiction in the painting transformed from the reality, leading the viewer to a knee-jerk realization about that performative act.

Sadashiv Fadnis, an art teacher in M.C. High school of Baroda, younger to Mr.Khedkar joined him later to learn the technique. He being an art teacher he could train students further. Artists

⁹³ Mr.Khedkar holds a diploma in textile engineering.

who have perfected the technique formed a group called *Swastik Rangoli Kalaakar* group.⁹⁴ They actively make *Rangoli* painting exhibitions in Baroda every year at the time of *Diwali*.⁹⁵ Compositions of Mr. Fadnis differ a bit from Mr. Khedkar though he too continued his fancy to make a carpet of real looks. He painted 'commoners' subjects like 'boys selling paper at railway station' makes the viewer to recollect Sudhir Patwardhan's style, (a celebrated artist from Bombay). Other compositions include an old man and a monkey on a street play, themes of poverty and hunger, etc. His subjects also include young prince Bharata playing with a lion cub, Dushyant-Sakuntala, etc, similar to Ravi verma's compositions. He also painted portraits of political leaders like Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel. More than the systematic and phase wise thematic rendering it is the exploration of various compositions and technique enjoyment on different compositions prevails in his work.

Making a carpet panting out of *Rangoli* fine marble powder seems to be a fascination and a challenge for these *Rangoli* artists of every generation, every group and on every exhibition. They also enjoy the technique and the difficulty in bringing various hues through colored marble loose powder. Rajendra Dindolkar, another active member and a junior to Mr. Fadnis, makes a carpet of *Rangoli* painting fascinatingly real. His compositions differ a bit. There is an exotic element keeps occurring in his compositions whether it is in a painting of a saintly wanderer or a service class man with spectacles. One of his compositions, 'Bajirao-Mastana' a love story of a Maratha king Baji Rao is his landmark painting.⁹⁶ There are many artists made

⁹⁴ He trained many students, many formed different groups and that technique of Rangoli painting continued further.

⁹⁵ These Rangoli painting exhibitions were continued for a while at Nyaya Mandir hall of Baroda. Later these are happening at Kirti Mandir hall. This is another land mark architecture of Baroda.

⁹⁶ Swastik Rangoli Kalaakar group artists displayed an exhibition at the time of Deewali, 2005 at Kirti Mandir in Baroda. Abhay Gadkari made Saint Saibaba, Prakash Lokhande made a picture of popular political leader Sri

compositions on native, mythic and popular subjects while focusing to bring out the feeling of reality with technique perfection.

Realism-analysing real like paintings:

These artists make Rangoli paintings looking in to a photograph and display a photo-realism on the composition. Photographic image captured from the camera changes the size and measurement of the format compared to the real object. These artists make life size paintings. Photograph brings a two dimensionality to the picture. Their paintings bring a little volume to the image because of the marble material filled in the drawings. The volume of that material is sensuous and is made out of delicate, and breeze sensitive marble dust. The enticing sensuality of the painting is at arms' length and technique makes the viewer to swing between the feeling of reality and imaginary fiction.[Fig.2.43; to 2.61]

Viewer receives many and pleasant surprises on these exhibitions. Viewer relates on the terms of their title itself "*Swastik Rangoli Kalaakar*". *Swastik* is an auspicious symbol, and *Rangoli* a house hold traditional practice. All the compositions and figures are like known human figures and the objects seen around are painted as images to appear as real ones. The themes are known from the history, of illustrious personalities, etc, are displayed in front of them. Known *Rangoli* is transformed into a painting composition and such compositions never seen by the viewer on the traditional designs. Many such factors make the viewer to astonish as well as make them to relate to these exhibitions.

Impermanency of their work does not give the status of art to this practice of loose powder technique that is erased after the exhibition viewing. Mr. Fadnis says these paintings value is

Narendra Modi, Himanshu Antapurkar made a painting of a film hero Amir Khan, Arun Dindolkar made a painting of an old man of a rural background and the list is endless to speak about the technique perfection.

recovered when thousands of viewers enjoyed their works and he says that he does not get disheartened while removing those paintings after that exciting reception by huge crowds. Probably the ephemeral nature of their art should be appreciated on the meanings. These paintings are signifying the impermanency of the known, pleasant and sad experiences of this worldly life. Whether it is the impermanent sand sculpture of Sudershan Patnaik on Orissa beach⁹⁷ [Fig.2.62] or the impermanency of the *Rangoli* paintings, such paintings should be appreciated for their meaningful message on ephemeral life.

Copying or representing?

Rangoli artists' choose the images from selected photographs to reproduce the images. It is very obvious to think on the first instance for a passing by observation that they are copying the photographs. Their work is not a literal copy or running on the note of popular and kitsch art as unauthentic and shallow images. Easily digested art does not mean that it should be a kitsch form and skin deep. Kitsch is a relative term that is variable according to the context. *Rangoli* paintings carry their own meanings. Norman Bryson writing on still life paintings mentions "when a representation is placed along side or against the original, representation is raised to a higher power. It becomes a simulation."..."But when a copy stands adjacent to or in the place of real thing some thing more is involved. The original loses its autonomy, it becomes first in a series that also includes fictions."⁹⁸ Their paintings are not an example of mechanical reproduction and copies. They are transforming the images seen around through the photographs as mirrors to view the reality around; but that should not become the hindrance

⁹⁷ Sudersan Patnaik made a sand sculpture on Tsunami, a huge sand face 'Cry.'

⁹⁸ Norman Bryson. "Looking at the overlooked". Harvard University Press, 1990.

to gain a position on art and the aesthetic understanding. Photographs document the life seen around into a still picture. These artists are transforming those permanent photographic images to impermanent *Rangoli* paintings to reveal the ephemeral meanings. Non-permanency of this worldly life is fixed as permanency on the photographic images. That permanency is reversed and re animated on their images while making the images impermanent once again including the metaphorical meanings of mortal life of this world. They have re articulated the meanings involved. Meanings of materiality and reality of Rangoli paintings has triumphed the mechanical reproduction of photographic images.⁹⁹ They have created a 'spectacular' surprise. Viewers are observing another 'Real' that is as real as the objects around; but this Reality is on yet another frame. That frame makes the viewer to swing in between the similarity of the worldly image and its representation. The reproduction of photographic image of paintings is not the exact copy of that image. There is a charismatic authority involved in these *Rangoli* paintings. The real like looks of these paintings crossed the 'un-knownness' and 'un-reachability' to middle class people/public to feel oneness with it unlike the high art of celebrated practices.¹⁰⁰

Mimetic act:

There is a mimetic act involved in these artists' *Rangoli* paintings. There is something more involved in the concept of mimesis i.e imitating or reproducing the world around. There is an element of seduction involved in re-looking at the reality and that triggers the feelings once again felt through those objects. While explaining the mimetic act Michael Taussig writes that

⁹⁹ Balamani M. "What is the role of "People" in "Public Art"? Kaladirgha, April, 2006. Ed. Awadhesh Misra. Lucknow.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

“It seems to me that the question of the mimetic faculty tickles the heels of this upright posture and makes it interesting once again.”¹⁰¹

Even if one wants to mimic the real objects/feelings as exactly as possible the result cannot come as a clean product in the reproduction. Mimesis comes as an accomplice of that real and that mimetic act represents a gimmick. That reproduced real like image comes as a ‘graspable’ reference and one can easily relate those images to its original objects; but they are based on a slippery base. The mimetic activity tries to draw the character of the power of the original to represent the original while assuming that original. In the process of mimetic activity one explores the difference between the original and the ‘other’ the ‘second’. It brings an objective sense to the abstract sensuousness and sutures original and the representation. Mimetic act plays the trick of dancing between the very same of the original and the very different of the second that is reproduced. There is a difference between the essence of these two objects, one as original and another as a second. That difference is to be noted as ‘Alterity’.¹⁰² This term is coined by Michael Taussig. According to his discussions this term does not exactly give the meaning of ‘alternative subject’.

Alterity:

Pre-Independence;

There is a gimmick in *Rangoli* artists’ practice of mimetic paintings. They are maintaining an alterity, a difference with the society and with the celebrated art practices of fine art field. Their practice is nonetheless the same practice like privileged art practices that is not produced for

¹⁰¹ Pg.xv. “Mimesis and Alterity- A particular History of the senses”. Routledge, NewYork, London. 1993.

¹⁰² Ibid.

the utility purpose. At the same time *Rangoli* art practice is different and not similar to privileged art practice that is produced for rich class collection. Their paintings are impermanent are to be removed after the exhibition cannot be collected by the art collectors. It is also different from the traditional *Rangoli* practices practicing on western style of technique. They maintained their different identity at any point of time either in pre-Independence or post-Independence. When Athavle practiced *Rangoli* exhibitions in 40's that was the period of anti colonial movements hitting the social heights. There was a resistance against British rule from many corners of India. 'Gandhian' ideology was working out different kinds of projects to assert on quit India movements. British were imposing the Indians to mimic their 'self', and their culture. Their idea was to pull down those 'Quit India movements'. '*Swadeshi*' movements were one of the effective tools used by Indians to resist the British by burning the foreign made clothes, spinning the cotton or on salt *Satyagraha*. It can raise a question that whether Athavle through his *Rangoli* exhibitions was expressing his solidarity with *Swadeshi* movements. One cannot get away without mentioning his adaptation of traditional *Rangoli* on paintings, to display his commitment towards the indigenous culture. His practice of making *Rangoli* paintings may be one of the ways to resist the culture of modern art practices of British. In a way it is hard to discern without giving a position of middle nationalisms to Mr. Athavale's practices, if not on the list of aggressive nationalist agendas. It is one passively gestured way, a low key voice to resist the British. Format of these *Rangoli* artists' art practice, right from Athavle's time, is on photo-Realism making real like perspective paintings that is kept open by west for the modern practices. But these artists follow that practice of west by keeping an alterity with British-a difference on the concept and the context of that practice.

Post-Independence;

Alterity seems to be the strategy of the *Rangoli* artist of later generations also. Khedkar¹⁰³ was displaying *Rangoli* exhibitions at late 50's and early 60's. That was the post independence period of forming Indian identities and that exercise was exerted in art scenario also. Indigenous subjects were most revered art themes of that period whether it was for N.S. Bender or Jyoti Bhatt or of the artists adapting *Tantric* subject matter by G.RSantosh, etc. Khedkar chose *KrishnaLeela* themes. Sadashiv Fadnis and Rajendra Dindolkar are trained artists can grasp the concept of Indegenism of the artists like Jyoti Bhatt or K.C.S Panikkar. Probably all these *Rangoli* artists choose the subject of *Rangoli* to make a reference to the Indian culture as project of Indianness rather than the strategic defensive statement.

The subjects of all these *Rangoli* artists' practices are tapping the 'Indianness' either on the name referring to traditional practice or on the subjects of history, illustrious personalities of independence movements. It does not mean that every act on their hand is a nationalist ideology just because they belong to such period and references on such subjects. But it is also difficult to ignore the theme and the way they practiced *Rangoli* paintings. Their practices cannot hide their low voice, referring to nationalist agendas on Indian identities.

G.Aloysius writes "The articulation of cultural nationalism revolves around first, the beliefs concerning the distinctness, integrity, uniqueness and superiority of one's culture and second, the claim that such a culture is the proper and legitimate repository of collective and determinative power."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Mr. Khedkar was present at Ayodhya on 6th December 1996, as a Karasewk, when the Babri Masjid demolition and the riots happened.

¹⁰⁴ Pg.131, "Nationalism with out a Nation in India", Oxford University press, first published, 1997, fifth published 2004.

The mass enthusiasm can be generated in the wake of independence movements or on nationalist/*Hindutva* projects of cultural nationalism. Those projects can be categorized as one of the movements of middle nationalisms. That also can evoke the sentiments and emotions through the cultural platform on nationalist identities. Cultural nationalism, whether to project the exhibitions on *Rangoli* formats, to sing '*Vandemataram*' on September 7th 2006 on its 100th birthday as a mass activity by Shivsena activists of Maharashtra and B.J.P. government of Gujarat to mark the centenary celebrations or building the temple at Ayodhya, is to invoke the emotions to strengthen the psychological relations towards cultural heritage also can be categorized as middle nationalisms.

Subversion of Euro-centric practices-

There is a gentle voice that speaks on subverting the Euro-Centric formulas in their practices. None of these artists displayed their *Rangoli* art on the regular gallery space where the modern art is exhibited. They exhibited in those places where people can relate and elite modern art practices do not relate. If one can critically analyze their preferences between the strategies whether their practices are against the British modern art practices or to assert the 'Indian-ness', probably it is an admixture of both with a more weight on the balance tilting towards the Indian cultural elements. Their exhibitions have visitors in hundreds previously and thousands at present. Galleries of privileged art exhibitions have handful visitors.¹⁰⁵

Amalgamation of 'self'/'other':

¹⁰⁵ We have references in History. Gustave Courbet realized the appearance of common people in art and made the art where people of working class relate themselves. He defied the official and the custodians of that art. That aroused a storm of criticism and he had to exhibit away from that place where official art is exhibited. T.J. Clark. "Image of the People-Gustava Courbet and the 1848 Revolution. Thames and Hudson, 1982.

There is a mysterious hybridism and amalgamation of many aspects found on the exhibitions of these *Rangoli* artists. Their core idea seems to continue the term *Rangoli* on their art practice because of its spirit to relate it to Indian cultural identity. Such subjects like *Rangoli* designs or the national anthem *Vandemataram* acquired cultural and nationalist identity dimension because of the way they are practiced on moral and serene¹⁰⁶ grounds and those terms earned certain values. Those subjects have the lucidity to gain the identity on Indian culture as a timeless and without spatial hindrances, whether it is on the aesthetic projects or on political agendas.

Euro-centric model of classification has kept out such arts like *Rangoli* in the oblivion or classified in to a broad group of popular/folk arts and ethnic identities. These artists are bringing *Rangoli* house hold name to the different platforms and different mode of art practices. In a way, they are bringing it out of that oblivion space and questioning the euro-centric model of ethnic identity¹⁰⁷, but they are still keeping household *Rangoli* in the space of 'other' a second subject. They made *Rangoli* as their technique for their art practice. By changing the format of household *Rangoli* technique to a modern art form for viewer's viewing they are establishing certain other aspects also. They are establishing a higher status over the house hold practice by appropriating that household practice; but they are not making it obvious too. They are continuing the term *Rangoli*. It is a decent fix and an amalgamation of both accommodating and alienating the masculine 'self' and the feminine 'other'. These artists'

¹⁰⁶ Terms like morals and ethics can be discussed as yet another potential subject on philosophical and philanthropic discussions. That is not a related discussion at this point. My reference to such terms is on the day to day references of common meanings.

¹⁰⁷ Ravi Chaturvedi, Brian singleton, "Ethnicity& Identity- Global performance." Rawat publications, Jaipur, New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai. 2005. Ethnic Identity is a localized identity against the universal identity of U.K or U.S.A as an identity of 'self'.

exhibitions are playing on a lack and a gap that is household practices remained in the oblivion. They are adding a point for the people/viewers to astonish the chiaroscuro and a new perspective on the known name *Rangoli*. Privileged Modern art of European import is affordable only by rich class people and understood only by those who are trained to understand the aesthetic of that privileged art unlike these artists' *Rangoli* compositions.

Public Culture:

Conventional and Euro-centric model of popular/folk and elite model presupposes an opaqueness to understand the culture of middle class that is in between those two extremes. That is also throwing unavoidable tension between these two extreme poles. Such different conjunctions and contradictions between these two segments of European classification are forcing that to emerge in to a new space. That new space is relaxing the borders of both elite and popular/folk space to transform into a middle sphere, i.e. 'public space'. This new space is an alternative space of discourse for Elite/popular model. Public space is a middle ground to accommodate the culture of middle class as 'Public culture' that can move side ways from popular/elite distinctions. Marginality and dominance are subdued and pushed to centre space where that middle space can accommodate all the participants in the same sphere. That makes them to become fluent in a shared language and grammar.¹⁰⁸ There is a community sentiment that emerges in the practices of that public space sharing a common cultural platform.

Their *Rangoli* painting exhibitions have many aspects that can be related to public/middle class. That relation is through themes, subject matter, mimetic activity of reproducing the real around, the terms of traditional practices like *Swastik*, *Rangoli*, exhibiting at the time of *Diwali*

¹⁰⁸ Pg.3. Ed. Rachel Dwyer, Christopher Pinney. "Pleasure and the Nation". Oxford University press, 2001.

festival time, exhibiting in those landmark spaces in the city where people can easily relate. Society placed *Rangoli* designs of the house hold as private space practices. Many aspects of single authority and private ownership are democratized and made available for society in the Modern period. In this process, subjects under the private authority were brought out to public space. Subjects of elite/popular did not remain in their arena. In public culture all cultural systems operate together on the basis of potential collapse. 'Unity in Diversity' has negotiated a zone of potential conflict to emerge a new meaning.¹⁰⁹ *Rangoli* of house hold/private space is brought out by these artists to a space to emerge with new meanings on cultural identity.

As per the discussions in the introductory chapter in *Pleasure and the Nation* edited by Rachel Dawyer and Christopher Pinney mentioned that "Public" is that sect that is positioned in between rich and working class, popular class and elite class. Raymond Williams in 1958 proposed his counter thesis that 'culture is ordinary.' That attacked prevailing conception that the masses are low in taste and habit. Williams argued and remade the social meanings.

Reference on Mass media:

Mass media communication on the consumer market adapted *Rangoli* design as one of the symbols of cultural identity an effective vehicle to communicate the messages. The experience of themes related to 'culture' in mass mediated images mobilize the stock feelings of the buyer. An advertisement was released by Maruti Suzuki four wheeler manufacturers at the time of *Diwali* 2004. *Rangoli* designs have a conventional meaning of inviting a guest. *Diwali* festival celebration and a meaning of invitation have become synonymous symbol on this advertisement. This advertisement has an image that mother and daughter are laying out a

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Rangoli design out of colorful flowers. There is a verbal message below that image is a well known phrase in *Sanskrit* that is written in both Hindi and English “*Atithi Devo Bhava*”, (Guest is the God). The words are indicating an analogy between the festival and four wheeled car as the guest invited. Script in both languages and the selection of *Sanskrit* along with the *Rangoli* is making many Indian regions to feel one with those visual and the verbal messages.[Fig.2.64]

The Times of India, daily news paper wishes its reader-customer with an image that two young women are making a *Rangoli* design out of colours and flowers. [Fig.2.63] What is the common point to be noted on both the images is the *Rangoli* design and that is reproduced in a traditional form. Advertisement image of a product should reach as many customers as possible with out any hindrance. Probably *Rangoli* is such cultural practice and becomes an easily understandable design to most of Indians cutting across the local identities. Product marketing strategy did not change the format on representing that traditional image. *Rangoli* of house hold space become synonymous image to convey the cultural symbol of a festival and prosperity.

Public culture directs a meaning towards inward/outward flow and activities of public are involved. The mass mediated images in the capitalist market have only one direction and their aim is to get a flow towards the society to convey their message to the consumers. *Rangoli* design in the traditional form and practice has become the choicest as a serene image cognizing the aesthetics and the moral faith involved in that practice. This house hold design and practice has that fluidity to reach every group of society surpassing the regional, linguistic differences and has the capacity to become the subject of identity of numerous groups to feel nearer to that image.

Visual Culture:

References on *Rangoli* designs and practices of traditional or modern periods can be understood only through pluralistic approach. *Rangoli* art practices of Mr. Athavale or of *Swastik Rangoli Kalakaar* group can be explained through the public culture discourse; but it is not true for traditional household practice and the mass mediated images. Both these space's images can be explained on the Visual culture that refers to those images of visual and the verbal of our daily life and the involved images in day to day activities.¹¹⁰ Mass mediated images, visuals in the rituals, photographic images, etc. can be understood as few examples of such visual cultural practices. In the process, these images also have a tendency to create certain representational idioms of overarching impacts. In a way it is a bit different from the public culture and do not reduce the distances on democratizing the practices. Visual culture displays a disadvantageous flow of inequality on the vision of systematic structure.

Mass mediated images have a flow of message in to the society but do not leave any space for inward/ outward flow for interaction for the public to communicate. *Rangoli* of house hold design has a spontaneous understanding on private and introvert space and cannot reach the public space on its own.

Finale:

Whether the *Rangoli* designs, on traditional practice, on the mass mediated images of visual culture or on the art practices of public culture there is a common point to highlight. That is, on every reference, *Rangoli* design has become a symbol of conveying a meaning. These practices and the references may be having their own strategies and contexts on traditional meanings,

¹¹⁰ Parul Dave Mukherji, Visual culture Special number, Forum of Contemporary thought.

commercial interest or the interests of nationalist ideologies every reference is making *Rangoli* image a symbolic message. European model is reducing the potential meanings of *Rangoli* design of house hold simply as a sign to convey the lesser meanings in the name of popular or folk art by giving a marginal position. Marginal positions are imposed to reveal the meanings of inert, introvert, expressively redundant and subordinate to elite and privileged art. People's traditions of folk and popular arts are made a sign of less informative-communicative on folkloristic and primitive terms by dominant colonial methodology of classification. That model does not a leave a space in between the poles of primitive and progressive to operate and compromise. On the contrary *Rangoli*, aesthetic designs of traditions and ritual practices of house hold reveal the features, capable of significantly challenging the symbolic communication in any form and on re-investment.¹¹¹[Fig.2.40; 2.41; 2.42]

¹¹¹ Guy Poitevin. "People's Traditions, Assets or Liabilities? II- Orality and Democracy. New Quest, a quarterly journal. January-March 2003.

4.Chapter-

Body Decoration in Customary Practices.

Decorating the body is one such practice that is ceremoniously and religiously followed on every celebration, special occasions, festivals and ritual worships. Ceremonious decoration is extensive and different from the regular day to day casual way of wearing the costume and simple ornaments. Women decorate themselves with colourful costumes, flowers, jewellery, *Mehendi* designs etc., in the special functions where as men may restrict themselves mostly to special costume and occasionally few jewellery. Body decoration is culturally integrated but not enjoyed the status on the knowledge analysis. This chapter is to talk about women's decorations and the un-surfaced meanings and issues involved in this practice. For example aesthetic pleasures drawn out of selection of the colours of the costumes to wear, designs of the jewellery and the sensibilities in organizing the materials for the decoration of the body that enhance the pleasures of senses like visual, nasal, touch, etc., with perfumes, flowers, beetle leaves and nuts for chewing, etc. In the process of discussions we come across the references from literary sources mentioned about the related materials that were used in the History period for embellishment of the body. This chapter focuses on the points- 1.How women are making the aspect of body decoration an expressive platform to fulfil their aesthetic sensibilities 2.Importance of acquiring the jewellery and the material as '*Stree Dhan*' 3.Subdued political tones to assert them-selves and achieve social security on economic distribution through such materials' acquisition.

Flowers –

Colourful and perfumed flower decorations are the necessary part of the celebrations. Women wear colourful flowers, sarees and ornaments and those decorations set the mood of the occasions. Flower decoration on the hair is seen mostly in South India. Women of that region take pleasure in wearing the variety of flower garlands and learning the techniques of making the garlands of various kinds. Jasmine flowers are abundantly available in summer seasons and Chrysanthemum in Rainy seasons. Women make a plaited hair of flowers. The flower set plaited hair of the girls was seen very frequently till the couple of decades back as a routine activity. In the present times only brides are mostly found on their wedding rituals with the plaited hair of flowers. Previously senior women who were adept at making the flower studded plaited hair, used to make the same for the brides to get the fine decoration. There were casual workshops of women exchanging the technique was found in the afternoon hours of leisure times. A halo shaped round flower format is stitched on the top of the hair above the neck to continue the stitching flowers along with the length of the plaited hair. As Phanindranath Bose says *Shilpa Sastras* explain that the halo on the sculpture brings prosperity. Probably women bring out a design of such halo with the flowers exactly at the same position similar to the sculptors practice. In the recent times, specially shaped flower garlands are readily available in the markets which can be stitched on the plaited hair easily for special occasions like wedding functions. Flowers are one of the important materials to stimulate the senses while perfuming the self and the surroundings. [Fig.3.1; 3.2]

Mehendi Designs-

Certain kinds of designs, decorations and ornaments signify a female body. *Mehendi* designs on the hand are one such example. Men in *Marwadi* families in North India do put such *Mehendi* designs on hands at the time of wedding celebrations and ceremonial occasions but the designs are very simple and limited. The elaborate designs on the hands and feet are part of bride's decoration and designate the feminine kind of decorations. In south Indian practices putting *Mehendi* on the hands and feet whether it is in simple format or elaborate designs that is only a women's practice of designation. Moreover it is believed and effectively informed to baby boys by family members that if boys and men put on the *Mehendi*, whether it is on the hands or feet, those men become meek and timid. Such decorations are made gender specific.

There is a variety of *Mehendi* designs available either in the booklet form of prints or people who are experts in laying out good designs are available on hiring. Various kinds of designs Persian, Rajasthani and South Indian design patterns are available. Finely ground paste of the *Mehendi* leaves is laid out in to various designs on the hands. Hands gain colour of orange, reddish or maroon shades as per the skin kinds and the heat of the body supplied to the *Mehendi* leaves paste. Design compositions transform the appearance of the hands or feet. They appear like colour nets on the palms and a colourful walk through the designs on the feet. Applying '*Aaltha*' and '*Parani*' is a temporary application for coloring the feet. [Fig.3.8 to 3.11] There is another practice seen in recent times that younger generation is tattooing the body. Tattoo making was prevalent in earlier times also but the designs were very limited and

the practice was followed only as a sentimental and spiritual activity. Those tattoos were made as permanent colour scratches on the body. The tattooing of present times does not carry those meanings and they are very temporary and designs change time to time.¹¹² [Fig.3.3; to 3.7]

Jewellery-

Jewellery is one of the important aspects of body decoration consisting precious and valuable collection whether it is in the '*Poshagar*' of a queen or it is in the iron safe of a commoners' house or the simpler jewellery of a working class women. Senior women of the family instruct the younger generation women that how and which ornaments they are supposed to wear on specific rituals and the customary practices. As it is quoted "I wore everything expected of me." "...." ...my mother had been careful to explain the significance of every piece that I wore." "My ear rings must remind me not to listen to gossip or idle conversation." This was written by Sharada Dwivedi and Shalini Devi Holkar, quoted in an article "A woman's wealth." [Fig.3.17] Before the British entry or the women's liberation in modern period, women's jewellery was more than the adornment and it was defining the women's place according to Sharada Dwivedi and Shalini Holkar.¹¹³ [Fig.3.12; 3.13]

Women possess variety of ornaments in their jewellery boxes. Their ornaments are made of precious metals like gold, silver and the precious stones like diamonds, corals, etc. The precious stones are chosen to wear as per their astrological signs many a time. Few women learn the

¹¹² A tribe used to write lord Rama's name as tattoo on their body in British times it seems, so that when they are tortured by the colonial officers they can console themselves that there is lord Rama in between the stick that is beating and the person who wear tattoo.

¹¹³ An excerpt quoted from "Almond Eyes Lotus Feet" by Sharada Dwivedi and Shalini Holkar in a daily news paper Sunday magazine, The Indian Express, 23rd October, 2005.

information about the gems and utilize the information when they make a choice to wear the ornaments. At times they are advised by the senior members of the family or gifted by them. The ornaments are made in various patterns. *Chandraharam* is a well known pattern for Andhra region women, designs based on full moon shape for the long neck-chain ornament. There is a pattern of *Suryaharam* with radiating Sun rays is also available but it is a lesser known design. Sun sign is known as a masculine sign and symbolic of progress and moon as a dependent planet.

Choice of the metals of the ornaments goes as per the class and caste differences and according to the affordability. There is a belief amongst the *Brahmin* community of Andhra region that feet should not touch the gold, the precious metal. Married women wear toe rings on the feet made of silver and other ornaments worn on the different parts of body are made of gold. But the *Kamma* caste women who are land lords wear golden toe rings on the feet also. Working class women's jewellery is made of silver and the thickness of their jewellery is indicative of their riches. Ornaments are also known as '*Stree Dhan*' property of women.

Economic Distribution-'*Stree-Dhan*'-

Art of body decoration is instrumental and cognitive. Aesthetic metaphors of decoration are pitched to suit the political tone to cut across the civil and moral rules that create a restriction on women's economic security along with the freedom of expression. Another issue involved in such rituals of body decoration is economic distribution and material acquisition of jewellery under the umbrella of customs and traditions. Women did not have the property rights in then society.

Traditional laws of *Dharmasastras* were governing the personal law in traditional societies. Those judicial laws were looking in to both religion and ethics together as one scripture. It is hard to differentiate between the secular and religious matters of law in those days. Therefore Hindu Law was to be re written in British period by separating secular matters of modern times from religious issues. *Smritis* were the base for the writings of previous times as well as for the modern times. My discussions with legal advisor late Sri J.Nataraja Sarma of Hyderabad high court informed me that British did not touch the personal law that is the law of personal property. There is a definite distinction between the real rights of property and personal rights. That practice of law on personal property was differing from region to region depending upon the conventional practices belonging to that region and traditional societies. One such issue was the women's property rights on property in-heritance. The rights were separate for sons and daughters. Women were gifted land and/or jewellery by her parents or in laws. Those gifts were also of two kinds as for as women's rights on that material property is concerned. If that material property is listed as a common and joint family property, women can only enjoy that property but legally cannot have any rights to sell or transact. There were continues reformations on women's rights as for as their economic dependency is concerned in the later dates to come. Law further evolved by allowing little more freedom on women's rights on the property but all the reformations on the legal scriptures towards such personal law were based upon the conventional practices and customs which were the guiding principle of earlier times also. In 1920's there was a reformation on personal law towards the benefit of women that she can enjoy the land property of her husband's but cannot transact if she was a widow. There were similar modifications continued and in 1950's there was a further leverage allowed on the

legal scriptures to benefit the women. There were bills passed and daughters also have the rights in the family property. At the same time if the dowry was given to the groom at the time of marriage, the daughters would lose the rights on parent's property. In 2006, legally justice was given towards women's benefit and the laws were formulated against the domestic violence also. But there are clauses always to follow the laws. There is a common factor throughout the times that gave social security to women is, her jewellery that she possessed. Ornaments and the material that are gifted to a woman would become her property in true sense.

During the ceremonies and family functions, daughters are invited home and given the auspicious materials that includes valuable materials like jewellery and costumes. Such gifts are expected and her parents' would bring gifts when the daughters are performing any special rituals at her husband's place. Social customs made it compulsory to gift the married daughters in the ceremonial occasions and family functions whether that function is at her parent's or husband's place. Those gifts become sole property and wealth of that woman. The gifts of such kind fall into movable and immovable goods that are economically useful.¹¹⁴ Those items may not be identifiable in to liquid property category. Such practice is made a part of the custom probably to provide the economic and material security to women.[Fig.3.14 to 3.16]

Sri Harsha of Kanauj's, play refers to *Naganand* where the reference of *Diwali* festival comes in.¹¹⁵ It is mentioned in that context that bride and groom are presented with garments at this festival. The date of this play is 7th century and we can take the reference that such gifting custom to the daughter and son-in-law can be traced back to that date.

¹¹⁴ Marcel Mauss-"The Gift". Routledge, New York, London, English edition 1954.

¹¹⁵ Gode.P.K, Indian Cultural History

There is another kind of gifts where there is a moral code involved.¹¹⁶ If the gifts are made in the name of gods and rituals of sentiments, such gifts become important to receive and possess. Women not only gift amongst themselves, materials are gifted in the name of gods and goddesses. It is believed that if the daughter and son-in-law receive such gifts offered in the name of god, it is auspicious for the parents' family. Daughter and son-in-law respected in such a way that they represent Goddess *Laxmi* and Lord *Vishnu*. This is another way of accumulating material in the name of gods and goddesses. There are certain occasions, specific festivals and marriages no body refuses other persons' gifts. Give and take happens between two people and two groups. One gives and same one accepts from apposite person to whom one has given the gift, for example daughter gifts her parent's family and her parents make return gifts to her. It can be vice-versa also.

There is a different kind of reciprocation involved in this practice of gifting. Gifts and presentations can be of abstract emotions also. That reciprocation could be of material, honour, prestige, etc. When the youngsters receive the gifts they touch the feet of the elders. Meeting our near and dear in special occasions or meeting them after a long time would lead to the act of embracing and the greeting made in tears shows that these acts are also equivalent to gifts of concern and affections of abstract emotions. After receiving these gifts at times people may not emerge any richer than earlier many a time, but would have the satisfaction of exchange of gifts, affection expressed and that signals honour, moral support from the people of concern and relatives while receiving or reciprocating. Gifts received from her parents are memorable for the married daughter and prolong the pleasure of her childhood memories and

¹¹⁶ Ibid

times that she spent at her parents' house. Objects of permanency received from her parents and relatives of near and dear are passed on to their kith and kin. Objects of gift and emotions of abstractions are intermingling, represent one another, can replace each other or can exchange the positions. Such gifts make the people to feel that they are under one roof of attachments and that feeling brings them togetherness. The system of reciprocation brings the members into a real contract. These acts of gifting happens sometimes as obligations, reciprocations or even as services given on one hand and expecting on the other hand. Gifts and presents whatever may be the form they are pleasurable and makes the person stamped with the care and love attached to the gifts as a tag.

The system is woven into an inextricable network. Various themes, rules and ideas are complimenting each other in such kind of system of traditional practices. They are based on the sentimental and spiritual mechanism of a customary practice. Another kind of sentiments propagated in the society to secure the women's material wealth. There are myths made to spread in the society, that women's ornaments should not be sold that is inauspicious and bad omen for the family. While by preaching such emotional faiths or through the ritual practices of acquisition of material property, women are sure that they have the social security of precious material possession that is known as '*Stree Dhan*'. Women are not the earning members conventionally and they are economically dependent. Social, cultural and personal components are meaningfully admixed into such conventional practices. It is a complex composition, needful pack and aesthetically practiced.

Body pleasure-feminist theories-

There are prohibitive social norms and laws that generate the corporeal body stylization and regulate the body politics to define the gender. In other words female body is stylized through their dress code, gestures, regulates inner bodily desires calling it as a social discourse while controlling the female bodily pleasures.¹¹⁷ Female body is regulated through certain taboos and cultural inscriptions in their dressing and decorating. Their bodies are supposed to learn the modesty and submissive nature through such regulations. Very surprisingly women subverted those regulations of social norms and converted to their convenience to express themselves. They take pleasure in pampering their bodies through decorating their bodies through culturally approved costumes and decorations. Gestures of expected modesty become a performative platform for the women to express themselves to the beloved as well as to keep themselves away from those male whom they wish to avoid politely. [Fig.3.19; 3.20]

Performativity-

If the woman is not docile and otherwise in expressing herself that expression is called extravert expression¹¹⁸ and she is named derogatively as seductress. She is forced to behave in a specific way and cannot cross the boundaries set for her behaviour in the society and not supposed to express in those methods that are not in the expected norms. Woman does not want to negate the system nor want to expel herself out of that, behaving in other way. She would like to express in such a way where she need not become answerable to the society and does not want to display indifference to the social boundaries.

¹¹⁷ Judith Butler. "Gender Trouble" Chapter III, "Bodily inscriptions, performative subversions", Routledge, New York, 1990, 1999.

¹¹⁸ Girls right from their childhood are given a different kind of a training and women should be less expressive and they have to be obedient. There are many restrictions on their behavioural patterns and she should be modest in talking. She is informed that her modesty is the most beautiful decoration than wearing any other ornament.

Woman is expected to wear another costume that is modesty along with or without other decorative ornaments. She follows the same module that is given to her by the society and negotiates her space working within the same module to express her desires to seek bodily pleasures. The practice of ceremonious wearing of colourful costumes and ornaments come under accepted norms of the society. She carefully gets dressed up on all her gay and pleasant moods. *Abhisarika* of *Ashtanayakas* is one such example to explain the similarity. Women turn the same disc to boomerang. She performs to decorate herself to express her pleasures of the body through that modesty. That modesty is her performative plot. She made her body itself a source of expression while getting dressed up. They set their own household environment towards that performative space in the name of rituals or no rituals. All such pre fixed performative acts go as if things are happening in a regular and expected way of living. But the onlooker cannot get away without noticing that space and time of performance and cannot ignore the difference. Women do not make it obvious in an extravert way to be felt by the people but the subtlety in the expression makes its own way. They do not remain in the everyday kind of decoration when they want to express. Something happens little more than the regular day to day life of activities when women set the environment. They decorate themselves and decorate the household surrounding to appear different at different events changing the colours, flowers, ornaments, etc. Flowers and materials that spread perfumes are made integral part of the theatricality to express the desire and anticipating pleasures as a lively theme of the skit. Beginning of the story of the performance is never initiated nor ends. It is interwoven with the regularity of life and is a continuous process. Specially dressed and decorated sight of her is visually loaded information and informs that it is a special moment

elevated above the regular moment and the routine. Such performative aspects come under theatrical grouping. They express their aesthetic visual sensibilities on such performativity. Verbal dialogues are even absent. Women do not follow the classical notions of theatre and drama on the plot of body decoration and it is different from the folk theatre also where the rules of the performance differ. Women's performance is setting a new grammar of performance altogether on the body politic.

Women's point of View

"Sharira is about the co-existence of sexuality, sensuality and spirituality."...."It is all about movement; the flow of energies- there are no divisions."....."Arousal, for instance, is something that happens even when you touch something beautiful like a flower,....., It is that intense feeling..." (The Times of India, Oct, 9th 2004. 'Celebrating the Body' Chandralekha(Choreographer) spoke to Narayani Ganesh.)

There are two ways of evacuating the act of body decoration of women and the meanings involved in it. One accusation can be that women are narcissistic and are involved in appreciating themselves. Another negation can be that she is available for male gaze or for the act of seduction by decorating themselves. What are the points of women's view? Both the accusations have social implications and implied to derecognize her desire and pleasures of her body. Neither their decorations involve the self appreciation, nor her pleasures are designed only for the male gaze.

Writers like Laura Mulvey analyzed how the male gaze is locating the female as an object of pleasure. While fixing such discussions on male gaze and discussing only about the patriarchal norms, one is not bringing in the women's point of view. Male pleasure alone is compiled but

never the pleasure of women and not recognizing the experience of a female body. Women's acts, voices and desires are evacuated and made invisible in such discussions.

Udaya Kumar¹¹⁹ describes and reflects on Sree Narayana Guru and Kumaran Asan's story about customs and costumes of 19th Century, changing traditions in Kerala women's practices. Women started wearing blouse-upper costume that was not a practice earlier and seen as an unwanted modern practice. He writes that there were several strands of transformations that make the end of the last century a crucial turning point in the history of modern subjectivity in Kerala. Caste provided the primary grid for differentiation in nineteenth century Kerala. Clothing, jewellery, hair style, naming, food and all these constituted an elaborate sign system that had as its basis in the system of caste differentiation. Complex relocations underwent at the end of the century. The blouse in the narrated story ceases to be a caste marker and becomes an object of personalized enjoyment in the changing situations. What is the point of interest for us to note in the discussion is, individuation and desire that seems to be present in the act of decorating one-self and wearing the colourful costumes seems to have made possible gaze directed at one's own body and looking at one's own self indicating a new relation to the body in the context.

He also discussed about the spirituality, a complex relation between ascetics and desire. First the move is from the individual to the community and from the community to the human race. The identity established here between worldly and spiritual aspirations can be seen as emerging from the bodily desires individuated. Body needs to be preserved in order to care for

¹¹⁹ "Self, Body and Inner sense: Some reflections on Sree Narayana Guru and Kumaran Asan" by Udaya Kumar. Studies in History. Sage publications. New Delhi, ThousandOaks, London.

the '*Prana*'. The body is not a bearer of signs, it is a sign on its own right. Pleasure and pain, in their ultimate intensities, would no longer be matters of the body but of the soul.

References of ornaments and Decorations from Literary sources—

Alamkaram-

There is a commonly used word in Andhra region for auspicious decoration that is '*Alamkaram*'. Dandin of early 8th Century discussed *Alamkara* in Indian literature. He was a predecessor of Vamana, mid 8th to mid 9th Century, who talked on Riti a specific arrangement of words. *Alamkara* leads to beauty '*Sobha*' of the poetry that is formal ornamentation. These formal qualities indicate the expression. According to them formal arrangement and ornamentation designates the aspects of successful expression i.e, '*Guna*' expression and less successful is the '*Dosa*' the ugliness.¹²⁰

Women's understanding about decoration and its aesthetic meanings can be explained vitally. Few examples to quote here are from the Epics. Radha by allowing Krishna to decorate her body in intimacy, she is expressing her desire towards him in their romantic story. Epic story *Ramayana* explains that Kaikeyi, Dasaratha's wife takes out her ornaments and decoration and throws on the floor on her way to a dark chamber '*Kopagruha*'. It is a successful expression negotiated through her ornaments to express her anger. It is to negotiate her wish that her son Bharata to become king of Ayodhya instead of Dasharatha's eldest son Rama. It is a business deal worked out through the removal of her body decoration. Sita threw her ornaments on her way to Lanka when she was abducted by Ravana. Here removal of jewellery is dwelling a

¹²⁰ S.K.De writes a critique on Sanskrit poetics as a study of aesthetics that the expression should be taken as an organic whole rather than a mechanical model.

direction as a message communication to Rama to reach her and rescue her. This is not the ugliness of *Alamkara*-the removal of decoration. It is expressing the wish or seeking the security while acting through the removal of ornaments. There is another practice in the society that if a woman becomes widow she supposed to remove the ornaments. Probably this practice of removal of decoration may be understood as '*Dosa*' the ugliness.

From Telugu Social history'—

Mr. Reddy observes wearing the toe ring is not a practice found in *Vedic* culture. It was described in *Mahabharatam* that when Keechaka went to *Nartanagaram* and he was wearing toe rings. Probably men were also wearing toe rings at that time of that Epic writing, and as per Mr.Reddy's observation, even today men are seen, but rarely wearing toe rings. Wearing toe ring is a practice of married women widely seen today in most of the parts of Indian continent.

Mr. Reddy extended his references to quote from literary sources for the information required.

Somasekhararaju a western Chalukyan king's *Abhilashitārtha Chintamani* in 1130 A.D wrote¹²¹ that "The 'Dias'-platform of wedding rituals are decorated with flowers and garlands. During the wedding rituals groom and bride would sprinkle scented waters. Mr.Reddy also observed that certain wedding rituals are different from one community to other. A locket kind of '*Mangalasutram*', round and typical ear studs are worn by the bride and the married women. That is the practice of *Dravida* or south Indian practice and was not found in Vedic literature. Design of that '*Mangalasutram*' differs from one region to another.

Kakatiya period, 12th and 13th centuries, people felt that sarees without border and plain ones are inauspicious to wear. That obviously increased the luxury of the costume while increasing

¹²¹ Suravaram Pratapa Reddy

the borders with gold and silver of various designs. Marcopolo from Genewa visited Orugallu present Warangal city, capital of Kakatiya dynasty in Maharani Rudramadevi period. He had written that textile weaving in Kakatiya period was in very advanced state of weaving. They weave such a fine cloth equal to a spider web. That was very costly and it seems there was no king or queen who did not wear that textile in the world.

Nannechoda written '*Kumarasambhavam*' in Telugu language and he mentioned women applied lac on their lips to brighten the colour of the lips. They applied lac colour also to the feet. There were many professional craftsmen who were making jewellery for women. There was a place in Orugallu of kakatiya period where toe rings were made for married women and that place was popularly known as '*Mattewada*'. '*Matte*' word in Telugu language means a toe ring. That place with the same name still exists in Warangal district.

Dandi of early 8th Century described few ornaments of hands, head and precious chains and necklaces worn as neck ornaments in his *Sanskrit* poetry. Ketana, 15th C. written *Dasakumaracharitam* in Telugu and described certain ornaments. His listing of described ornaments is more than those ornaments that were mentioned in original text written by Dandi. That makes us to believe that those further narrated ornaments must have been popular in Telugu land. As per Ketana's description women used to wear *Mungara*, *Mukkera*, ear and nose ornaments of various designs. There are various designs and ornaments like *Sumaang-Maang Teeka*, *Ekaavali*-one string pearl chain, *Nupur*, *Manjeera*-anklets, *Seesh Phool*- circular flower kind discs worn on the hair, arm ornaments-*Vankeelu*, *Maanik mala*-gems strings, *Katisutra* or *Mekhala*-waist ornament of belt shaped, *Sumargi*-nose ring, *kangan*, *Kundala*-

*Patra Kundala, Nakra Kundala, Sankhapatra kundala, Ratna Kunadala, Sarpa-Kundala, etc.*¹²²

Those ornaments are popular in Andhra Pradesh even today including finger rings of different motifs and shapes. Wearing *Kanchipuram* sarees, pearl ornaments, etc were very popular in Kaktiya period. Long and life size mirrors were popularly used at that time. Orthodox families did not use the mirrors because they were made of earthen clay. Such people used sparkingly shining brass plain surface as mirrors.

They used turmeric for the face to get the tint of colour and on feet as anti septic medicinal material. *Mehendi* herbal leaves were used to colour their nails and *Kajal*-a black ash-collyrium, made of herbs is applied on eyes to intensify the charm of the eyes as well as for the cooling effect on the eyes. *Kajal* was a usual wearing of women every day. When the daughter is sent to her in laws place after her marriage it is a tradition to include *Kajal* box along with other gifts. The objects of auspicious materials like turmeric, *Kum-Kum*, *Kajal*, etc were gifted to women in the rituals of customary practices today or yesterday and such objects come under the material possession of her toiletry kit. The cosmetic industries brought in great change in the materials that are used today for the beautification of the eyes, nails, lips, etc. There is a change and modification on the list of items gifted in recent times. Fancy shaped '*Bindi*' or toiletry kits are also seen gifted in the present times.

From Reddy Raja's period 1324 to 1434 A.D. women's ornaments does not seem changed much in this period compared to earlier times and the same continued further in Vijayanagara period of 1340's to 1530 A.D also, as per the observations of Mr.Reddy based on literary sources. Golden border sarees, various colors on the pallus, various kinds of blouses were worn very

¹²² J.N.Banarjee, The development of Hindu Iconography, Munshiram Manoharlal publishers Pvt. Ltd. N.Delhi, 1974

popularly in this Reddy Raja's period also. Mr.Reddy observed similar kind of ornaments. Diamonds were abundantly worn in the society. There were diamond mines near Gutti region of Andhra land. Men of rich families used to wear hats with silk frill decorations. Men also were wearing pearl ear rings and chains in the neck. Poet Srinadha's times jewellery, what he described in his verses correspond to the similar designs what are seen today and what was there in Kakatiya times of 12 th C.

Probably there was no difference in the ornaments of women from 1600 A.D to 1800A.D also as observed by Mr.Reddy from Narayanakavi's writings of this later date and the ornaments what he described. There is not much of a great difference compared to earlier variety and the pattern of the ornaments that are worn today on the occasions like wedding ceremonies. Plaited hair ending with a typical ornament of conical or circular kind, a chain on the partition line of the hair, ear studs, typically designed and called as Sun and moon to decorate back side of the hair and above the plaited hair or hairdos, Diamonds and ruby studded ornaments, Nose rings, waist ornament decorated with delicate chains and various decorative motifs on that ornament which encircles the delicate waist, three layered long neck-chains, anklets, etc. are similar on those or these days. Women at coastal districts and north east of Krishna district used to wear thick ring on the nose partition of thin layer '*Mukkeru*'. Such kind of ornament is seen in the Visakhapatnam, north of Vizag, Srikakulam, Kalingapatnam, south of Orissa, etc. regions even today. That ornament gets hung on the middle line of the upper lip from the partition of nostrils. The ornaments were as finely made as possible. Probably change is only on the men's costume and decorations of ornaments. Ornaments that are worn by men in those days, as described from literary sources are not seen today.

There were people who were dyeing the colours to the textiles. They used natural colours that were made of herbs. Weaving of cotton and silk was quite popular at that time in the society. “*Patusale*” is a weaver’s community was working on weaving silk. “*Patu*” word means silk in Telugu and Sale is pronounced as *Saalee*(Aae) means spider. Men were also wearing long saree like costume with gold and silver borders which is seen occasionally in these days. There were many traditional weaving centres like, *Ponnuru, Gunturu, Gadwala, Pochampalli* silk, *Venkatagiri*, etc and block printing centres like *Kalamkari* in Andhra Pradesh and continuing till today.

Perfumes-

Turmeric, sandal, flower essence waters are sprinkled on each other in the festivals of *Vasantotsavam* or on specific occasions. But it was a regular practice of rich people. Such perfumed waters would entice the people and the surroundings. Perfumes and scents were very popular and people extensively used rose flowers, musk and saffron etc for the purpose of making the perfumery. Rose water was sold extensively, filled in the leather bags, the bags that keep the water in cooling condition. Garlands were sold and made extensively with different flowers. There were many ‘*Gandhakaras*’ who made perfumery.¹²³ Royal family members used to apply musk perfumed grains mixed with rose water on their body. They used scented oils and perfumes made of flowers to massage their bodies before taking the bath. Both men and women used different kinds of perfumery waters or oils.

Community specific decorations-

¹²³ P.K.Gode

Different communities wear different kind of costumes and they are recognized by their costumes and decorations. Decorations changed as per the occasion of the celebrations. If the village goddess festival of '*Gramganga*', women would wear new clothes after shampooing their hair, apply *Kajal* in the eyes, *Sindhhoor-Kumkum* on the forehead, flowers in the hair, *Neem* leaves garlands in the neck and move around having eating beetel nut and leaves.

'*Chenchu*' is a tribal community in Andhra Pradesh. Their costumes and decorations are specific in recognizing their community. Women wear bead chains in the neck and peacock eyes in their hair.

Maladasari, men of specific community who sing devotional songs to earn their livelihood has their own kind of dressing. One would be identified by his *Tulasi* beads chain in the neck, his umbrella made of *Kevda* leaves, a stick made of horse hair, a hat, circular *Kundalas* in the ears, etc.,

Dasarasani's costume is a typical wear of tight saree. *Jamili* beads are tightly stringed to wear in the neck and she chants the name of Lord *Vishnu' Hari'*.

Madiga Joguralu- *Madiga* is a backward tribe. *Joguralu* is a lady *Shiavite* saint. She wears turmeric *Bindu*, model feet of the goddess made of leather are hung in her neck, Long chain of shells hanging in the neck, a stick with snake hood design, wearing anklets, wearing colourful costume and she would be moving around begging singing about lord *Parusuramudu*.

Erukali woman-they are also from *Chenchu* tribe community because their deity is also Lord *Narasimha* worshipping god of *Chenchu* tribe. She has tattoos on her face and elbows, holding a baby in her specially tied saree on her shoulder to waist. She carries generations old cane basket on her head, puts *Vibhuti* on the forehead and white colour line in between the

eyebrows, *Kajal* in the eyes and she sells herbs and claims that the herbs she sells can hypnotize people. One can use those herbs to fulfil their wishes, for example if a lady wants to grab the attention of a man of her liking, her herbs would do the needful.

Reddy women wear beads and different kinds of ornaments, finely made chains in the neck, big toe rings on three toes, *Kajal* on the eyes, etc. Women of only this community wear golden toe rings. Women would wear Jewellery as per their class distinction along with the caste identification.

Jangamuralu- a lady from *Jangam* community-Her hair is applied with milk secretion of banyan tree which turns the hair tough and entangled, puts *Vibhuti* on the forehead, *Rudraksha* beads in the neck, a stick with snake hood design, a finger ring with '*Nandi*' Lord *Shiva's Vahana* as its motif.

ii) References from P.K.Gode studies on Indian Cultural History-¹²⁴

***Nuth*-Nose ornament—**

P.K.Gode studied extensively about the antiquity of the *Hindu* nose ornament-*Nuth*. As per his discussion the Indian nose ornament attracted the attention of the foreigner's in 16th and 17th centuries. Lt. Edward Moor written in 1790 to 1792 A.D that the *Hindoo* women wear a jewel or ring in their nose called *Hindvi Nuth*. The Arabian women bore the separation between two nostrils to wear a hallow ring. P.K.Gode is under the impression that the nose ring ornament came in to existence in post-Muslim period and he admits that he is irresistible to conclude that Muslims have imported the custom of wearing the nose ring ornament. He brings in another

¹²⁴ Studies in Indian Cultural History volumes by P.K.Gode, collected publications, Pune. 1960

reference of Dr. Altekar's observation that there is no word referring to nose ring in Sanskrit language of *Vedic* period. Mr. Gode kept bringing in many references from the writings of British writers and the writings from earlier than British period where the references of nose ring and jewels of nose ornament are mentioned. He brings in examples of 14th century mural paintings of *Padmanabhaswami* temple in Trivandrum. Mural depicts a gathering of women musicians where every woman is wearing a nose-ring. While bringing the examples from *Suktimuktavali* composed in 1257 A.D and Kshemendra's writings he establishes the presence of nose ring in these writings. Bilhana composed his poem in 1080A.D and nose pearl had taken possession in his writings. Mr.Gode does not agree to Mr.Das Gupta's statement that Vallabhadeva's *Subhasitavali* contains a reference to nose ornament assigned to *Bilvamanagala* of 9th century. He further discusses about the *Amarakosa* of Amarasimha of 6th C. A.D. and mentions there is a mention of list of ornaments in this earliest *Sanskrit* lexicon but there is no mention of any nose ornament in the list. The nose ornament –Nuth as per Mr. Gode cannot be traced back earlier than 1000 A.D. He quoted the references of Sankaras verses where the references on nose ornament are found in *Saundaryalahari*, *Tripurasundari* *Manasa Pujastotram*, *Mantramatraka* *Pushpamalastavam*, *Devichatushashti* *Upachara*, *Yamunashtakam*, *Bhramarambashtakam*. Mr.Gode further comments that Sankara the great Indian philosopher was a great devotee not only of the goddess but also of her nose ornament. The nose ornament offered to the goddess in these verses appears to be an elaborate description. Mr. Gode brings in these examples in and also questions the authenticity of the verses and the authorship of these verses to Sankaracaharaya. He felt that all works are not of Sankara and they are composed after 1000 A.D.

Mr.Gode brought in the reference writings of E.W.Lane (1833-1835 A.D) who described the Biblical ancestry of the Egyptian nose-ring. As per his observations nose-ring must have had some previous history. Egyptians and the Bedawin tribe of Palastine have kept the custom of using the nose-ring till the present day as stated by Prof.Miller. Egypt seems to have been in contact with India long prior to 400 A.D. In view of this early contact between Egypt and India it would have been easy for the nose-ring to migrate to India long before 1000 A.D. and its appearance in early Indian literature. One can also keep the options for discussions about the import of nose-ring either from Egypt or Palestine.

Past and present-of Nose ornament-

Aryan ancestors may not be very fond of ornaments as per Mr.Gode. They must have developed this love when they came in contact with races and cultures of India as per his opinion. There is a big list of male and female ornaments mentioned in Bharata's *Natyasastra*. Nose ornament is conspicuously absent in this list. At present nose ornament is popular among every community not only *Hindus*. As per Mr.Gode Anthropologists have already recorded the evidence which shows that all the savage tribes in Asia, Oceania, Australia, Africa and America have had the custom of boring not only the septum but also the sides of the nostrils to put the nose pins and pendants or rings in the septum borings.

Even after looking into such evidences Mr. Gode is very much interested in discussing the date of nose ring at 1000 A.D and not ready to accept any genesis or the proof for the nose ornament earlier than that date. He says no literature of *Jain*, *Buddhist* or *Brahmanical* prior to 1000 A.D contains any reference to nose ornament. No sculpture or painting earlier than 1000 A.D contains any representation of the nose ornament at least in India.

At the end he leaves the question to be answered by Proto-Indian History and Anthropology students and opines and advises the women that they should leave this tradition of boring the nose and wearing the nose ornament which should be left for savage tribes because it is not the practice supported by any *Dharmasastras* of Hindus. He advises further to leave this ornament by orthodoxy women who make their husbands to pay heavy amounts for these nose ornaments. He did not leave any space for the women who like to wear that ornament.

Gandhasastra-Perfumery-

Gandhasastra means the 'Science of Cosmetics and Perfumery' and *Gandhayukti* means the art of preparing different cosmetics and perfumery. *Gandhadhara* of *Gandhasastra* defines the purpose of science of art of cosmetics and perfumery. As mentioned by P.K.Gode from the literary references that, this science of cosmetics and perfumery is helpful in religious merit as perfumed auspicious incense to worship gods, worldly prosperity and sensual enjoyments, it contributes to the pleasures of men, it removes one's own poverty, contributes to the pleasures of kings and it gives the highest delight to the minds of accomplished ladies. The manufacture and trading of cosmetics and perfumes was flourishing in ancient and medieval India. The collection of moral tales '*Panchatantra*' in Sanskrit, about 1500 years old, contains a stanza on the prosperity attained by the dealers in cosmetics and perfumes. The Indian *Gandhasastra* or the science of cosmetics and perfumery is a part of Indian medical science i.e. *Ayurveda*. Consequently *Gandha-Dravya*-aromatic ingredients are part of Indian Pharmacology. Presiding deity of *Gandhasastra* is *Gandha Yaksha* according to *Gangadhara*.

P.K.Gode discovered two treatises on *Gandhasastra*-Cosmetics and perfumery. According to him these treatises were composed between 1200A.D and 1600 A.D. Authors of those treatises,

he says, have not mentioned the sources of the materials from which they have drawn the information. He wrote that sections of *Vishnudharmottara* and *Agnipurana* describe *Gandhayukti*. The extracts from the *Kalikapurana* and the *Manasollasa* (1130 A.D, composed by a *Chalukya* king Somesvara) illustrate the use of perfumes in sacred and secular spheres of Hindu life in medieval India between 600 to 1300 A.D. Vatsayana's *Kamasutra* mentions the art of preparing cosmetics and perfumes as one of the 64 arts in which the gentleman of the period was expected to be proficient in those arts. As per his discussions, Indian knowledge of art of manufacturing cosmetics and perfumery was known in 9th century. Varahamihira in *Brhatsamhita*, 5th century did not record the process of preparing the perfumed oils but there is a chapter on *Gandhayukti* in his work. *Agnipurana* of 9th century describes the preparation of perfumed oils. There is a Buddhist text called '*Gandhadhikara*' a work on eroticism called the '*Nagarasarvasva*' by a Buddhist author *Padmasri* of 1000 A.D. *Manasollasa* of Somesvara in 1130 A.D refers to *Gandhayukti*. *Gandhasara* of Gangadhara of 1300 and 1600 A.D also talks about in detail on *Gandhayukti*. This process was unaltered right from 9th century till 1811-1812 A.D of Buchanan's Patna-Gaya report. *Bhojanakutuhala*, 1851 A.D manuscript of *Raghunatha Ganesha Navahasta*, deals with a section on preparing the Rose-water.

In the *Carakasamhita* of *Cikistasthana* there are several medicinal oils prescribed that are made of varied materials of aromatic ingredients like Sandal, *Manjisht*, *Agar*, *Valak* etc. It is possible to presume that the preparation of scented oils developed along with the preparation of medical oils. Some of the aromatic oils used in *Gandhasastra* have definite medicinal value.

There were recipes available for hair-dyes in the *Navanitaka* of 2nd Century A.D. and there is a close affinity with the recipes for Ink manufacture after 1000 A.D and the hair-dye '*Kesaragah*'

given in the text which is 1000 years earlier. Texts about hair-dyes are as old as 2nd century A.D. Varahamihira of 500 A.D in his *Brhat-Samhita* (Chapter 78 *Gandhayukti*) refers to the importance of Hair-dye and records a recipe for it.

Tambula-

Dr.Lokesh Chandra brought in the references of '*Tambula*' in Indian inscriptions. The earliest date of reference, he found, is 473 A.D. *Tambula* is used to get the red colour on the lips as one of the costume to get dressed which is replaced by lipstick artificial colours in most of the societies in recent times. Gupta inscription of 473 A.D on *Tambula* supports, as described by Mr.Lokesh Chandra, that *Tambula* was introduced in India from South Sea islands like Java, Sumatra,etc during early Gupta period because of increased contact between India and these islands. The references to *Tambula* are found in Kalidasa's works, and the early medical texts like '*Caraka Samhita*' '*Kasyapa Samhita*', '*Susruta Samhita*', etc. Those texts references are in harmony with this inscriptional reference of 473 A.D. Verses about *Tambula* are found in the section on Cosmetics and Perfumery-*Gandhayukti* in the *Brhat-Samhita* of Varahamihira, who was born about 490 A.D. The author on this chapter Mr.Chandra brought in the reference of inscriptions in abundance from 8th century A.D. and onwards. V.S Agrawala thinks that "*Tambula*" came into vogue somewhere about the early Gupta period as a result of India's cultural contact with the Eastern islands. Mr.P.V.Kane in his writings '*History of 'Dharmasastra'*' said (B.O.R.Institute, Poona, 1941) vol.II *Tambula* was probably introduced sometime before or about the beginning of Christian Era in South India and then spread northwards." He also states that *Tambula* is not mentioned in ancient *Grhyasutras*, though there are references to *Tambula* in *Laghuharita*, *Laghvasvalayana*, *Varahamihira*, *Ausanasa*, *Raghuvamsa*, *Kamasutra*,etc.

The Attitude of Hindu *Dharmasastra* towards *Tambula-Bhoga*-

Tambula was recognized as an object of enjoyment but its use is forbidden for the persons who adopted a religious mode of life or observing certain religious vows as a permanent or temporary measure as per Mr. Gode's writings also. According to a verse quoted by Gagabhata(1625 to 1685 A.D)¹²⁵ *Tambula* is one of the eight *Bhogas*-objects of enjoyment-

1.Perfumes, 2.Woman, 3.Clothes, 4.Music, 5.*Tambula*, 6.Dinner, 7.Bed, 8.Flowers.

In the encyclopaedic work *Manasollasa* there are chapters on different *Bhogas*.

1.Vilepanabhoga-deals with *Vilepanas* to be used by the king for different seasons. *Vilepana*-application of prescribed materials removes the odours of perspiration. *Lepana* is prescribed for the season and that should be harmonious with the dress, which should be changed according to the seasons.

2.Dhupabhoga-deals with the ingredients of different *Dhupa*-incenses such as *Churnadhupa*, *Pindadhupa*, and *Vartidhupa*. *Dhupas*-incenses are kept in front of kings and queens, their costumes and queen's hair for perfuming the surroundings and the self. Different kinds of perforated incense-holders of gold and silver of different sizes and shapes of birds and beasts are also mentioned in the chapter, as per the observation of Mr.Gode.

Vilepanabhoga and *Dhupabhoga* corresponds the *Sugandhabhoga* verse.

3.Yosidbhoga-deals with the qualification of women whom a king should marry. This chapter also corresponds to *Vanitabhoga* verse.

4.Vastropabhoga-deals with the enjoyment related to garments. The king should wear those clothes that corresponding to the auspicious and inauspicious occasions. After the process of

¹²⁵ Journal of Oriental Institute (Baroda) , March, 1952.

Vilepanabhoga the *Vastrabhoga* follows. The clothes in king's wardrobe possess cotton, silk, silver or/and gold woven clothes, colourful clothes from various countries are recommended for various seasons.

Spring-Thin and charming silk or cotton clothes are to be worn.

Summer-Clothes of white colour are prescribed.

Rainy season-Red, pink, reddish and dark-red clothes made in attractive colours should be worn.

Autumn-Thin clothes dyed with Safflower or lac.

Cold Season-Woolen clothes of various kinds are recommended.

King also should consider to wear those clothes that suit his complexion.

5.Sangita-Vinoda-This chapter corresponds to the music forms. It is the longest chapter in *Manasollasa*.

6.Tambulabhoga-This chapter describes the way king should use and enjoy the *Tambula*-beetle leaves. This chapter also describes how the beetle leaves, pearl-oyster lime, camphor, *Kasturi*(Musk) should be checked for the quality and the use of those materials in making *Tambula*.

7.Sayyabhoga-deals with seven kinds of royal beds and eight kinds of bed-steads. *Toyasayya*-water-bed to be used in summer was made of leather bag filled with water. *Hamsasayya*- a bed made out of feathers of Swan bird to be used in spring. A bed of flowers and tender foliage was made for temporary enjoyment. Cotton bed was to be used in hot season and water-bed at noon time. In *Hemanta*, *Sisira* and rainy seasons also cotton bed was used. In the autumn, king

is advised to use '*Dolamanca*' or swinging bed filled with lotus filaments for the extended pleasure.

8. *Annabhoga*-deals with vegetarian and non-vegetarian eateries and their methods of preparing, various recipes suitable for different seasons.

9. *Malyapabhoga*-deals with the enjoyment of the flower garlands. *Campaka, Mallika, Utpala, Patala, Bakula, Surabhi, Karaviara, Satapatar, Malati, Yuthi, Varnapushpa, Iruvaiti, Nevali*, etc flowers are to be gathered from the trees and creepers to make the garlands. Some of these flowers were used for preparing perfumed oils in ancient India and today for perfumes. This chapter corresponds to *Kusumabhoga* of Gagabhatta's eight *bhogas*. These *bhogas* indicate the veritable culture of Indian history period and the interest provided on such issues of decorating body externally, enjoy intensely and decorating the surroundings to enhance one's own pleasures.

According to *Sivapurana* quoted in *Prasastisamgraha* by K.Bhujabali Shastry is, the student and the ascetic are prohibited to use a comfortable seat, bed and garment, *Tambula*, decoration after bath, tooth-pick, perfumes, etc. No luxury was allowed for the student and one is expected to lead a hard disciplined life. According to *Agnipurana* a person observing '*Upavasa*' fasting on religious following is forbidden to use *Tambula* and physical pleasures. As per P.K.Gode's mention, Haribhaskara Agnihotri also had recorded such observations in his work on *Dharmasastra* called *Smritiprakasa*, for example use of *Tambula* and such pleasures are forbidden for the ascetics, students, widow, and a woman in her menstruation. Further such discussions brought in by Mr.Gode informs that list includes along with *Tambula* and perfumes

are gambling, dancing, vocal or instrumental music, slander, stale and used food, umbrella, sandals, cloth girt around the legs and knees while in the sitting posture, etc.

Tambula seems to be an important aspect of traditional values. *Dharmasastra* deals with such details about auspicious time to chew *Tambula* for astrological belief. *Tambula* should be made with good leaves, lime and nuts and it should be chewed after gifting one *Tambula* to a *Brahmin*. It is believed that who gifts such *Tambula* would become as beautiful as god of love and attains freedom from diseases. Gifting beetle-nut in *Tambula* pleases god *Brahma*, beetle-leaves lord *Vishnu*, and lime pleases lord *Siva*. *Tambula* being the characters of trinity, it's gifting is supposed to bring prosperity and good fortune. Number of nuts that are to be given along with certain number of leaves is also prescribed. King should be given thirty two beetle leaves in *Tambula* and six leaves for the enemies. There is a description about which finger should be used to take the leaves and nuts.

There is a custom in the matrimonial ceremonies that bride and the groom cut the beetle nut roll by keeping their mouths close to each other or one would cut and eat one half while giving another half to the partner. The amatory property of stimulating love and passion, setting the physical charm, is one of those 13 properties of *Tambula* recognised by Varahamihira. Vatsayana's *Kamasutra* describes in detail about a technique to be followed by a lover with the help of *Tambula* in his advances to inform a married woman about his desire. *Brhatsamhita* by Varahamihira of 500A.D and the *Yogaratnakara* composed before 1746 A.D contains the verse mentioning 13 qualities of *Tambula*. *Tambula* has medicinal values. As a token of respect *Tambula* is presented to the learned and amongst relations.

5.Chapter-

Prodigal Aesthetics-Day to Day-(Household) Aesthetics-

Indian traditional philosophy emphasizes sight and sound and consider these senses as the senses of higher status compared to smell, taste and touch. Such sensations are understood as lower, visceral, animalistic and crude to allow any intellectual description for the conceptual analysis and rational organization in the Western Aesthetics and known as kinesthetic sensations. In the process of denying such bodily sensations as lower senses and, morally problematic, we neglect a large portion of aesthetic dimension of our daily lives.¹²⁶ After the model of western paradigmatic art aesthetic, analysis about everyday aesthetic is misguided by that 'High Art Aesthetic' in understanding its rich and diverse content. Preferred arts are elevated to dramatic and extraordinary platform where as everyday events are overlooked as ordinary and mundane and does not receive equal attention.

There are many aesthetic encounters in the day to day activities like, cooking, having food, day to day worships, ritual worships, while decorating or attending toiletry for the daily routine or on the worships and celebrations, singing involved in the worships, singing folk or classical songs as an act of catharsis, humorous conversations, including riddles and proverbs in the conversations to explain the situations to others, etc. We tend to take these expressions for granted and overlook the deep rooted aesthetic involved in such activities. There is hardly any person who did not open the vocal cords for personal informal singing. Film music is very commonly picked up tunes heard from radio in previous times or from television sets

¹²⁶ Yuriko Saito, "Everyday Aesthetics". Oxford University Press, 2007.

nowadays. Homemade medicines-*Griha Vaidyam*, decorating the inner chambers of living and houses is a commonly found aesthetic pleasure. These activities are the most easily dependable cathartic acts for many. Consequent query that arises is about the nature of these aesthetic activities, grouping them and their nomenclature. As per the list of prof.B.Rama Raju many such day to day aesthetic category activities can be classified into folk lore practices.

Definition of Folk lore-

Prof. B.Rama Raju of Osmania University worked on Telugu Folk poetic literature.¹²⁷ He took a note of Alan Dundes analysis on what is folklore and his observations. The word folk can be referred to any group of people whoever shares at least one common factor in the social living. It does not matter what the linking factor can be. It could be a common occupation, language or religion. They can announce that that factor is their tradition. He explained that there are certain common folklore factors that come under the category of 'Folk', include myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, greetings and leave taking formulas, etc. It also includes folk costume, dance, drama(and mime), art, belief(Superstition), medicine, instrumental music, songs, speech, similes, metaphors and names. Folk poetry ranges from oral epics to autograph-book verses, epitaphs, latrinalia¹²⁸, limericks, ball bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes, counting out rhymes and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also has games, gestures, symbols, prayers, practical jokes, folk etymologies, food recipes, quilt and embroidery designs, types of houses, barn and fence types, street vendors' cries, and even the traditional conventional sounds used to summon animals or to give them

¹²⁷ Janapada Vignana Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1978.

¹²⁸ Authentic repetition of the word from Prof. Rama Raju.

commands. There are major events such as festivals, and special or celebration day's customs are also included under the category of folk practices.¹²⁹

Historical references-

Telugu literature as a classified language, '*Margi Bhasha*' can be found right from 11th century but it is difficult to trace the time period of folk literature. People wrote songs and poems and enjoyed singing those songs in colloquial language earlier than 11th C. As mentioned by Suravaram Pratap Reddy "*Ooyala Patalu*(cradle songs), *Gouda Geethamulu*" were popular in the society of eastern Chalukyas. Narayana Bhattu, a friend and who helped Nannaya Bhattu in writing *Maha Bharatam* in Telugu language, was a scholar on Sanskrit, Karnataka, Prakrit and *Paisachikandhra* languages. Devotional songs, songs of pounding, etc. folk songs were prevalent in Kakatiya period and those songs are found even today. Nachana Somana mentioned about a kind of songs known as '*Jaajara*' songs. Those are sung by agricultural labour in Telangana region in present day times also. But he had not clearly mentioned who sang these kinds of songs at that time.

Telugu script of one of Jaajara songs- There was Jaamba mythology. Panchajaati-lower casts were believed they were the offspring of Jaambavant and their songs and expressions were settled as Yakshagaanam, it is believed, and there songs have lyrics of Jaadura, Jaajara, etc.

“జాజర	జాజరంచు	ముదుచర్పరిగీతులు	వారునీరస
స్వాదమదాతిరేకముల	జన్మిక	గాయగ	దక్షవాతటికా
వేదుల	మీదటన్	గనక	వీణలు
		మీటుచు	బాడి
			రాచ్చరల్

మొద మెలర్పగ భువన మోహన విగ్రహ భీమనాదునిన్”

¹²⁹ Authentic reproduction what Prof. B.Rama Raju reproduced from Alan Dundes.

Folk category songs sung by women-*Elalu, Jolalu, Suvvalulu, Dhavalulu, Vennelapadamulu, Viraali, Tummeda, Gobbi* (songs sung to worship *Gobbemma*), *Kovela Padamulu, Manjarulu*, etc were put under the category of *Yakshaganamulu*. Appakavi had written the character of *Yakshaganam*. Wedding songs, Lullaby songs, *Sri Dhavalamu, Suvvale, Suvvi, Ardhachandrikalu, Dvipadabhedalu, Ragadalu*, etc are the few examples of such songs.¹³⁰ Some of these songs are popular till the date. This form of singing was popular in Vijayanagara, Madhurai, Tanjavur regions. *Sugreeva Vijayam* was one of the popular episodes out of 500 *Yakshaganam* that were popular in Telugu land. *Yakshaganam* dance dramas must had become popular in the civil society taking the clues from tribal songs and dance dramas, as opined by Suravaram Pratap Reddy. They had become more popular than Sanskrit dramas in the society.

Yakshaganam is different from Sanskrit-classical drama and known as '*Desi-Kavitha*'. Those songs were popular in south India earlier than 11th century, '*Akkalejogu*' was a community worshipping goddess *Sakti Kameswari* who were from *Jakkala* sect, was living in Telugu land. *Jakkala* must be the colloquial pronunciation of the word *Yaksha*. Palkurki Somanadha mentioned in his *Panditaradhya Charitra* that people of *Jakkala* sect performed *Shaiva* stories on theatrical performances. *Kreedabhiramam* of Srinadha talked about *Kameswari Katha*(Story) narrated by *Jakkala* sect. These are the references of 15th century. Some of such folk practices probably settled in Brahmin communities also continued till the date. Srinadha mentioned in his *Kaseekhandam* that *Jakkani* and *Chindu* were *Desi Nrityam*-folk dances. Men danced '*Kolatam*' (*Raasleela*) and women were dancing '*Gondli*'-a dance form while clapping. Siddhendrayogi, (1568 A.D.) of *Kuchipudi* village near Krishna river region had written *Bhagavatam, Paarijatam*,

¹³⁰ Andhrula Sanghika Charitra. Pg.276.

Gollakalaapam, etc. He organized dance drama programs based on those story songs involving *Brahmin* community of the same village. '*Kuchipudi Nrityam*' of that lineage is celebrated and performed even today as one of the classical dance forms. Most of the celebrated names of today, Vedantam Satyanarayana, Vempati Chinastayam, etc who perform this dance form are from *Kuchipudi* village.

Folk songs-

Certain behavioral patterns like abusing, polygamy, drinking, etc. are considered uncivilized in the society and are banned in the regular social activities. But the leverage space is available for such avoided practices in the folk/cultural celebrations. For example certain folk songs are inclusive of abusive words as a matter of fun. Folk songs enjoy a different gimmick many a time. Festival celebration of rural living is different from *Brahmanical* celebrations.¹³¹ Upper caste people held the Epics, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharatam*, *Vedas*, etc. at an esteem position and celebrated only a few characters like lord Rama or Krishna of those epics in the heroic positions. Folk *Ramayana*, *Maha Bharatam*, stories of Lord *Shiva* and *Vishnu* are different from *Brahmanical* narrations. Folk songs take a note of those characters that are not celebrated in the Epics but play crucial role in those stories' narrations. Folk songs and practices are expressive and open to nature, include an element of analysis and comprise a difference with acclaimed narrations. Those expressions are dramatized to make their points visible through visual or verbal language.

Songs of '*Tattva Gnan*'-

¹³¹ Women of Reddy and Velama, a landlord community enjoy and it is a tradition to accept the liquor on Dussehara festival time.

'*Titti Tatvalu*' a typical kind of singing is based on *Tattva Gnan*(Logical wisdom). A leather bag, called '*Titti*' is filled with air and when a pipe is blown, musical notes are played through that pipe. This is a popular instrument accompanying *Tattva Gnan* songs. The songs that are prevalent in this category are '*Seetapaata, Narayana Satakam, Ramarama Satakam, Vachanakala Gnanam, Atmabodhamruta Tatvam, Kali Pramana Tatvakeertanalu, Kaalagnana Tatvamulu, Tarakamruta Saramu*, etc. These songs are available in print also. Some of the popular writers who have written such songs are Eganti, Edla Ramadasu, Narayana Dasu, Hari Dasu, Pidaparthi, Chilukapati, etc.

'Bandhavya Geetalu'

Bandhavya Geetalu is a section of folk songs, as per R. V.S. Sundaram¹³², that would mirror attachments amongst the family relations. These songs are sung by women and known as ladies songs and familial songs. There are songs related to wedding rituals, festival celebrations and the wish-makings for the prosperity and happiness of life.

Cradle songs- A major number of songs are related to children sung to put them to sleep, while giving them bath, teaching them certain morals and behavior, activate them to think and work more, study more, etc. Some of the songs are sung by children themselves on nature, birds, animals, gods, etc. Most of the children's songs are educational based on the concept of 'learning through play'. Cradle songs are addressed to Lord *Rama, Krishna*, goddess *Ganga, Parvati, gauri, Seeta* and many other such gods and goddesses.

One of the Telugu television channels-'*Maa T.V.*' broadcasts Sri Potanamatya's *Srimadbhagavatam* written in Telugu language and explained by Brahmasri Chaganti Koteswara

¹³² Andhrula Janapadavignanam. Published by Potti Sree Ramulu Telugu Viswa Vidyalayam, Hyderabad. 2004.

Rao for half an hour every day. On 1st of August 2011 he explained about an episode from *Krishna-Leela*, demolishing a demon hidden in the chariot and who came to kill young *Krishna*. He explained how beautifully Sri Potana felt the motherly anxiety when that cart flew in the air with the touch of *Krishna*'s leg and on *Krishna*'s taking turn while crying hungry. He says while imagining the daily chore and activities of bathing and feeding *Krishna*, Potana is drenched himself in love and inculcating the same feeling for the reader also through his writings. Probably that is the kind of love generated in women's singing themes of day to day activities on Lord Krishna or *Seetarama Kalyanam* in folk songs when they sing for their children while addressing the gods and goddesses in their daily chores of work.

Songs of 'Dhanurmasam-Sankranti'

Dhanurmasam 'Gobbemma' festival songs of young girls are wish making songs for their future and happy married life and requesting the goddess to bless them a loving husband and caring in-laws family. Few of the songs reflect the meanings about women's helplessness in their in-laws place. Songs that are sung at *Dhanurmasam* worship of goddess *Katyayini* are mostly on *Sri Krishna*, sung taking circumferences around the goddess *Gobbemma*. Srimati Tayaramma compiled *Gobbemma* songs that are prevalent in Ganjam-Koraputti district of Orissa state.¹³³ She titled them as women's songs of *Dhanurmasam-Sankranti* on *Gobbemma* sung by Telugu people living in that land. Most of the songs are addressing Lord *Krishna*.

One of the songs-

Where is that pretty young *Krishna*?

Who is sparkling like a star?

¹³³ 1977, Visakhapatnam.

Where is that pretty young *Krishna*?

Who sings on flute, who likes to eat butter?

Where is that fellow who eats butter?

Nandagopala who is dark and darker in complexion.

Who is a *Manmadha* of *Sati Sakkubai*?

Yadava who wears beautiful anklets?

Where is that fellow?

How to find him?

Another song has a bit different context of meanings. The song explains that girls should study, play and get the awards. Such songs must have come into the existence in the later and modern times to come. That song is-

Shall we go to forests and pick *Vatapatra*(leaves of *Vad-Ficus* tree),

Shall we rub cool sandal and apply that to our friends,

Shall we play with flower garlands of the groves,

Shall we play hide and seek,

Shall we hide behind the tree trunks and pluck '*Sannajajulu*'(a white small scented flower that blooms on creeper),

Shall we put them as garlands in the necks' of our friends,

Shall we work hard and look forward for the first prizes,

Shall we play *Kolatam*(playing with sticks) and sing songs of praising king George,

Shall we go and request queen Elezebeth-----!

Few of such songs mention the places names Chandragiri, Neelagiri, Khandagiri. These places are there in Orissa state. Probably these worships were present in *Kalinga* region that is divided partly in to Andhra Pradesh and partly to Orissa state when the region was disintegrated. The inference what Tayaramma is driving is that these are the songs from Orissa came to Andhra Pradesh. It is difficult to draw such derivations because many people migrated in between Orissa and Andhra Pradesh ages behind.

Folk songs of many such categories are composed on the names of sensuous flowers, a swing, gods and goddesses names or they can even include the wish-making as '*Charanam* and *Pallavi*'. There are few romantic songs also. Songs are of different categories composed for different tastes such as who loves fun, romance, sorrowful feelings, wish and blessings, who wants to forget the hard work and hard life through music, to express and vent out the anger, proceedings of the prophets, etc. Songs of satire make a part of '*Haasyarasa*'. Wedding songs are mostly a satire. They are the comments made on each other by both groom and bride's parties.¹³⁴ For the last 3 to 4 decades such songs are not found at the wedding celebrations. Songs of '*Vidaayi*', sending daughters to their in-laws house from parent's house is a sad part of the wedding ritual and that is the time of sorrowful songs. A sister's song is that her brother gifted her a black saree, peacock blue blouse, lap full of paddy, fruits, coconut, *Kumkum*, turmeric when she was leaving for her in-laws house.¹³⁵ What one can observe is many of the folk songs are centered and sung by the women, for the women and on the women's life.

¹³⁴ R.V.S Sundaram compiled one such songs from Suseela of Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh. The song means that bride's side people have supplied many objects like tooth brush, flowers, comb, silk saree, perfumed garlands, beetle nuts and leaves, etc but they are saying the groom's mother is so unpleasant in her physique and looks and she cannot even use all these objects.

¹³⁵ There is a custom, today also, in Non-Brahmanical women's practices that daughters are invited home once in 3 or 5 years gifted all the above items. This is called "Godbharai-Vodibiyam" ritual.

Folk traditions keep changing according to the times because they are based on the experiences of people than the literary principles. *Maya Brahma Veeracharyulu* has written folk songs suited to these times 'Eetaram' and published in 2004. This collection has songs on Dowry system, ban on liquor consumption, bribe taking, family planning and such day to day problems of today's society.

There are many women's songs that are sung at various occasions of household rituals. All these songs are collected and published into small booklets. For Example Satish and Sreenu had collected many such songs- songs of cradle separately sung for boys and girls, ritual and devotional songs offered for various gods and goddesses, etc. are published. Telugu folk songs category has a landmark name Nanduri Subba Rao. He had written romantic songs imagining a female character Yenki and Nayudu *Bava*, her beloved. It's about a relationship and separation enjoyed and suffered by these two imaginary characters *Bava* and '*Maradalu*'. This is a romantic relation enjoyed between cousins who are a son and a daughter of a sister and a brother. This relation is an eligible marriage alliance allowed and practiced in Telugu community¹³⁶.

Folk Mythologies-

Ramayanam and *Maha Bharatam* have influenced and left their colors on every walk of the society. Folk traditions have different narrations of those Epics that are different from *Sanskrit* traditions. People imagined the day to day to events of the Epic characters *Seeta*, *Rama* or *Krishna*, etc, and songs are sung on their mundane life activities such as bathing *Seeta*, wedding

¹³⁶ Nanduri Subba Rao's "Yenki Patalu" is a collection of many songs written by him in 1927-28 when he was studying in Madras College and were published in 1925. Every song is tuned in classical Raag and Taal but the words were written in colloquial language.

rituals of *Seeta* and Lord *Rama*, cradle songs of *Krishna* are some of the examples. These songs are mostly women's songs and are sung by women in their daily routine work. Sometimes such singing is seen in rural practices of agricultural labour during their work and on dance dramas of folk practices. Folk songs and narrations celebrate the importance and the patience of *Urmila*, *laxmana's* wife of *Ramayana*. She lived alone away from her husband, when her husband *Laxmana* was in Exile along with his brother *Rama*. Importance of her sacrifice never gets any mention in the *Sanskrit* narrations. Every time *Rama* and *Sita* are celebrated along with the mention of *Laxmana's* sacrifice. *Urmila's* patience and sacrifice is sung in the songs of upper cast women and rural and lower caste people's folk songs. Folk *Ramayana* stories have special status for *Urmila*. She was alone when *Laxmana* left her behind, she took all the sleep of her husband *Laxmana* on her, because he was supposed to guard his brother and sister-in-law. This episode of *Urmila* and *laxmana's* sacrifice takes important narration in folk traditions.

Folk narrations can directly and without mincing the words express the meanings what they want to. They can poetically narrate *Maha Bharatam* in two lines-'Hands of *Dharamraja* threw the dice, *Draupadi* towed down the dice.' *Saiva* and *Vaishnava* religious stories are narrated and sung as if they are narrating a commoners' life whether it is about a fight between *Siva's* two wives *Ganga* and *Gauri* or *Rukmini Kalyanam*. Folk traditions have a different method of making the narratives. If we look into the mirror of a magician one can see something that is not seen in the regular image. Folk narratives are based on such images that are not displayed in the regular representations of acclaimed narrations. They not only enjoy the aesthetic involved in singing or dancing that different narrative, they also enjoy narrating different information unacknowledged in the regular mirror. It is a way of making a parody of acclaimed

Sanskrit texts that are not reachable for the illiterate folk whether they are women or lower casts of rural life. It is a satirical pleasure enjoyed in an aesthetic way.

Classical music-

Tyagaraju-*Carnatak* music composer and a Bhakti poet, lived in Tanjore in 1759 to 1847 A.D. composed music extensively on lord *Rama*. His contemporaries Narayana Tirthulavaru composed *Krishnaleela Tarangini* and he lived in Krishna district. Kshetrappa's *Padalu* are "*Javali*" category of romantic songs written by Kshetrappa and *Sarangapani Padalu* are another kind of semi-classical songs. Tanjavur and Madhura had become the centers for the composition of music. Many classical singers including men and women enjoyed singing these music composers' songs and *Keeratanas* in 20th century to till the date. South Indian classical music is termed as *Carnatic* music and it contained mostly the music composed by Tyagaraja. There are many acclaimed classical singers like M.S.Subbalaxmi, Balamuralikrishna, D.K.Pattammal, etc. in *Carnatic music*. Organizing music concerts such singers and listening to the classical singing became a great aesthetic activity and people enjoyed extensively in 40's to 60's. All India radio broadcasted these singers recorded songs and listening to the radio music was a popular pastime activity in the society after the radio became popular and before the television appeared. In specific, girls at home in middle class families were put to learn instrumental and classical music at *Guru*-music teachers and singing *Carnatak Sangeet* has become a wonderful aesthetic pastime activity. Many young girls even entered the stage performance activities of ceremonious functions. It became an aesthetic and meaningful activity and a hobby for many middle class people to learn classical music and practice singing. All India Radio broadcasted many singers of melodious singing programmes. Smt J.Hymavathi, 75 years old, is one such lady

learnt classical music and Violin, instrumental music in her teens at Vijayawada, Krishna district, from her guru Krishnamacharaya. With great difficult her parents agreed for the All India Radio to broadcast her songs. She never left her love for singing till the age of her late 60's when she was affected with throat cancer and the weakened vocal cords. Later she started exploring her other interest that is *Ayurvedic* medicines and oil preparations for smaller and regular pains and hair oils.

Decorating pleasures-

Women were adept at weaving cotton on the spindle right from Kakatiya period. Trade and business of cotton clothes were considered as high grade activity. A saying was popular in those days that a house where the spindle spins the cotton thread, where the buttermilk is churned the butter there the poverty is kept at a distance. Both silk and cotton costumes were popular at that time. The designs and colors that were listed by Suravaram Pratap Reddy “*Chandanakavulunu, Pattedukavulunu, Chengavulunu, Kadambakavulunu, Bommanchulunu, Mudugubommanchulunu, Muyyanchulunu, Chilukanchallunu, Vetanchallunu, Ninduvannelunu, Uruthacharala vannelunu, Gantaki vannelunu, Puppadi vannelunu, Rudraksha vannelunu, Naagabandhamulunu, Poobandhamulunu, Jalapanjarambulunu, Kaamavarambulunu, Sooravarmbulunu, Taaramandalambulunu, Hamsaavalulunu, Harinaivalulunu, Turagavalulunu, Gajavalulunu, Simhavalulunu, Draupadeeswayamvarambulunu, laxmivilasambulunu, Madanavilasambulunu, Vasanthavilasambulunu, Ratnakeelitambulunu, Raayasringarambulunu, Kanakadandelunu, Gachhilambulunu, karpuragandhulunu, Paravampugandhulunu, Sri Topulunu, Sri Ramatopulunu, Sri Krishna Vilasambulunu, Jeebulunu, Sugi Pattunbulunu, Sanna Valipambulunu, Velipattulunu, Hombattunu, Puligorupattunu,*

Udayaraagapattunu, Netrapattunu, Vajrapattunu,” etc were the variety of silks available and cotton were also popularly available in those days and it was mentioned by Gourana in *Simhasana Dvatrimsika*.¹³⁷

There is a reference of 8th century story of *Vishnuchittudu*, father of *Goda Devi-Andal*, was a *Vaishnavitee*, devotee of *Sri Ranganadha*. He travelled to Madhura, Pandians capital, to participate in a religious conference. He carried his bag of necessary items that were arranged by his wife *Viraja Devi*. She had put a sparkling brass to be used as mirror in that bag. *Viraja Devi* requests child *Goda* to take bath, when the child was playing around, mother said she kept turmeric, sandal and lotus bulbs for fragrance, oil and *Sheekakaya* for hair massage and the water was boiled with *Amla* leaves. There is a reference that *Goda's* mother arranged for boring the ear lobes of *Goda*. It is believed that when the nerve on the ear lobes is bored one will be free from the heart disease. This ear boring was done for both the girls and the boys. In the recent times it is seen only for girls but on the occasion of *Upanayanam*-Thread ceremony boys are also given the ear boring. There is an another reference in '*Goda Devi Kalyanam*' that women were taking bath at lakes and turmeric paste was grounded on the floor to apply on their bodies before taking the bath. Decorating the ornaments on the body, wearing colorful costume and applying the turmeric and herbs available in the kitchen to get the flawless skin are an age old recipe of women. '*Bandala Alamu*' a creeper thickly spread in the fields in rainy seasons. The scents eject out when that leaf is rubbed. Working class women pickup and put

¹³⁷ Pg.95. Andhrula Sanghika Charitra.

that creeper in their hair dos.¹³⁸ Such decorating and enjoying the bodily pleasures are the prerogative of women today or yesterday.

Villupotturu was taken over by Pandyan kings in Tamilnadu and they planned that town to construct in to a beautiful city. Buildings' edges had Sapphire stone studded *Koel* figures and Emerald studded parrots as decorations. The groves around the city had many parrots and the *Koels*, when those birds were singing in the groves, people felt as if those sounds were coming from the bird decorations of the buildings. The top of the buildings had *Sikhara Kalas* as it is found on the temple *Sikhar*. Decorating the house and inner chambers is another aesthetic activity and pleasure drawn.

Fasting in the rituals-

Goda Devi, daughter of *Vishnuchittudu*, followed *Katyayini* worship, also called *Margali Vratam*, along with her friends to fetch *Sri Ranganadha* as her husband. Procedure of this worship is to take early morning baths in the lakes in the month of *Dhanurmasam*-December 15th to January 15th, for one full month not to take the milk and milk products in their foods, did not wear flowers and Kajal for their toiletry, took the oath not to hurt anyone, respect the elders, made offers to the saints and their disciples and singing prayer songs on Lord *Purushottama* who is sleeping in the *Ksheerasagara*.

Writing and singing in this worship-

Every day she sang '*Krishna Leela*' while writing about '*Gopikas*' who performed *Katyayini Vratam* in *Dvapara yugam*. *Goda* and her friends performed *Rukminikalyanam* an episode from *Bhagavatam*, as a conclusive ritual of their '*Margali Vratam*'-worship, in the similar way how

¹³⁸ Ibid.Pg.278

they played their dolls' wedding in their childhood. *Manmadha Puja* is also a part of concluding part of the ritual of *Margali* or *Katyayini Vratam*.

Drawing images-

Image of *Manmadha* is put or drawn on the wall where they performed the ritual worships for the whole month. Fish and parrots are also drawn on both the sides of *Manmadha* figure, offered paddy combs, jaggery, sugar cane, rice, pounded rice to worship this amorous god-*Manmadha*.¹³⁹

Feasts after Fasts-

Most of the conventional *Brahmanical* rituals followed today are having fasts or feasts as part of the ritual. Fasting would keep the bodily digestive systems in good health and feasts of the ritual and festivals take care of the healthy diets. There are certain rituals that prescribe that women are supposed to distribute soaked Bengal gram and beetle leaves and nuts to other women on the rituals of goddess *laxmi* and *Gauri*. Soaked Bengal gram is full of vitamins and proteins and beetle leaf is a good digestive herb and in the name of rituals women distribute each other the healthy and medicinally valueble objects. There are rules made that curd rice is a must preparation for goddess *Mahakali*, sweet pan cakes and salty cakes for lord *Hanuman*, soaked green gram and jaggery water for lord *Rama*, etc. One is supposed to make these preparations as corresponding offerings for concerned gods. Such preparations would supplement the healthy nutrients in the name of rituals. On every ritual women are supposed to decorate themselves with jewelry and colorful costumes after taking holy baths, recite the verses, sing devotional songs, narrate the ritual stories to other devotees, should prepare

¹³⁹ "Goda Devi Katha' Kapilavayi Linga Murthy. Mahaboobnagar, 2008.

different preparations and enjoy the culinary skills and eat good food after a fasting. Such activities are part of the prescription of rituals involving the aesthetic pleasures and health secrets. The incorporation of offerings like Bengal gram, beetle nuts and leaves, fruits, etc. in the women's rituals also must be spreading the health tips.

Food and beverages-

Bhogya Aharam consists of beetle leaves and nuts. References on groves of beetle nuts and leaves are found right from 6th century, as per the inscription data available. One of the 11th century inscriptions mention that one of the grove was sold and cultivated by somebody in the name of the devotee Kannappa at *Sri Kalahasti*.¹⁴⁰ There is an inscription of Kakatiya dynasty informs that there was an open market outside the forte area in Warangal informs that the vegetables that were sold are leafy vegetables, coconuts, *Maadiphalam*(a medicinal fruit), mangos, tamarind, sesame, wheat, yellow-gram, paddy, millets, oils, ghee, salt, jaggery, mustard, black pepper, foil, lead, copper, sandal, *Kasturi*(Musk), *manjishta*, ivory, silk, turmeric, onion, ginger, etc. Sreenadha kavi written that *Palnadu* region(Guntur) ate only millets as their staple food. His *Bheemeswara Puranam* talks about many eateries that are found popular even today. 15th century *Kaasikhandam* talk about '*laddu, Idli, Kudumulu, Appadam, Ippatlu, Golledalu, Gilledukayalu, Dosa, Sewai, Angarapolialu, Saarasattulu, Bontarakudumulu, Chakkilambulu, Madugupoovulu, Morundalu, Pundrekukhandambulu, Pindakharjura, Draksha, Naarikela, Kadari, Panasa, Jambu, Choota, Likucha, Dadimi, Kapithha, Karkandu Phalamulu, Gasagasalu, Pesarambulagamulu, Cherukugadamulu, Ariselu, Bisakisalayamula Varugulu, Chirugadamulu, Badidemulu, Bulupalu, Bulivarakalu, Pappurottiayalu, Chapatlu, Paayasambulu,*

¹⁴⁰ Dr. R.S.V Sundaram,"Andhrula Janapada Vignanam." Pg. 371.

Karkareekaravella koosmanda nishpava patolika kosaalaboosigroodumbara vaartaka bimbikara vinda salatuvulu, Kandayu, Bondayu, Charulu, Divyagooralu, Pachhadalu, Bajjulu, Gijjanulu, Vadiyambulu, Kadiyambulu, Gayambulu, Gandhatoyambulu, Undralu, Naanubralu, Anumulu, Minumulu, Budukulu, Nadukulu, Nilimidiyunu, Chalimidiyunu, Drabbedayu, Vvadayunu, Nukkeralu, Chakkeralu, Netulu, Donetalalu, Bittunu, Gattunu, Dalatimma nambulunu, Dopalu, Poopalu, Modakambulu, Gudodakambulu, etc.

Foods and beverages are not only a requirement of the day to day life but preparing the recipes are learnt and enjoyed as culinary skills. Every region has their own way of preparing the special recipes. Preparations change as per the availability of the material also. Coconut is abundant in south India and one finds various recipes made out of coconut. Cooking is a passion for many including men and women. Arranging the table with matching crockery and cutlery on the formal dinners is one pleasure enjoyed in Modern times. Understanding the seasons' aroma on the seasonal vegetables and fruits and catching the fragrance of the climatic changes and preparing the dishes accordingly is another pleasure enjoyed. At times season's climatic changes would develop disorders of the health and that can be neutralized with the seasonal fruits and vegetables preparing special recipes. Cook also enjoys bringing out the relishing tastes and flavor in attractive colors.¹⁴¹ Aroma and color of the dressing of the preparations itself can attract the people to consume the foods with great interest.

¹⁴¹ The Hindu news magazine section 'Metro Plus' published an article about Kunwar Rani Kulsum Begum, niece of Salar Jung III. Article written by Shonali Muthalaly says, "She is not just royalty, she is also a treasure of royal recipes. She was trained under her grand-mother who was specific in instructing the chefs how to cut onions and vegetables for every dish. She revealed that begums of Salar Jung family worked with Hakims (Traditional doctors) to maximize the benefits of healing ingredients. One is needed to measure the ingredients and the spices that would change with every season. Kulsum Begum said "It must taste just right." Her daughters are studying outside the home. They are unaware of earlier generation's cooking expertise and she says youngest daughter calls her even to know how to make potato fry.

Griha Vaidyam-

Women enjoy thoroughly finding medicine for many ailments by mixing the materials from their kitchen cabinet. Many remedies for simple ailments are popularly known as 'Grandmother's remedies'. It is mentioned in Vijayanagar period details that people were aware of home remedies and were using black pepper, *Tulasi*, dry ginger, *Kasturi*, Saffron, etc.¹⁴² Viraja Devi (8th C.) was blessed with a girl child. She had put her in the cradle when she was given the name '*Koda*' and was called as *Goda*. An old woman had put the copper ring to the child's leg and it is believed that it is good for digestion.

Nowadays *Ayurvedam*, *Unani*, Naturopathy medicines are getting popularity and the State is furthering the study centers on such native medicine. There are many Telugu television channels that are propagating *Ayurvedic* medicines and one program is telecasted everyday for viewers for half an hour how to prepare medicines in a simpler way from regularly found medicinal herbs and the materials available in the kitchen. Smt. Jagarlapudi Hymavathi is one of those viewers who enjoy listening and understanding the medicine preparation and take notes from those programs every day. She maintains a long-space note book to note down the preparation of the medicines and oils from the ingredients. She used to use simpler medicines for her children till the age of her 60's. Later she developed an interest to read simple tips that were given in the weekly journals and started practicing the read information to get relief from her ageing body pains like arthritis etc. For example, wheat grass saplings grown in the small pots at home and taking the juice of that grass for better nutrients, etc. Now she prepares perfect oils for arthritis or any kind of body pains after listening to television channels

¹⁴² Ibid

information. She prepared home medicines for her husband late J.Nataraja Sarma who developed diabetes at his old age. Probably the pleasure she gets in preparing the medicines and understanding the ingredients is a more energetic boost and keeps her active in her late 70's. Our social system must not have allowed her to study medicine in her young age. That was not the time girls were allowed to complete even their schooling. Only after great requests she could complete her matriculation that is school final examination privately appeared. Today preparation of medicines is not just a pass time she enjoys, she advises her children and sisters. Probably after she is freed from her children's responsibility she is grown as an amateurish *Ayurvedic* medical practitioner.[Fig.4.25]

Folk tales-

Folk tales delineate the information through the stories that reflect the social customs, living and the psychology of the people. These tales are narrated in a simple way, easy to digest. There are numerous grandmother's tales, grandfather's tales, '*Pedaraasi Peddamma Kathalu, Kaakamma(Crow) Kathalu, Tatacharya kathalu, Paramanadayya sishyula kathalu, Kaseemajilee Kathalu*, etc. are familiar narrations amongst people and they are dateless. There are different categories of folk tales-fairy tales, merry tales, Animal tales, fables, riddles, etc.¹⁴³

Fairy tales narrate about prince and princess, *Yaksha, Gandharvas*, devils and spirits, etc. The themes of these stories are about the life above the human beings.

Merry tales or humorous tales-These tales are very near to human life, short, characters in the narrations may be humans or animals, lazy fellows, stupid, thieves, cheaters etc. These stories

¹⁴³ K.Sumathi completed a Ph.D thesis on Telugu folk Tales from Osmania University and Dr.B.Ramaraju's Folk Tales Andhra Pradesh are published by Sterling publishers.

are simply narrated, sometimes only humor at times morals are added to the theme. Some of the popular characters of these stories are *Midathambhotlu* and the stupid disciples of *Paramanandayya*.

Animal tales-*Panchatantram* stories are important section come under this category. The human relations and their behavior, good and bad characters are exemplified through the examples of animals and birds in this section. Many a time they are pedagogic end with specific morals, ethics as preaching. It is difficult to differentiate between moral stories and animal stories or literary stories and folk stories. They can intertwine. Elders, grandparents entertain children by narrating the stories. Many a time story starts with a note that 'long ago there was a place, village or forest' etc. That brings a reference for the listener to relate with their life or with the life of previous generations. That relation brings a feeling of reality and pleasure of existence of those characters that are to be visualized. Moral stories some times are narrated to educate the children to develop sharp thinking and good conduct. *Jataka* stories are about *Buddha's* previous births and have a nature of folk tale category.

Proverbs-

Proverbs are the essence of the life experiences of generations together uttered in simple sentences. They are lyrical sentences and expressed in a poetic way. Proverbs have the capacity of expressing the sharp meanings in powerful words. Proverbs are two kinds. One is born out of common understanding of the people another from literary proverbs. Some of them are born out of poetic sentences, mostly from Poet Vemana's poems. Some proverbs are based on Mythology, another are on historical and social experiences. Some of them are based on spiritual understanding. Many a time elderly advises are uttered through proverbs.

Riddle stories are another category. They are more humble sentences and allow more thinking, less obvious on the meanings. They hand over the pleasure of understanding the non-obvious meanings that are delineated only by exercising one's brains. Those are more of a kind of puzzle games and short narrations for sharpening the children's brains meaningfully along with fun. '*Pedda Balasiksha*' is a book compiled on all such information about riddles, moral stories, moral verses-*Slokas*, etc. That book is a standard book available for many generations in Telugu language.

Games-

Games are recreational. They recoup the energy and give pleasure to the players, remove monotony of the routine, when people come together they develop sportive nature in the group activities. There are many indoor and informal games played by girls-'*Gudugudugunjam* - sit and play, *Chippachippa Gollu*-take rounds like Ringa-Ringa roses, *Tokkudubilla*-throwing a flat small stone into huge squares drawn on the floor and hop into those squares, Hide and seek, '*Doodumbulla*-played with sand, '*Puli-meka*' that is tiger catching the goat, shells and seeds, playing along with pillars is a game played in the method of musical chairs, etc. *Vamana Guntalu* is played with tamarind seeds played by women in their leisure hours. Games are part of our culture. Many a time singing accompanies games. Those songs are informative about certain medicines and health tips. Certain earlier literary texts like *Basava Puranam*, *Panditaradhya Charitra*, *Uttara Harivamsam*, *Kreedabhi Ramam*, *Bhojarajeeyam*, *Hamsavimsati*, *Simhaasana Dvatrimsika*, etc have a detailed note on the games. Modern literary scholars who worked and compiled the information on the games are Nedunuri Gangadharam, V.Subrahmanayam from Nagarjuna University, Unnava

Laxminarayana(Malapalli), Suravaram Pratap Reddy, Bulusu Ramajoga Rao, Timmavagnula Kodandarama Rao, and many.

As for as Epic references are concerned, Nachana Somana a Telugu poet mentioned about the play of dice played by *Rukmini* and *Sri Krishna* in *Uttara Harivamsam*.¹⁴⁴ Lord *Siva* and *Parvati* played Chaupar, *Dharmaraja* played dice, and there many such references. Today such games are played with shells, tamarind seeds, '*Kachhakayalu*' a kind of dried fruit, etc. by women at home in their leisure hours. *Devadasis* in *Godakalyanam* story of Villuputtur were playing "*Pachheesu, Barakatta, Maddirangam*",etc. in the afternoons. *Goda* was playing with her friends-*Bommarillu* (dolls house) where they were cooking and arranging a celebration of wedding of dolls in a mini scale.

Charity-

Chinnamba, sister of a minister Rayabhaskara, had constructed a lake named, '*Gopinadhasamudram*' at Vankayalapadu village in Guntur region in 1462 A.D. Reddy Rajas of 14th century were donating '*Shodasa-Danam*'-giving alms, as per that text's mention. There is a pleasure in sharing the things with others. There is a popular belief that certain offerings of grains like paddy, Bengal and Black gram, milk products, etc. would waive off the unwanted affects of the nine planets and increase the pleasant and desirable affects for this life. It is also believed that what is donated today will be paid to them with interest in the times to come or in their next life.

Creative activities-Visual and verbal-

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Vijayanagara period has a mention that women were adept at painting and making murals and preparing the foundation for the same. Women wrote beautiful poetry in *Sanskrit* and *Andhrām* i.e Telugu. Ganga Devi, Tirumalamba, Ramabhadramba are few such women who were poets. '*Madhuravijayam*', a historical writing was written by Ganga Devi in Sanskrit. Muddupalani was a poet written *Radhika Santwanam*, in 8th C.

Aesthetic pleasures drawn in early hours of Sankranti month-

Rangoli designs are laid out daily with fine rice powder in Andhra Pradesh or other states in South India. That becomes a food for small living organisms like ants. White lime powder or colors made out of lime mix materials are also used for designing and yet another time flowers are used to fill the designs occasionally. These materials are environmental friendly. Touch sensibility of *Rangoli* powder and the technique of making the curves on the designs are enjoyed while moving the hand by the maker. Colors are filled in the designs occasionally and those colors are differently textured from the white colored rice flour or lime powder that is used for daily *Rangoli* designed in the courtyards. Auspicious objects like turmeric, *Kumkum*, flowers are filled in the *Rangoli* designs on festival and occasional celebrations. How about feeling the smell and touch of these flowers or colors? How can we discount the essence of these objects that perfume the surroundings? What about that feeling of silent early morning hours before the sun rise when the *Rangoli* is made in the courtyards? What could be the feeling of those quiet hours enjoyed by the lady who is laying out the designs? How can we not take the early morning cool breeze in to consideration? What about the viewer who crosses the designs that appears like a carpet to walk on?

Young girls make these designs on wee hours of everyday of *Sankranti* month. They also make a round form of cow-dung, called '*Gobbemma*' known as goddess *Katyayini* or *Gopika*, and worship that goddess with Turmeric, *Kumkum* and flowers while placing that goddess at the centre of *Rangoli* designs. Preferred flowers for this worship is marigold, pumpkin, etc. that are not used in the *Vedic* gods worship. Such early morning hours of *Sankranti-Dhanurmasam* month are not only becoming colorful right before the Sun-rise and also perfuming the surroundings with all the wild essences like cow-dung or flowers like marigold. Only by exercising our imagination to understand such creative and aesthetic pleasures then alone we can understand the tactile, nasal and the visual aesthetics involved in such rituals. These are different sensuous smells and colors unlike those aesthetics of preferred high art practices. If we start counting down the numbers to evaluate the aesthetics of such sensuous designs and compare with celebrated art objects, essence is already lost. Mornings of *Sankranti* days are enjoyable. *Sankranti* makes the courtyards colorful with *Rangoli* designs, when *Maladasari* sings and *Haridasu* echoes *Harinamam*-chanting of lord *Vishnu's* name, women would give them rice and paddy when they come home early in the mornings.

Sankranti Koluvu is another activity women draw pleasure in arranging different themes to display. They recreate the mini model of epic stories or social themes of their choice.[Fig.4.29 to 4.33]

Worship pleasures-Non-Vedic folk rituals-

Regional goddesses-

Folk¹⁴⁵ and lower caste's practices are not only different from upper castes they are different from region to region also. Telangana region follows a practice to worship *Ellamma* a form of *Renuka Devi*. A song sung at the time of yearly special ritual mentions that *Yellamma* is worshipped with country liquor and chicken. Rural practices at Chittoor district of south of Andhra Pradesh worship goddess *Gangamma* and she is offered the sacrifices of bulls or sheep. *Gangamma* is none other than the goddess of water. The worship songs request her to stop at their place and that would facilitate them to live their lives. The Rayalaseema region is a dry place and probably the drought that frequently visits made them to worship goddess *Ganga*. There is no great distinction between men and women's rituals in folk practices. They have community worships in pre-decided places such as temples, pilgrimage centers, etc. These goddesses' temples are present as *Gramadevatas*-minor goddesses at the village boundaries. Songs itself take care of the worship process and those songs are filled with various meaningful expressions wrapped in day to day colloquial terms and easy communications on spirituality, meanings of *Advaita* philosophy, non-violence, removal of caste differentiation, etc. Probably *Vedic* practices are toned down to form such social customs that can reach those who cannot read *Sanskrit Mantras*. Importance of materials in the customs is increased rather than reading the Sanskrit verses. Every cast and community has their own ritual practices right from the birth to the death of human beings. Wedding rituals are very elaborate. *Yanaadi* is one of the tribal sects in Nellore region. Their wedding songs inform that they do not want any gifts

¹⁴⁵ Many worked to study on Folk Cultures. Few scholars even contemplated on the term 'Folk' and said this terminology denotes an un-civilized and an illiterate. Sri Khandavalli Laxminarayanam garu said instead of 'Folk' those cultures should be called 'Prajavagmayam'. Sri Tallavajjula Sivasankara Sastry, Sri Adidam Rama Rao, etc. said it should be 'Padavagmayam'. Sri Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma said it should be 'Anaadrutavagmayam'. Veturi Prabhakara Sastry said they are 'Madhurakavithalu'. Sripada Gopalakrishna Murthy termed it as 'Desisaraswatham'. But Prof. B.Ramaraju analyses and feels that all these terms are giving one sided meanings only.

from the bride's party and their promise is that they respect the home coming bride. They expect pleasure of living together in the day to day requirements of searching bread and butter. Many forms of goddesses, Vijayawada *Kanaka Durga*, *Madhura Meenakshi*, *Hanumakonda Padmakshi* etc. are the local deities incarnated to bless the people regionally and adopted in to temple Vedic worships.

Minor goddesses-

The minor goddesses like *Maisamma*, *Ellamma*, *Renuka*, *Pochamma* are the deities of village boundaries to protect the villages. *Gramadevatas* are goddesses in feminine gender. Mostly the narrated stories inform that the women who faced unwarranted abuses or convicted became the goddesses. They would protect their community, village or the boundaries of the village. *Gramadevatas* are classified as lesser known goddesses. Such goddesses are known locally, confined to specific regions unlike *Vedic* gods. All such local gods are equalized conceptually with the gods and goddesses of main *Hindu* pantheon. Most of such gods and goddesses carry the power and essence of Lord *Siva* and goddess *Parvati*. *Gobbemma* or *Batukamma* like minor goddesses of women's worships are equalized with goddess *Gauri*.

Omens and Faiths-

Blind faiths and believes are plenty in the society. Many a time they work as fall back punching pads on the emotional setbacks. For example- If a cat is crossing their way, one can blame the cat if one cannot complete the targeted work. If a vegetable vendor or a woman and a young girl cross their path to begin the journey it is supposed to be the good omen to begin the work. Good and bad omens, auspicious times are very much believed right from earlier times and its mention is there in the *Reddy Raja* period, 14th C. also.

Women who could not bear children were considered as inauspicious and they were taking many 'Vrat' and performances to please the gods and goddesses to get the progeny and it was mentioned, it seems, in *Sivaratrimahatyam*, *Simhasana Dvatrimika*.¹⁴⁶ There were many rituals followed after the son's birth and at every stage of his growth to protect the child. Srinadha kavi (In *Sivaratrimahatyam*) has mentioned about certain rituals followed, songs were sung at the time of the weddings, rituals followed at the time of delivery. There was a reference to offer *Dhoop* and performances of good omens to ward off bad evils-'*Nazarutaarna*', etc. Suravaram Pratap Reddy opines that the rituals mentioned in *Simhasana Dvatrimika* must have followed in Telangana region whereas the rituals mentioned in *Siva Ratri Mahatyam* must have followed in *Krishna Godavari* region's ritual practices.

Myths-narrative stories involved in the rituals-

Concluding part of most of the household ritual worships-'*Streela Vratamulu*' are having an end note of story narrations. Every story indicates certain problems. The problems mentioned in the stories are those that are usually people come across in their lives. Solutions are suggested in the stories how those obstacles are kept out by following that specific ritual and worshipping certain gods related to that ritual.

Mangala Gowri Vrat story narrated at the end of ritual delineates the information that the story belonged to the medieval times when child marriages were in popularity. Story also indicates that neither there was a proper communication system nor the commuting facilities were available for the commoners on their long distances of travelling.

¹⁴⁶ Pg 120. Andhrula Sanghika Charitra.

Telugu people were on sea trading in earlier times.¹⁴⁷ They were exporting and many goods were imported in the ports of eastern coast of Telugu land. The traders were facing many troubles because of sea pirates and dacoits. Probably many ritual stories like *Satyanarayana Katha* mentioned about such thefts on the sea travelling. One of the preoccupied stories in the rituals is how one's husband would come back soon who went away on long distances.

Some of the ritual stories indicate that, if the earthly beings are suffering, the gods and goddesses incarnate in front of those people as another fellow men and women and advise them to follow certain rituals to overcome such troubles. Story themes are based on distributing the materials to many, helping the others probably based on '*Bhakti Marg*', philosophy of '*Manava Seva*' is '*Madhava Seva*' that is helping the fellow being is worshipping the god, modeled on the *Brahmanical* religious rites and advise to follow the general *Hindu* value system.

There are references of factors like sea, water, rivers, tanks, etc. in the ritual stories and protagonists of these stories also, like Epic stories, are having divine origin or become divine at later stage or their existence has divine approval or support.¹⁴⁸ Stories are dramatized and the plot is invariably framed aspiring prosperity, fertility and chastity and story magnifies its' importance as if it is the ultimate deed to overcome the trouble. The doers draw the pleasure of reading a story that has many aspirations one is aspiring.

Unobvious violence-

¹⁴⁷ Krishna, Godavari rivers and seashore regions like Visakhapatnam had plenty of opportunities for sea trade and had business relations with Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, China, Srilanka, Persia, Arabia, etc.

¹⁴⁸ "Myth"-Laurence Coupe. Routledge, London, New York, Indian Edition, 2007.

There is a second and concealed layer that is designed in the mythical narrations of ritual stories, that is leading to systematic violence. There is a constant fear involved in most of the ritual stories threatening the performer that if the performer does not perform the ritual systematically they would face the consequences of unhappy nature. There is a message in the stories that the performer can get a waiver from the ill luck of life if they perform the rituals sincerely. That fear is created through the ritual stories itself. Women also receive the messages through the ritual stories that performing these rituals are an opening to the possible worlds which transcend the established limits of our actual world. This is an indirect message and an order given by the social system also in forcing the women to be in these spaces.

Performative aesthetic in the household rituals-

When the theatrical performances are enacted on the stage people play the roles of particular characters related to that play. People are aware that the role they are living is an unreal role. Where as in the rituals women enact living within the feel of reality also transform themselves in to that role suitably. Women perform many a time as a priest and a devotee also. People acting on the theatre platform have to be conscious to feel their unreal roles throughout the play. Women set themselves into the role at the unconscious level. They have a feasibility to move in between the formal to informal role without any hindrance. They repeat the similar behavior every time on many rituals. Probably the stereotype in the repetition is of similar kind what actors get involved on the rehearsals.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Pushpamala a contemporary artist had given a performance breaking the stacked pots, one after the other. She had spread the red vermilion around that place. Every pot she broke created monotony and that is the expression she wanted to display. It is the enjoyment for the artist enjoyed the performance breaking one after another pot but for the viewer every pot is similar and every action of breaking is similar. A performance is a sequence and the performer drawn the pleasure from that sequence. As for as the spectators pleasure is concerned in this case is there

Ritual space is a collapsible space from secular to sacred transforming the aesthetic objects into esoteric. A private household corner is made esoteric and opened for worship where many women are invited to view the performance of rituals. The spectators' space and the performer's spaces are undivided like folk theatre in ritual space. As Richard Schechner explained about folk performance spaces, women's ritual performances are also appear like any other real incidence, move through the utility space, environmental friendly, without any heavy machinery to construct the theatre space, they explore that space in different ways and that can transform real regular space to non routine auspicious space, they can feel the space, listen to it, make sounds with it, play music, smell it, embrace it and become part of it. Materials utilized on the performances appear different as well as similar to the daily life.¹⁵⁰ This space is in continuity, with a subtle flow, fluid, passive movement between routine and the performative. Their performances are not on the formula of denial where the character played in the theatre are accepting the denial of the self to live in the given theatre role. Ritual performances of women are on added glory. They attain many roles once as worshipper, as a priest, assuming the position of a goddess for the co-worshipper, as a boon giver, etc. They can add on the roles, temporarily, to their original personality. Performer's names do not change as it happens in the theatre where the names of the actors are given as per the role and the character played.

Audience-

is no sequence. It is the pleasure of the artist by bringing the esoteric meanings of ritual material like pot and vermilion to aesthetic artistic material. The monotony of breaking the pots do not involve the spectator. That performance take the spectator for granted.

¹⁵⁰ The utensils that are used to worship are taken from the daily work most of the times. Silver objects at times or brass vessels are used in the worships. It is said that these materials are auspicious to use in the worships including copper, gold if not earthen pots but never the iron. Iron is used only for the worships related to the god Saturn.

Women's ritual performances are neither completely private nor totally public. They occupy a middle space performed between for oneself and as a fiction of a theatre play. Notion of audience vary in these performances. Some performances are played for an audience in the conventional sense while few appear more in the nature of personal reflections, may not meant for others initially. At times audience may not even notice in specific. Some times rituals are performed on the routine and in singular.

The rituals have different steps in the process. One is initially have to worship the goddess whether some body is present there or not. The audience, other women's presence is required when they are supposed to read the ritual stories and offer the auspicious items as a concluding part of the ritual. At the time of offering they exchange few sentences to each other. When a lady is offering she believes that the lady who is accepting has arrived her home in the form of goddess. The lady offering asks other lady that "Who is accepting my offerings?" The receiver says "I am *Gauri, Laxmi and Parvati*?" First lady says "Kindly bless me." Other lady says "I have granted the boons." Here the performance is happening with in the private space for the undefined audience in an uninformed manner. Performer and the visitor, both become audience for each other.

Understanding ritual practices-performances through Bharata's *Natya Sastra*-

Rituals of women's practices are understood as dogmatic practices, stereotypical repetitions and imitations of meaningless practices in a general sense. 'Imitation' theory of *Bharata's Natya Sastra*,¹⁵¹ might explain these practices differently.

¹⁵¹ G.K.Bhat-Theatric aspects of Sanskrit Drama.

Imitator follows the model accurately and does exactly that what model does. What imitator has done is not the original. Imitation is different from the original. Similarity or resemblance in between the original and the imitation is that viewer should be mistaken finding the original and the imitation.

Similar is the case with rituals and performances. Every generation appears as if they are imitating the previous one and every time it appears as if the same ritual was performed previous time/year. But it is never the old alone is imitated every time. It is a fusion of several old and new elements for the sake of convenience and availability of the materials that are imaginatively constructed. It is not mimicking, duplicating or reproducing the same what was existed earlier in the practices of previous generations. There is a re-creation involved in the reconstruction. Setting the platform for the ritual that is '*Aharya*' as per *Natya Sastra*'s explanation, creating the goddess form, decorating the place is different and as per their creative abilities, from one generation to another and different for every woman in the same generation. Attachments, feelings and sentiments generated are different at every house. For example same ritual *Savitri-Gowri* has a different set up at Rangavajjula's house and Kalluri's house.¹⁵² Viewer who enters their houses at the time of that ritual would watch a different arrangement in both the places.

Bharata says representation of emotional experience is *Bhavanukirtana*. It is true for explaining the rituals also. Effect of such rituals is principally a pleasure and in addition it yields advice, guidance or philosophy and the meanings or statements are indirect communications like the

¹⁵² Probably it can be explained through making of *Davadas* film, old and new versions. Both the films are made based on Sharatchandra's novel story *Devdas*. Both the films have new elements of construction and enjoyed differently by both the directors on making their own version. Viewers of both the generations enjoyed the visual picture of the story line.

persuasive words of a charming beloved. Passing experiences in the theatre are called *Vyabhichari Bhavas*. Spectator would experience the subject and that is called *Anubhava*. Similarity with all these explanations can be seen on the aesthetic experiences of the ritual performances also.

Components are visually and concretely presented in the theatre form and that is true with the ritual performances also. They reach the spectator through '*Abhinaya*' theatrical or histrionic representation. Performer and the participant/spectator utter those words that dictated/expected by the performer. Performer/participants use the appropriate costume, make-up¹⁵³ and specific tone to utter the expected words to create a credible image of the specific ritual meanings. They speak the correct voice and pitch to reveal the sense and emotion of the words that are uttered. Women adopt certain gestures of *Abhinaya* to convey the expressions. Ritual performer creates a theatre stage out of day to day objects, elements and within the living environment. Their personal imagination is presented to the spectator. They make their innovative imaginations tangible and palpable to the spectator.

'*Sattvika Abhinaya*' is a psycho-physical or psycho-somatic representation where the body and the mind of the actor are in perfect harmony and concentration to reveal the appropriate physical reaction matched by the mental state. Bharata says *Sattvika Abhinaya* is the most efficient mode of drama to carry the dramatist's intent to the audience. In ritual performances women assume their position as a performer, as a priest, harbinger of auspicious omen to bring good fortunes to the family by performing these rituals. Their mind and the work are in harmony to behave and move in a particular and specific way. When they decorate themselves

¹⁵³ On any ritual worship day women are supposed to take turmeric bath, shampoo their hair, wear a new or a silk saree, wear the flowers and jewellery also if they possess.

for the rituals their actions differ from the day to day life activities. They believe intensely in the actions what they are performing.

Bharata says that, drama which uses soft and graceful words and meanings, avoid obscure words and senses, such as could easily enjoyed by people-*Janapada*. Ritual worships develop proper knitting of the various elements, junctures and varied subtle sentiments of above said. As Bharata says that '*Natya*' present 'piety, sport, piece of mind, pious behavior of the righteousness and sexual passion'. He explains further that '*Natya*' provides boldness to the timid, enthusiasm to the brave, knowledge to the ignorant and wisdom to the learned, graceful pleasures to the affluent and powerful, steady comfort to the miserable and courage to the despondent. Rituals also provide such results.

Unlike western drama, in *Sanskrit* drama, conflict in the plot comes particularly in confronting and counteracting the obstacles. The rituals explain the stories that are similar to *Sanskrit* drama while following the 'obstacle-conflict' method rather than the western method of 'tragedy-conflict'. The difference between the western and *Sanskrit* method is in the emphasis of elements. Ritual performances differ with *Sanskrit* drama also in the histrionic presentation of emotions. They begin with the remedy of performing the ritual to remove the conflict of obstacles that should not fall on their family in future. This could be a pleasant beginning itself to avoid any probable unhappy situations. They don't wait for the hero character to arrive to unleash the solution to remove the obstacles. The primary effects of the rituals are the pleasure and delight for the spectator as well as for the performer.

Aesthetic pleasures in day to day activities -

As Yuriko Saito explains most of our everyday artifacts and environments are taken for granted. We do not take a special note of our experiences associated with those objects. Everyday objects sharpen our aesthetic sensibility and nurtures the aesthetic appreciation of the mundane. [Fig.4.15 to 4.24]Our everyday activities like making *Rangoli*, cooking, packing, daily worships and decoration of the living space, seasonal celebrations, etc are distinct from the celebrated art media like paintings and sculptures. In contrast, actions prompted by everyday aesthetic -judgments are often un-reflected. Sometimes they are like knee-jerk reactions.¹⁵⁴ Spirit of philosophical investigation and examining and excavating the aesthetic experience of mundane appears obvious, does not seem important and taken for granted. Hence the neglect of everyday aesthetic because this aesthetic moves out of aesthetic radar of celebrated art that prompt the contemplation. The aesthetic of such day to day activities do not claim its importance in its full length and do not exoticize as it is claimed in the honorific arts of announced status of art and aesthetic where that demands the spectator to move in a certain way and experience it.

Any discussion regarding the aesthetic dimension of non-art objects is almost always conducted by examining to what extent they are similar or different from High art objects. That approach misconstrues the nature of our aesthetic lives as well as unduly limits its scope. The day to day aesthetic artifacts and objects also offer the similar experience that is generated through coherent design, dramatic tension, or intense expressiveness to the same extent that many works of art do. Difference lies in the non high art objects is, absence of definite authorship and declared art-hood. Idea of fine art cannot capture the concept of day to day activities as one of

¹⁵⁴ Yuriko Saito

the categories of aesthetics. It is popularized that non-art and daily objects do not contemplate the spectator for the aesthetic treasure hunt.

Prescribed mode of experiencing the preferential arts, distances the spectator/audience from the performer and the work of art. The household practice of everyday aesthetic, like folk arts and popular arts, reduces the distance between the art and the audience/spectator. Metaphysically and literally these, non preferential arts are very near to day to day living.[Fig.4.34]

Critique-

Haapala says "Strangeness creates a basis for sensitive aesthetic appreciation. Art is presented in the contexts that create strangeness, and the tendency in aesthetics has been to maximize strangeness and to minimize familiarity."....we compromise with the everydayness of the everyday while searching for the aesthetic. "Ordinary everyday objects lack the surprise element or freshness of the strange, nevertheless they give us pleasure through a kind of comforting stability."

Tom Leddy says "There is a distinction between the aesthetics of everyday life ordinarily experienced and the aesthetics of everyday life extraordinarily experienced. Any attempt to increase the aesthetic sensibility of our ordinary life-experiences will tend to push those experiences in the direction of extraordinary. One can conclude there is a tension within the very concept of the aesthetics of everyday life."

One can group these statements with hegemonic declarations. Such declarations avoid considering the potentials of such day to day aesthetics and evacuate them by declaring that they are commonly found or lacking strangeness and classified as other than the acclaimed

western discourse of art. Resisting such hegemonic statements is the point of contemplation for this study's argument and to develop an understanding about the epistemological importance of household arts.

Beauty played an important role all the time¹⁵⁵

AS John lane explains 'general aesthetic' which is not a classical and celebrated aesthetic does not have any commendable word in language. There are words like beautiful, pretty, lovely, handsome, graceful, elegant, etc; strike as inherent weak terms and ineffectual on contesting. It even sounds it is removed from contemporary resonance in the western thought of Art appreciation. But the philosophy of eastern thought is, maker of art work should go out of one's own ego and respect creativity as supreme power. One should develop the self-surrender attitude. One finds such attitude in the household rituals. Women put their hands to work and heart to god. They feel that whatever the result that comes out is the blessing of god. There is an unconscious involved in this attitude and that drives the minds to create the work. They work more than limiting themselves.

As john lane says beauty played an important role in long heritage of our history. Previously beauty was never at the periphery, was a necessary ingredient of day to day life, like food and drink, etc. Beauty is assimilated within the system as sensuous. Women placed their rituals on that system where that sensuous of personal or family life is tapped and roped in. Aesthetic pleasures involved in organizing and performing the rituals fulfill the emotional baggage and

¹⁵⁵ John lane-Timeless Beauty-In the Arts and Everyday life. Vivekananda Foundation.2004.

the vacuum is filled by those innovative activities while investing their creative energies. They express themselves beyond the words in subtle visuals.

Silence is a more and stronger statement of expression and women's expressions are located on that principle. Let such day to day and regular aesthetic may not get classified under the cerebral or egoistic, but the spectator cannot get away without marvel the beauty of the household aesthetic whether it is a decoration of the household or ritual activity or the aroma of the delicious dish that cooked. Here the beauty is embedded in a context and inter-texted with some other aspect of life and left unacknowledged. Beauty originates within and guides the soul. A sense of ordered harmony or ordered complexity induces a sensation of expanded consciousness about wholeness, may be that is the beauty's definition. Beauty brings ecstasy and self transcendence.

In *Buddhist* aesthetics beauty is more than pleasing. That is the element of uplifting. It takes us out of constricted consciousness and gives us a taste of unity with the wholeness, connect and resonate at a deeper level with cosmos/abstract. That is the attainment of inner bliss.¹⁵⁶ If any object that fulfills the aesthetic pleasure, whether it is in silent mode or in a loud voice then what makes one for not calling that object as creative work?

Modernity-Modernism-

Rituals of household practices are seen as fixative and 'lack of progression.'

Modern period raises certain questions on the mythical reading and ritual following. De-mytholization is associated with modernity. Modern period claimed that these myths are thoughtless. But the definition of modernism is a bit different from the modernity. Modernism

¹⁵⁶ John lane-Timeless Beauty.

resisted the understanding of modernity and supported the aesthetic involvement in the myths. There is a romantic imagination involved in reading the myths and exaltation of desires. Ritual story reading also falls under the category of such myths and fiction stories. An illusion is generated through these ritual stories. One envisages an ideal situation through narrating or reading-listening to myths. In a way one can say myth and imagination are interchangeable. The myth stories can project a dreamy 'Other-Nector' world in the imaginations or a hope to avoid any possible troubles and difficulties in life and the dreamy world promises to be available at arm length. It takes assurance for the aspirations. Stories save the 'reader-listener-narrator' of fiction stories from the 'dogmatic-routine-monotony'.

The imaginations about the future in the ritual stories appear as a continuity of the present. Performance of the ritual worship appears like a ladder for the future to reach those distant dreams. An enigma is created in that process of journey from present to the future, reality and abstract, reachable and unreachable, continuity and conclusion, nearness and distances, real and ideal, sacred and profane, etc.

Literacy in Modern times-

First modern Telugu publication was printed in 1807 A.D. Brown, an English man in British Indian period learnt Telugu language and written a dictionary in English to Telugu meanings. He also had written the translations of *Vemana Satakam* and many more. Though Telugu presses were more in Madras, Vanaparthi in Telangana and Gadvala in Rayalaseema had printing press around 1860's and 70's and published Telugu publications. That helped in propagating the reading of language by many readers which was only the scholars' activity earlier. Language also started improving with the printing presses and Si Marepalli Ramachandra Sastry's '*Tenugu*

Tobuttuvulu and Caldwell's Grammar of Dravidian languages would give us the information that how the Telugu people tried to congress and expand the reading, spread information and civilization and the ideas of social reforms. *Sati Sahagamanam* was stopped because of Rajammohan Roy in 1829 and widow remarriage act was passed in 1856. Veeresalingam was one of the important persons who were acting with reforming ideology and instrumented the act of widow remarriage act and in passing that bill in Government. He was a member of *Brahmasamajam*. This faith was established in Krishna and Godavari districts. Later it is expanded to form as *Arya Samajam*.

Telegraph, postal and railway development had increased the consumer market of publications. Mid 19th century, '*Sri Yakshini*' was a Telugu weekly journal published from Ballari. *Andhra Patrika* as a weekly journal started from Bombay later shifted to Madras. Kasinadhunu Nageswara Rao had started that Andhra Patrika as daily paper in the days to come later. In 1920 *Krishna Patrika* another daily reading paper was started. The daily and weekly publications started reaching the houses and reading the news paper and journals had become a greater and meaningful pastime for the house hold. Kattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy garu had written '*Musalamma Maranam*' in 1900 A.D. That was the new way of writing '*Bhava kavitha*'- expressive writing and that was a story on a theme of sacrifice and that changed the traditional thinking. Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu, Komarraju laxman Rao garu, Gaadicheral Harisarvottama Rao, Kattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy garu, Gidugu Ramamurthy garu, etc studied English language and changed the stride of Telugu language and given a modern flow to the writing in their mother tongue. Veeresalingam had written dramas, essays, novels, humour, biographies, translations of best English writings, etc. Komarraju Laxman Rao had written for

children in specific. He, Gadicherla, Ravichettu Ranga Rao had established '*Vignana Chandrika Grandhamala*' in 1907 in Hyderabad. They first published biography of Abraham Lincoln president of America.

Right from 1900 A.D. Telugu language had Novels, essays, history writing, critiques, poetry(*Khanda Kavyalu*) were available in translated versions of English and also in the methods of Sanskrit writing. Komarraju had once mentioned in the preface of a book on Abraham Lincoln's biography in Telugu and such books are very much necessary for the development of language. That was first said by Chinnayya Suri (1807 to 1861 A.D) and later by Veeresalingam. *Purushaardhapradayini*, *Andhrabhasha Sanjivani*, *Mandara Manjari*, *Chintamani*, *Sri Vaijayanti*, were monthly journals available in the earlier phase. *Saraswati*, *Manjuvani*, *Manorama*, *Suvarnalekha*, *Savitri*, *Hindu Sundari*, were the monthly journals began and published in the second stage. *Andhra Prakasika*, *Sasilekha*, *Krishna Patrika*, *Aryamatabodhini*, *Satyavadi*, etc weeklies had generated meaningful developments in Telugu literature. 19th century British India witnessed substantial change because of the western education especially in the urban areas. With the growth of vernacular print and publications people took to reading, writing and public speaking. Women also took to reading because of the increased print culture of weekly, monthly journals and daily news magazines reaching homes.

"Personal narratives-"

Malvika Karlekar has studied about early personal narratives of Bengali women in her book 'Voices from Within'.¹⁵⁷ Education, in which ever form, it is instrumental in facilitating the self expression. Writing is always an act of catharsis and it helped women in an unequal society of

¹⁵⁷ Oxford University press.1991.Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras.

those days to reflect roles and specificities of their lives. As mentioned by Ms.Malvika Karlekar '*Amar Jiban*' is the earliest personal narrative of a Bengali woman written by Rassundari. Born in 1809 her thirst for religion inspired her to learn how to read and write. She recounted how she used to hide pages removed from her son's note book within the folds of her saree. Many women wrote about themselves rather than fiction, poetry, essays because it can be expressed more easily. There was no need to think about a plot, theme or structure, literary niceties in which they had no training. Act of writing is fulfilling certain role of biographies. It may provide a raw data than a synthesized memory but helps in the formation of a distinct identity and a sense of self, as the writer is able to physically view on the paper what she feels about herself.

Modern women and pass-time creative activities-

There is a case study on Smt.Bhagavatula Janaki, 83 years old, from Kalavapudi village of Krishna district is presently living in Hyderabad along with her husband Bhagavatula Subrahmanyam, 87 years old. Mr.Subrahmanyam worked in Digboi oil mills in Assam. Mrs. Janaki joined him after their marriage in 50's. They lived in Assam for 25 years from 1950's to 80's. Smt.Janaki studied up to 5th standard examination. There were no Telugu speaking people available to meet in Assam not even the culture and living styles of Assam are known to her at that time. She could not travel frequently to her native place to meet their relatives back home, because of the distances and less developed railway systems. She had to manage all the festivals and the necessary rituals like *Ganesh Chaturdhi* there in Assam and with the available materials. Her childhood days' learning and the exposure she had observing and helping Vempati China Satyam a *Kuchipudi* dancer and his group, became handy to fulfill the requirements. She made *Ganapati* with cut fruits, dry twigs, soaked clay, shells that are

available plenty in Assam, dry bamboo twigs that Assam is famous for and thick chart paper sheets to make a pedestal of lotus shape to place *Ganapati*. She stored all the empty tins, shampoo bottles, perfume bottles, nail polish bottles, dried ring gourd vegetable, electric bulb covers, fused bulbs, etc. and made toys, *Raas Leela* of lord *Krishna* and *Gopikas*, king and queen, bride and groom, Manipuri dance dolls, penguin birds, adding facial features with clay, lack, dried seeds, etc. Used color paper, beads, old shining cloth to make costume, crowns, jewelry, etc. Her younger sister got married and left for America. She helped people decorating wedding dias with local flora and fauna in the similar way how our wedding dias are made here in India. Their mother Cheruvu Hanumayamma and her aunt Dhara Savitramma, a widow from her childhood, were talented women. Smt. Janaki observed her mother making beautiful floral designs on hair dos and plaits for young girls. She learnt many wedding ritual songs from them. Her uncle was a school teacher and made them to learn “*Kolatam*”-*Rass leela* style of dance, with sticks in the evenings. He taught them mat weaving, hand work on the wool carpets, carpentry of small objects. She never learnt classical dance but she taught dance choreography to her daughters for their school programs. Smt. Janaki kept the continuity of the culture of her native place with her creative energies.[Fig.4.1 to 4.14]

Digboi oil mills were under Britishers’ governance for some time in independent India also. European women, officer’s wives formed ladies club and encouraged Indian women to become members and participate in all the club meetings and cultural programs. Smt. Janaki participated in all such programs and made her children and husband also to participate in the fancy dress programs. She collected money for charity activities along with other women at the time of China war made and taught other women making pickles with rarely available

vegetables, taught Telugu recipes and preparations at the club activities. She used color papers, chart papers, sparkling paper, bamboo twigs, old cloth, thermacole, etc. in making the costumes for fancy dress activities. Mr. Edburg was an active officer in the company and his wife Dr. Mrs. L. Baird in the club. They encouraged all the activities in the colony at that time. She is happy to inform me that she made a toy lobster with dried ring gourd and gifted to Mrs. Baird.

There are many women of that age group and in early independent India or today, depend on such creative activities and drawn aesthetic pleasures within their four walls of household. Many women are seen stitching, making dolls with beads and wool threads, weaving bags, painting with sand grains, rice grains, peelings of the bamboo, bottles, embroidery, etc. [Fig. 4.26; to 4.28; 4.35] Girls of 21st century studied professional courses and working on their career plans. This was a practice of 20th century girls and women's leisure time when girls' education itself had a limited permission in the society.

Section-III

Drawing Spiritual Pleasures-

6.Chapter-

Saundaryalahari

This chapter consists of two sections of discussions.

i) Household practices of ritual recitations of the Verses

ii) Illustrated manuscript of *Saundaryalahari*¹⁵⁸ verses

First section is on the present day ritual practices of reciting *Saundaryalahari* verses mostly by women. Second section discusses about an illustrated manuscript on Adisankara's *Saundaryalahari* text.¹⁵⁹ The recitations of these verses are practiced like any other Household worships by women to draw the spiritual pleasures. Second section's discussion is about the style, meanings and similarities of this manuscript's illustrations comparing with other Indian painting styles.

I-Ritual Recitations-

"*Saundaryalahari-Stuti*", verses on goddess are recited or sung as devotional recitations. This recitation is similar to any other recitations of different gods and goddesses like *Sahasranamam* of lord *Vishnu*, goddess *laxmi* or *lalitha*, *Sivastuti* or *Chaleesa* of lord *Hanuman*, etc. People recite everyday or once in a week, at any particular time or on auspicious days, preferably in the morning hours or in the evenings. For example *Vishnu* or lord *Venkatesward's* verses are recited on Saturday and goddess's verses are preferred to read on Tuesday or Friday if not on each and every day. *Lalitha Sahasranamam* and *Saundaryalahari* are the recitations of different

¹⁵⁸ The way of pronunciation should spell Soundaryalahari in Telugu instead of Saundaryalahari, but I am following the spelling written in the illustrated manuscripts of Oriental institute and Baroda museum.

¹⁵⁹ Both the sections may not appear an obvious relation with each other on the face value but the relation is on the Saundaryalahari text itself.

forms of goddess *Parvati*. Both the recitations are under the practice of reciting amongst women of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamilnadu in Southern part of India. At times men are also seen reciting these verses. There is a recent practice that women get to gather in groups on full moon days or on nine days of festival of goddess '*Navaratri* or *Dussehra*' to recite the devotional verses on goddess. They perform the ritual of reciting the verses in the morning hours after men and children left for work or in the afternoon leisure hours, after the household routine is concluded. There are audio cassettes and CompactDiscs available in the market sung lyrically by both men and women on *Saundaryalahari* and *Lalitha Sahasranamam* verses.

Saundaryalahari may not be found singing or reciting as popularly as *Lalitha Sahasranamam* verses are. At the same time it is not an unknown and rare practice. *Lalitha Sahasranamam* consists more of Telugu literary words and *Saundaryalahari* is in *Sanskrit* language. These verses are learnt through a music teacher-*Guru* and should recite in a musical mode. One who learns *Saundaryalahari* verses sings individually or women get-to-gather in groups for singing in chorus.¹⁶⁰ *Saundaryalahari* and *Lalithasahasranamam* verses are recited only by upper caste '*Hindu*'-women¹⁶¹ and widow is not supposed to recite these verses till the previous decades.

¹⁶⁰ Smt. Geetha Kalyan raman a classical music teacher in Baroda used to teach Saundaryalahari when she lived there last decade before shifting to South India. Many women learnt from her and they felicitate their guru with auspicious gifts. Any pre decided auspicious days women get together to recite these verses. The verses *lalithasahasranamam* or *Saundaryalahari* were recited by only Brahmin caste women and pious women who's husband is alive. There is a change in the practice that *Lalithasahasranamam* is recited by many women, widows or of other castes. Still one do not find much popularity on reciting *Saundaryalahari*. Reason could be for its content that full of Sanskrit words and its pronunciation may not be popularly known.

2. Romila Thapar explains that the term '*Hinduism*' gained popularity in British India. She writes "It was only gradually and over time that it was used not only for those who were inhabitants of India but also for those who professed a religion other than Islam or Christianity."

One can see a change in present day times and it is recited by many sections of the social casts, widow is also not restricted on the recitations.

***Sundaryalahari* Recitation ritual-**

Malladi Laxmi on 6th March 2011 performed *Upanayanam*-Thread ceremony of her son Jasvanth, who is studying in 7th standard. On 5th of March and the previous day of *Upanayanam* celebrations, she performed a ritual of reciting *Saundaryalahari* along with her co-learners of those verses at her place.¹⁶² The ritual of recitation was preceded by her Guru Smt.Saraswati Kalyanasundaram. She is a retired Head-Mistresses of a Govt. School and living in Hyderabad. She learnt from Late. Ms. Pattammal, renowned *Carnatak* classical singer. According to Mrs. Saraswati the learning of full length *Saundaryalahari* would take 6 months. She informs that the goddess image that is to be kept at the worship while reciting these verses is *Balatripura Sundari*. [Fig. 5.1 to 5.5]

Photo frames of Lord *Ganesha*, goddess *Balatripura Sundari* and goddess *Laxmi* were placed along with one wall of the drawing room of Smt. Malladi laxmi's drawing room. Goddess *Balatripura Sundari's* image was decorated with a saree and golden ornaments along with the regular garlands and flowers. There is another plate containing 108 one rupee coins of currency was placed at the worship place. They recited *Lalitha Sahasranamam* before reciting the *Saundaryalahari* and it seems that should be the sequence of recitation. As Mrs Saraswati says, those 108 coins represent the Goddess *Lalitha's* verses. Mrs.Saraswati belongs to Tamilnadu region and that practice of worshipping goddess Lalitha with currency coins is not seen in

¹⁶² She resides in Cherlapalli, Hyderabad and performed the ceremonies at her house.

Telugu region. Worshipping currency coins is the practice seen in Andhra region for the rituals of goddess *Laxmi*. Her disciples are following her way of practicing. Probably this is one of the evident examples how the practices are changing along with the times and ages to pass.

There were around 30 to 40 women, who are their neighbors present at that worship. There are non *Brahmin* women also reciting the verses and Mrs. Saraswati says she has not put any such caste restriction to teach. Other practices and rituals were followed as usual and every lady was given auspicious offerings. There is one more activity happened at the place which is not a regular practice on the other rituals. All the women who ever is invited is applied '*Parani*' on their feet. *Parani* is a mix of lime and turmeric and that mix gets the maroon color. This mix of maroon color is applied in a circular shape on the feet after applying turmeric around the feet. Reddish maroon lines appear on the yellow feet get the colourful walk. This is a special decoration done on the bride's feet. It seems that when *Saundaryalahari* is recited this special decoration of '*Parani*' is unavoidable and made the situation little more special than the regular practice of applying turmeric on the feet. [Fig.5.6]

Saundaryalahari verses contain the meanings that goddess is very courageous, she is the mother of all the gods, she is the one who produced *Chatur*-(four) *Vedas*, she is the path finder, etc. While reciting women would increase their contentment and satisfaction in the unconscious levels that they are the privileged ones belong to the same gender of the goddess.

Possible purpose of recitations-

As per the explanation of Sankaracharya, who wrote these verses, concept of '*Brahman*' or absolute, is a 'Subtlety' rather than any intellectual curiosity. That absolute can be experienced by two ways of

practices. One is through logical knowledge, i.e. '*Karmayoga* and *Gyana yoga*.' Second is '*Bhakti Marga*' that is surrendering oneself to the supreme power of god. For such '*Bhaktimarg*' personal god can be conceived as an image or some concrete object to form an abstract ladder. The method of worship may vary from individual to individual or group to group. Probably recitations of *Saundaryalahari* verses by women in their rituals are one such kind of practice on *Bhaktimarg*. The exaltation of explanations on goddess' potentials by the poet Sankara may be sounding poetic but the elaborate poetic explanations would certainly help the devotee to reach an exalted status in '*Bhaktimarg*' to gain complete faith. That faith is drawn in a subtle way while reciting the poetic verses, drawing aesthetic pleasures and believing Her potentials as a savior and boon giver. Adisankara also described in the verses that one's (his) utmost yearning is to take shelter at her feet, final attainment. [Fig.5.7 to 5.9]

II-Illustrated manuscripts-

There are two illustrated manuscripts(I came across) on *Saundaryalahari* verses one is displayed in the Oriental Institute in Vadodara and another is in Baroda museum and Picture Gallery.¹⁶³ There is no mention of the patron or province on these illustrated manuscripts. Keen observation also informs that the goddess portrayed on the manuscript does not possess the features of a goddess. She appears more human than divine. [Fig.5.14 to 5.18]

References of '*Sakti*' principle in the verses-

Saundaryalahari literally means 'wave of beauty'. The 101 verses end with a mention on the manuscript that these verses are written by Sankaracharya. That could be about Adi

¹⁶³ My study on *Saundaryalahari* began after coming across the illustrated manuscript of these verses displayed in Oriental institute. Because these verses are rarely recited and written by a south Indian seer but manuscripts are found in western India and that was the curiosity made to began looking in to this illustrated manuscript.

Sankaracharya because other authors written that *Saundaryalahari* is written by Adi Sankaracharya. Biographers mentioned that this text has a divine origin of lord *Shiva* and Adi Sankaracharya has completed the text. Another story informs that Adi Sankara composed these verses involuntarily as a poetic composition looking at the divine beauty of a milkmaid.

As per Tummalapalli Ramalingeswara Sarma's Telugu commentary on *Saundaryalahari*, there are references on *Tantric* and *Sakti* cult meanings in these verses. *Sakti* principle is the base of *Saundaryalahari* text describing goddess as *Bhavani*, *Tripurasundari*, etc. In *Sankhya* and *Tantra* philosophy the female principle is named as *Prakriti*, literally meaning nature; the primordial material/body that envelops the spirit, the soul. '*Sakti*' indicates that power centered is a female deity.¹⁶⁴

Goddess in the verses is described as an utmost power by the poet-

The poet Sankaracharya explains about the goddess that "The tiniest speck of dust from your lotus feet is collected by *Viranci-Brahma* to mould the worlds in their entirety" "Oh!*Kalyani*! I will not go to *Viranchi(Brahma)*, who creates every day, not to *Vishnu* who loves *Laxmi* who is *Chanchal*(always on the move), not even *Siva* who destructs. You are the only one where I can take shelter."

Another verse in the text explains that coolness of moon light is nothing but the perfume, (musk-fat globules of musk deer) from her container. Goddess' radiance is so bright that reflection of Sun becomes pale and left only as a mirror in front of her sparkling brightness. Artist has literally illustrated these words on the manuscript images.

¹⁶⁴ Ed. Carolyn Larrington "The Feminist Companion to Mythology." Pandora press an imprint of Harper Collins publishers London 1992.

24th verse explains that by worshipping goddess' feet can fulfill the worship of all the three gods, *Indra, Brahma* and *Vishnu* who were born of three *Gunas*, "*Tamas, Satva and Rajas*". Corresponding illustration of this verse is displaying the image that all those three gods are standing with folded hands in front of the goddess.

Goddess in *Saundaryalahari* is described as *Kundalini Sakti*-energy and her ear ornaments are described as certain nerves of importance on *Tantric* practices. Ramalingeswara Sarma narrates about that reference. Goddess nods her head when goddess *Saraswati* was singing in front of the goddess of *Saundaryalahari* in praise of her husband lord *Siva* to please the goddess. When she nods her head her *Kundalas*, the ear ornaments make certain melodious sounds. Mr.Sarma opines that the purpose of mentioning about *Kundalas* in the verses is to make an indirect reference to *Kundalini Sakti* of *yogic* cults. The references made about six *Chakras* of the body and *Kundalini Sakti* in the form of a Serpent in the verses are meaningfully making the references to *Sakti* cult and *Tantric* practices. Goddess lives in *Sahasrara* a serpent form of *Kundalini* as per the text and that is represented in the illustrations also. Image drawn on the illustration is similar to a lotus flower with numerous petals called *Srichakra* as per the text and she resides in that mansion. *Sakti*¹⁶⁵ cult has a variety of *Kaula, Misra* and *Samayachara*

¹⁶⁵Aggrawala referring to Prof. Kane citing a number of passages from Atharvaveda and says that concept of Sakti can be traced back to Vedic literature. He also discussed about the philosophical ideas of Tantras, a Sakta philosophy conceived in the feminine form. Vedantists identified that with Brahman and Tantrikas with Sakti and understood as transcendent and immanent. This Sakti lies in the coiled form of serpent in human beings as Kundalini Sakti. She is dormant in the human body and supposed to be the root cause of this universe. Sakti lies dormant in the lowest Chakra Mooladharachakra. Tantric philosophy became popular at Gupta times and later it flourished in every part of India. Dr.Hazra pointed out that the female deity is of non-Aryan origin. Female deity worship was prevalent in primitive tribes throughout the world...female deities were worshipped for their magical and Shamanistic associations. She is described sitting on a lion glorified as a mountain mother or a vegetable deity.

methods of practices. *Kaula* and *Misra* methods are worldly in nature and *Samayachara* practice is for *Moksha* the final attainment.

Dr. Hazra says about *Sakti* principle that, as far as the explanation in *Puranas* is concerned, *Sakti* principle or mother goddess of primitive tribes is a *Prakriti*-nature, who unites with the lord of universe.

Sankara's Vijayayatra-

At the time of Adi Sankara's *Vijayayatra-Padayatra*, biographers mentioned, an untouchable's comment on his disciples made him to realize on certain realities about the practices of caste discrimination in the society. This incident was acknowledged by Sankara in his writing '*Manisapancaha*' and mentioned that there are no *Brahmanis*, *Vaisyas*, *Sudras* and *Mlechhas*. All these differences stem from their aptitudes and activities." Probably by bringing up the *Sakti* cults of primitive female deity worships he worked for the unification of the society and the removal of lower and upper status of religious differences. Sanctity of displaying the importance of female deity as a unifying power is probably to project the gender equality also. He encouraged the learned to be respected and for the removal of caste and gender differences by uplifting a goddess faith. Till then mother goddess worship was believed as a faith of lower strata of the society and Vedic gods alone were given the superior position.

During his *Vijayayatra*, touring the continent he established religious centers at the four corners of the country at Badari in north, Sringeri in south, Dwaraka in west and Puri in east of India and one at Kanchipuram in Tamilnadu where he himself presided over that *Peetham*. He established and declared those seats are interactive centers for the public to discuss the

problems of religious, social and cultural with the religious heads of those centers. Goddess is the ultimate and *Mathadhipati*-head of that religious institute is the devotee at her feet who runs the institute.

II-Reading the Illustrations-

There are two parts in *Saundaryalahari* verses. First section comprises forty one verses and they are at times known as '*Anandalahari*'. It is the term popular in North India and second section differs in number. They could be 59, 60 or 61 verses.

Province of the patron is not known either from the manuscript or from the accession details of administration records of both the manuscripts.¹⁶⁶ The critical enquiry engages to investigate who illustrated these manuscripts? Who patronized? What was the purpose and circulation of these manuscripts? *Saundaryalahari Stuti* being devotional verses, were these illustrated manuscripts happened for religious concern alone or these happened as literary writings and artistic activities on cultural promotions or these made to happen as political and social statements.

Relative dating of the manuscript-

Understanding the painting style of these illustrations and placing them chronologically in the traditional Indian painting schools becomes a yardstick to analyze the above factors. Interpretations of visual statements would direct us on this endeavor.

Goddess images in the illustrations do not look like a mythical goddess form. One could presume on observing, Goddess figure is metaphorically representing a ruling queen who is seated on a throne but not on any *Vahana*(coach) of goddess, tiger or lion. Further

¹⁶⁶Accession Records 1) Oriental Institute- 53 Folios, Sanskrit Language, Source-Harikrishna N.Shastry, Bazwada, Khatripole, Bill of 6-2-'19. 2) Baroda Museum- 52 pages, Source- Dr. M.R.Mazumdar, Baroda, July '54.

interrogations that proceeded are, who is that queen portrayed as a goddess. What were the situations and the context of these illustrations refers to?

Physical Features of the manuscript:

Both the manuscripts, one in Oriental institute and another in Baroda museum, have similar physical features. Text and illustrations are rendered on both, front and backside of the folios. Scribes of the manuscript written on the last folio that, *Saundaryalahiri*¹⁶⁷ verses were written by 'Paramahansa Parivrajaka Sankaracharya'. Both the manuscripts have same format and the size. The size of the folio is 8.5"- 5" and 3"-2.7" is the space utilized for illustrations.¹⁶⁸ The one in Oriental Institute, M.S University Baroda appears a trifle more sophisticated than the manuscript of Baroda museum along with a lavish gold application though both donot display great sensitive figuration of classical Indian art styles. The one in Baroda museum looks like a copy or a re- produced sample of the manuscript in Oriental Institute with further deterioration of features and figures.

Style of the Illustrated Paintings-

Application of gold on illustrations was found in Indian classical painting after Persian interactions from 12th C. These manuscripts lack the finer sensitivity of Indian classical painting styles of 15th to 17th centuries of Rajasthan, Mughal Schools or any such developed schools.

Both the manuscripts display a mixture of painting styles of various schools and inform that they do not belong to any one particular school of traditional Indian painting. Goddess, other human figures, landscape and surrounding details are stereotypically repeated. Many folios

¹⁶⁷ Also called as Jaganmatrika Stuti. 1 to 40 verses are called as Anandalahiri.

¹⁶⁸ My study is based on observing the manuscript that is in Oriental institute because of its better appearance and image clarity. Chemical bite must have affected the one in Baroda museum and picture gallery.

display similar and repeated forms, postures and figures. Very few and minimum architectural details are illustrated. Less attention was paid on sophistication of figure drawing. Features and body postures are drawn crooked. Figures are dwarfed and many a time appears like dolls stuffed into given spaces. One can observe that declining Malwa and Mewar painting styles along with few flashes of Mughal features filled the illustrations' spaces.

Few examples-

Folio no.6 display a floor design spread with geometric white tiles,¹⁶⁹ a Persian pattern. Backside of the 3rd folio's space is divided horizontally with red and yellow colour applications and illustrations are painted on both the divisions. *Nandi-Vahana* of *Siva* painted on upper division of the folio makes us to recollect Mewar style of rendering. As per the text, *Vedic Gods*¹⁷⁰ approaching the goddess do not appear like celestial figures but look like Mughal chieftains. The designs of costumes and headgear they wear make us to think so. All the figures are dwarfed in the folios look like early Malwa style of figures and features. But these figures are less sophisticated than that of Malwa paintings. On the backside of Folio no. 30, two *Asopalav* like trees painted at both the sides of goddess are filled with lattice design. That is similar to Mughal or Mewari schema, but without those styles' natural and sensuous appearance.¹⁷¹ They look like artificial trees. Trees and foliage are painted sparsely. Very few and necessary details are filling the spaces for conveying the information. Folio no.27-'*Gauri*' image costume display a design with stripes of yellow, green, red and white colors. Similar kind of designs appears on

¹⁶⁹ I am observing oriental institute manuscript because of its clarity. My readings are depended on the same manuscript.

¹⁷⁰ Saundaryalahari text refers to Vedic deities Brahma, Vishnu, Sadasiva, Indra, Varun and Vayu. They are portrayed as subordinates or praising Goddess.

¹⁷¹ Tuti Nama or Hamza Nama of 16th C. Mughal paintings or 17thC. Mewar's Sarangadhara Padhati compositions display Asopalav trees.

Mewar style of *Raasleela* paintings. Master painter who designed the format could be the descendant of Malwa periods and who filled the details could be the painter of Mewar school descendants or it could be vice-versa. Resulted paintings are mixed bags of different styles.

With the close of 17th century the school of Mewar loses much of its former charm and it was mostly lacking in aesthetic merit and true beauty.¹⁷² Last phase of Mewar shows a beginning of the tendency towards heavy figures with large faces and certain carelessness in the drawing. We can find those characters in these illustrations also.

Dr.S.Andhare while discussing about Mewar styles refers to a painting “Rana Jagat Singhji playing *Chaupati* with ladies” dated v.s. 1800 i.e 1743 A.D. and writes that this period portray typical female type with pointed and somewhat hooked a flattish head, the horizontal *KumKum* mark on the forehead in the shape of crescent moon and the elaborate of the jewelry all-over, overall use of reds of different gradations juxtaposed against pastel green is a distinguished feature of this period.¹⁷³ Certain distinct characters of such kind also found on these illustrations lead one to relate these illustrations with Mewar paintings styles of 18th century.

Malwa style of painting is perceptible little more than Mewar elements in the present manuscript illustrations, on the selection of characters, small bodice (Blouses of women),

¹⁷² Motichandra opines that Mewar school developed in to a distinct, sophisticated and sensuous school in 16th and 17th C. Motichandra mentions that with the close of 17th C. popularity of Mewar school of painting had grown but lost its former charm. Quantity and popularity increased because of feudatory chiefs, bankers, religious leaders, merchants and others had their portraits made. Court and harem scenes, processions and hunting scenes were popularly made and became commonly found images. Quantity increased at the same time quality suffered.

¹⁷³ Chapter 5-Mughal influence on the Mewari painting of the eighteenth century- Sridhar Andhare.

Colour tones, architectural designs or on the elements of decorative trees.¹⁷⁴ Folio no.15, three *Vedic* Gods are about to lie down on the floor in order to touch the feet of goddess. Bodies do not have any angular bend while bowing to lie down on earth. They are falling like wooden toys straight at an angle of 45° from earth.¹⁷⁵ This is a feature found on early Malwa style appeared on *Krishna* theme paintings and must have got repeated at later stages as a diminishing style with less importance paid on sophistication.

As per the above descriptions, lesser focus on the compactness, stereotypical representation as a degenerated style of careless drawing and lack of aesthetic merit of both Mewari and Malwa features were popularly found in 18th century. As for as the manuscript under discussion is concerned, Presence of such weak Mewari and Malwa features make these illustrations to be located in 18th century¹⁷⁶ in Indian Art chronology. When the political instability disturbed the Art activity, wandering painters and the descendents of those earlier painter generations from both Malwa and Mewar regions must have reached the province where this manuscript was

¹⁷⁴Malwa paintings from central India stylistically look like Mewar paintings but in each details like character representation and costume details one can see the difference that was maintained with clear distinction. Ananda Krishna expressed his opinion that art centres like Mewar, Malwa, Bundi, Bundelkhand sprouted from early generic popular style of Sultanate painting of indigenous styles. They wanted to resist the Mughal courts. After the Mughal conquest Malwa reduced to neglected stage in 16th and 17th centuries. But it was later backed by Vallabhite Vaishnavism in Malwa, Ananda Krishna writes, “References to the roaming painters abound in the medieval literatures, and it is as much possible that painters from Malwa wandered from place to place and painted a number of traditional themes for wealthy patrons...however by the end of 17th century the political and economic stability of the Malwa region was undermined subsequently by the Maratha policy to harass the Mughals..”

¹⁷⁵ Archival plates, Dept. of Art Histoty & Aesthetics.

¹⁷⁶ Dr.M.R. Majumdar who possessed the Saundaryalahiri Manuscript of Baroda Museum dates it as ‘ probably in 17th C.’ a century earlier than the Oriental institute manuscript. He opines that the better preservation is because of its later date. But the further diluted concreteness of features of human body informs that this is a copy of the Oriental institute manuscript that he did not take into consideration.

illustrated. Consequent query raised is what is the province of this illustrated manuscript?

Which kingdom must have patronized this manuscript?

Material Culture:

Viewer can infer certain observations while looking in to the customs and materials attributed to the figures of illustrations. Goddess figure in the illustrations appears more like a ruling Queen seated relaxed or conversing sitting on a big throne or eight-cornered mat made of silk tapestry filled with Persian patterns.¹⁷⁷ There are certain customs and traditions of Maratha's are represented on the illustrated compositions.

On close observation of 23rd and 25th folio's front and back page illustrations would reveal, goddess is wearing '*Mangalasutram*', an auspicious ornament made of black beads worn by married women of South and central India. One of the verses of *Saundaryalahiri* explains that neck folds of goddess are sensuous like the thread of '*Mangalasutram*'¹⁷⁸. South Indian women of married status wear the lockets of *Mangalsutram* in a turmeric -applied yellow thread as an auspicious symbol. Adisankara must have referred to this style of *Mangalsutram* as he belonged to Southern part of India. As far as north Indian tradition is concerned no such similar ornament is traditionally worn by women. One can see such tradition of wearing *Mangalasutram* of black beads in Maharashtra region of central India. The black beads ornament painted in the illustrations display the similarity with that central Indian tradition. The painters must be depicting the Maratha tradition of married women wearing *Mangalasutram*.

¹⁷⁷ May-August, 1999 issue of V&A(Victoria and Albert) magazine published a picture of "The golden Throne where Ranjit Singh sat" from a curated exhibition on "Arts of Sikh kingdoms". Throne of that Sikh king was made in 1818 by a 'Muslim' goldsmith. The design of that throne looks like one of those of cushions painted on the manuscript as a seat of the goddess.

¹⁷⁸ Telugu translations by Tummalapalli Ramalingeswar Rao Sarma.

Married women of Maratha region wear a “*Nuth*” a nose-ring ornament that is somewhat elliptical in shape studded with precious materials and pearls. “*Nau-vari*”¹⁷⁹ style of saree wearing is also a custom seen in that region. Images of goddess on backside of Folio 49 illustration is shown wearing *Nuth* and without a crown on the head, seated along with Lord *Siva*. *Nav-Vari* saree wearing of Maratha custom is displayed on the illustrations of many folios. These observations must have come from painters’ interactions with Maratha customs and cultural practices. Leading query at this juncture is what was that Maratha province where the artists of Malwa and Mewar region could reach and painted this manuscript and for whom?

Province of the Patron:

Anand Krishna opines “ It appears that the Malwa painting traveled to the Maratha courts in the 18th century.number of Ragamala paintings have come to light in which certain Deccani traditions are evident.”There are no Deccani painting’ features are found on these manuscripts as Anand Krishna described about Malwa style of paintings in Maratha courts. It could have happened in such a province where Deccani elements need not be seen and painters from Malwa and Mewar regions could easily reach.

The next leading enquiry is ‘attribution of the manuscript to 18th C. Maratha court’ such as Peshwas, Holkars, Gaekwars, Chatrapatis, etc. One can take a direction where that Maratha court is not located in Deccan region and Deccani elements are absent in the art activity.

Art activity in Maratha courts-

Maratha courts never had any glorified art patronage to name that as “Maratha school”. Whatever is the art that happened in Maratha courts, do not have the great sophistication

¹⁷⁹ ‘*Nau-Vari*’ is nine yards saree. This style of wearing the saree is a bit similar to south Indian practice at Andhra pradesh but un-similar in wearing ‘*Veil*’ on head.

comparable to the art that happened in previous centuries in the courts of Mughal, Rajasthan, Deccani, etc.

Baroda court-

Baroda, where these illustrated manuscripts are preserved, was under Maratha ruling in 18th century. Gaekwar's ruling of Baroda began in 1721 A.D. Late 18th century was the period of unsettlement for Maratha rulers. Except few inconsistent and shallow portraits collection, no other art activity could be seen before Khanderao Gaekwar who ruled Baroda in 1850's.¹⁸⁰ He was more interested in collecting jewels along with undertaking few architectural constructions in Baroda.¹⁸¹ Maharaja Sayajirao III, formally took over the ruling of Baroda in 1881.¹⁸² He was rigorously collecting art works, artifacts and manuscripts wherever he traveled.¹⁸³

He collected many manuscripts and established an oriental institute. Accession details of this manuscript in the Oriental Institute of Baroda inform that, it was bought in 1919 A.D. from Baroda itself. Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery manuscript was also bought from Baroda source itself in 1954 as per the accession details. That informs that this manuscript was acquired from outside the palace sources and it was not a property found in the palace. 1919A.D. was the ruling period of Maharaja Sayajirao III who must have collected the manuscripts while establishing the Oriental institute.

Peshwas of Pune-

¹⁸⁰ "Maratha Art" Art patronage in early Gaekwar's rein. Catalogue by Balamani.M for Maratha Art Gallery. That gallery is also known as "Old Baroda Room."

¹⁸¹ British appointed T.Madhav Rao as Deewan of Baroda to look after the administration of unstable Baroda court in 1875 after Khande Rao Gaekwad's death. Madhav Rao appointed M.C.Naidu as 'artist in court service' and Naidu painted mostly portraits in academic style.

¹⁸² Pre Ravi Varma Academic Style Artists in the Baroda palace collection-Myth and Reality by Balamani.M.

¹⁸³ He invited many modern artists like Felici, Fanindranath Bose, Nandalal Bose, Ravi varma. He was culturally conscious looking at British or at previous centuries Indian art traditions.

Art activity of Nana Phadnis, a minister in the court of Peshwa's of Pune needs a careful observation rather than the Peshwa's the rulers.¹⁸⁴ Nana Phadnis's art activities are more prominent in that region. Date of Nana Phadnis is late 18 th century and his constructions are his bungalow Meenavali Palace and Motibaug Palace of Sardar Raste, Wai (Maharashtra) of Nana Fadnis wada and Patwardhan wada. Murals found in the palaces were in Fresco-Secco, Rajasthani mural technique.¹⁸⁵ The mural images in his palaces have affinities towards Deccani painting and *Chitrakathi* painting styles of Andhra-Karnataka border.¹⁸⁶ One can be certain on ruling out this manuscript's patronage to this court because, there seems to be more mural painting activity to decorate the palaces and the style is having affinity more towards Deccani, *Chitrakathi*, Mysore styles and absence of Malwa elements in the mural paintings of this region's art activity.

Vidarbha and Tanjore Maratha courts-

Manisha Patil in her synopsis, submitted for her thesis on Jain Bhandaras in Vidharbha region mentions "The unstable political climate of the Deccan and dearth of regular patronage contributed little in the development of any distinct school in the region though painting for the Marathas continued in modest sized ateliers in places such as Pune and Nagpur, patronized by the Peshwas and the Bhonsles respectively." Bhosales or Chatrapati ruler' location is in Deccani region and there is every possibility that their art activity might show Deccani painting styles similar to Pune region's art activity. As there is no trace of Deccani style in the manuscript under discussion, we can rule out the possibility of Vidarbha region's patronization also. One

¹⁸⁴ Babu Rao Sadwelkar.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

can also rule out the possibility of Tanjore court patronage another Maratha court located in South India. There are no telling details of customs or painting styles of South India shown in the manuscript under discussion.

Scindias -

For the predominant Malwa elements along with Mewar style in this manuscript, one can comfortably get the direction towards Maratha kingdoms of central India for the possible patronage and this region is near vicinity of Mewar and Malwa. Scindias of Gwalior and Holkars of Maheshwar are the Maratha courts situated in central India.¹⁸⁷

Mahadji Scindia of Gwalior in 18th Century was involved in Anglo-Maratha wars and was preoccupied in extending his reins' boundaries. That caused social and economic instability in his region. He was at times to depend on Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore the neighboring state and Peshwas of Pune the official Maratha rulers for monetary and military help. It is obvious for the reader to search for the attribution of this manuscript to Holkars patronage. Ahilyabai Holkar who ruled Maheshwar in 18th C. seems to be possible patron of this manuscript because of her concentrated and visible architectural activity and her keen interest to travel on spiritual path.

Brief History of Holkar's:

Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranuji Scindia were chieftains under Peshwas, had obtained grants to establish their dominion in Malwa region to collect grants.¹⁸⁸ After Malhar Rao Holkar's death, situations would have been otherwise if his daughter-in-law Ahalyabai was not a strong willed person. She seized that region and took over the civil administration into her hands after her

¹⁸⁷ Availability of Saundaryalahari manuscript in western India could be through Dwaraka Peetham established by Adi Sankaracharya in medieval times. There are few un-illustrated manuscripts of 18th C. found in Jodhpur fort Mansingh Pustak Prakash also.

¹⁸⁸ J. Talboys Wheeler.

father-in-law's death. Otherwise her region could have been taken over by Peshwas the official rulers of Maratha kingdom to transfer it to another male chieftain. She was a widow. After understanding her abilities, her father-in-law, great General Malhar Rao Holkar trained her in military affairs and civil management.

Nana Phadnis one of the important ministers in Peshwa court tried to make Ahilyabai a non-entity by providing monetary support for her personal expenses and religious duties. She refused to accept that. Mahadji Scindia, neighbors also tried to interfere with Holkar's house but without success.¹⁸⁹ They found it difficult to force against her determination and decisions. Rani Ahilyabai of Holkar's reign was the enlightened, potential and saintly queen ruled from 1766 to 1795 A.D. Maheshwar was their capital city (later shifted to Indore after her death).

She was expected by Maratha kings and other chiefs to co-ordinate with Mahadji Scindia and support Peshwas on their political plans against British power or politics within or outside the clans. Historian Govind Sakharam Sir Desai also expects the same and comments in his writing that "While she was lavish in charities, she did not see the necessity of improving her armies on the model required by the circumstances or of co-operating with Mahadji in his wars and measures."

Ruling class patriarchal system accepts only a male to rule the reign. She made her position clear and distinct and did not succumb to the ruling class patriarchal system's domination. Her strong will and determination in administration had subverted the tradition that male alone is capable to lead. Probably Ahilyabai took a clever path and that supported her strong determination. She took the same path given by the patriarchal society that a widow and

¹⁸⁹ Govind Sakharam Sar Desai.

women are supposed to be pious and should travel on the spiritual path. She played the same dice coined by the patriarchal system. She walked on that expected path but brought out the different consequences of her interest. She negotiated her space skillfully within the ruling class patriarchal system, did not allow any interference and fulfilled her ruling and increased her fame and identity. She was admired for the justice, wisdom and for her able administrations.¹⁹⁰

Susan Bayly refers that “Ahilyabai was one of several women who confounded the usual conventions debarring women from Kingship, succeeding to power in the Holkar dominions in 1767 A.D. her strategy of pious largesse which was directed towards such fast growing pan Indian devotional centers”. George Mitchell writes “Like male rulers, Ahilyabai affirmed her right to rule by presenting herself as protector of powerful divinities”.

Allegorical Representations-

Marathas were worshipping Goddess *Bhavani* as a protective goddess in the wars. Queen Ahilyabai was probably looked at as goddess *Bhavani*, by the people of her province as a protecting Queen in the political and social disturbances of that period. Allegorical representation of kings equaling to gods is known to Indian art tradition. Frederick.M. Asher writing about “Historical and political Allegory in Gupta art” writes that “By ‘allegory’ here is simply meant a story which serves as an analogy to a real-life person or event, usually making that person or event more vivid, poignant or dramatic”. There is a panel of *Varaha* lifting “*Bhudevi*” i.e lifting earth from submerged waters at Udayagiri located in Malwa region. As Asher discussed that image seems to be inspired by Chandragupta’s conquest and how Chandragupta’s victory served as an allegory for the *Varaha* panel, providing cosmic

¹⁹⁰ George Michel

perspective to the historical event. The panel also has sage figures praising *Varaha*, portrayed as ascetics at the lower level of the panel. Those figures are portrayed with northern Indian costume and that must be the costume of Kushana rulers who were paying homage to Gupta sovereign. Such allegories were popular in central Indian art tradition where the manuscript under discussion was patronized. It is difficult to fail to understand such metaphorical meanings in the work of art. Analogy of a metaphor may not be explicit on the external encounter, but once it is understood it is powerful and meaningful.

“*Tripurasundari*” is one of the descriptions among many other descriptive names of Goddess in *Saundaryalahiri* text. *Tripurasundari* literally means beautiful Goddess is incomparable in the three worlds.¹⁹¹ Probably painters metaphorically represented queen Ahilyabai as a conqueror of the three worlds, world of three ‘*Gunas*’, properties. The painters of this manuscript glorified queen’s potentials as goddess by attributing four hands and goddess’ epithets, in the similar way kings were glorified as *Siva* or *Vishnu*.

Potentials and capacities of queen Ahalyabai were celebrated by the painters in the manuscript illustrations and she was depicted as extra terrestrial character. Painters had drawn the parallels with her able administration and the potential goddess format of *Saundaryalahari*. They had well cloaked the text, then situations, her potentials and the socio-political situations. Sankaracharya’s religious moves were be fittingly depicted by the painters on this manuscript illustrations to display the social and political scenario of Ahalyabai’s period.

Ahilyabai’s spiritual activities:

¹⁹¹ Commentary in Telugu by Tummalapalli Ramalingeswara Rao Sarma.

Rani Ahilyabai took keen interest in reviving '*Hindu*' temples overpowered by Mughals in 17th Century. One such temple revived by her in 1783 A.D. at Somnath in North Gujarat was named after her. K.M. Munshi writes about that temple and says Queen Ahilyabai found the ruins unfit for installing the deity, built a new temple at a little distance. She built '*Garbhagriha*' - Sanctum Sanitorium at underground level, (where presently worships are offered) and a pseudo *Garbhagriha* is made at ground level with an understanding that even if there are any wars and attacks on religious places original *Sivalinga* is in secured position at underground level. She also constructed '*Dharmasala*' and '*Annakuta*' to provide free stay and food for pilgrims. That increased the visitors and popularity of this temple.¹⁹²

George Michel also listed many such details where Ahilyabai given benefactions. He writes "Any further appraisal of Ahilyabai's munificence must inevitably encompass an impressive tract, as can be seen in her benefactions to Kedarnath in the Himalayas to the north, Dwaraka on the Arabian Sea to the west, Puri on the Bay of Bengal to the east and Rameshwaram in the southern most extremity of the peninsula. This quarter of religious sites, marked by sanctuaries dedicated to both lord *Siva* and *Krishna* are the holy spots defining the four directional compass points of India". He opines that that makes her reaching and leaving her mark on the four directions east, west, north and south in India, a *Chakravartin*.

One cannot rule out a hypothesis that her journey on spiritual path was a strategic act to negotiate her position within the ruling class patriarchal system. Medium of Architecture on cultural activities is a mega material on artistic activity. Her patronization on reviving or building temple architecture is encapsulating a distinct position and fame. Her contemporaries and male

¹⁹² Information collected from the site and Somnath Museum.

Maratha rulers were involved in political wars to increase their powers. Ahilyabai's troops proved adequate to preserve internal peace and to keep out the external interference. She made sure that her administration or religious activities are not interfered if not encouraged by her contemporary rulers and British governors.¹⁹³ Probably they thought or they were made to think by her that a woman is traveling on a spiritual path and that would not hinder them or become competitive on their masculine political spaces and she would not have the strength to become comparable. But she proved otherwise. She conveyed a different message for the ages to come. She left a mark of her identity through mega spiritual activities and her presence is made to feel even today in the pilgrimages.

Queen as metaphorical Goddess in illustrations:

Goddess is seated on golden silk cushioned furniture of royal interiors, also never portrayed on a "*Singhasan*" a throne with lion faced symbolic seat of a ruler, in the illustrations. One can make a hypothesis that, that must be Rani Ahilyabai Holkar, portrayed metaphorically as goddess to celebrate her presence and potentials. Principally she was a subordinate to Peshwa kingdom but did not hold a '*Singhasan*' a throne.

One can also assume that probably that period' manuscripts were portrayed in such a way that gods and goddess' were treated as humans. There are few illustrated manuscripts in Baroda museum are on devotional verses like *Devi Mahatmya*, *SivaMahimastotram*, etc. proves such queries otherwise. Though they are not dated one can presume that approximately they belong to the same period of *Saundaryalahiri* illustrations by looking in to the style of the paintings and the manuscripts' formatting.

¹⁹³ George Michel.

Illustrated manuscript *Sivamahimastotram* seem to be painted at the same time in 18th century as *Saundaryalahari* was painted. There is a convention that Lord *Siva* should be worshipped before reciting goddess' verses *Lalithasahasranamam* or *Sundaryalahari*. There is a possibility that both the manuscripts *Sivamahima Stotram* and *Saundaryalahari* appear similar in the style and must have been commissioned one after the other. There is a practice even today that *Sivanandaryalahari* is recited before reciting *Saundaryalahari*. Goddess of *Devi Mahatmya* illustrations were portrayed Her on '*Vahana*,-Tiger and few times seated in a *Mandapa*. Human characters are distinct to differentiate from God and Goddesses in *Devi Mahatmya* and *Sivamahimastotram* manuscript.

Relating text and illustrations on goddess with Ahilyabai's life:

The devotee Adi Sankara does not look like a saintly figure in the illustrations as it should be corresponding to the text. He looks like a warrior or a princely figure of any royal court worshipping the goddess. Probably that devotee could be one of the followers of Ahilyabai who respected her as AdiSankara worshipped goddess. Depiction of postures and hand gestures of goddess in illustrations appear many a time that, a Queen is speaking and listening to people. Text explains that *Vedic* Gods *Bramha*, *Vishnu*, *Sadashiva*, *Indra*, etc. are goddess's subordinates and she is the prime Deity. The *Vedic* Gods in the corresponding illustrations appear sometimes like subordinates listening to her commands or her rivals, Rajputs and Mughals who accepted her leadership bowing in front of that queen.

There is a mythical story that *Manmatha* burnt to ashes by lord *Siva* when he made *Siva* aggressive with his characteristic act of throwing arrows of seduction on Him. *Manmatha's* wife *Rati* pleaded goddess *Parvati* for her husband's life. Goddess gifted her husband's life but *Rati*

alone can see his body. Goddess is explicit in not giving back *Manmatha's* life by overruling her husband's words. There is a corresponding depiction of this story on 33rd folio's illustration. The depiction of illustration appears as if a queen is listening to a sorrowful saga of a woman. Here the narration has created two different potentials and status of two different women. Painters probably have related this instance to this queen's character that she was an advocate of women's rights. George Mitchell writes about queen Ahilyabai, "She was also a strong advocate of women's rights of ownership and inheritance. It was her accessibility also that Ahilyabai was most famous. So strong was her sense of duty on all points connected with justice that she sat for a considerable period everyday in open court listening to every complaint in person."

Folio 15, backside illustration depicts one woman and an old man dressed in royal attire conversing with each other. Old man seems to be leading ascetic life. Both are shown at the same heights seated in individual *Mandapas* of the same heights. That ascetic depicted could be Malhar Rao Holkar her predecessor and father-in-law of Queen Ahilyabai who was also her teacher '*Guru*' and taught her civil administration and cavalry. That could be the reason probably to depict both the figures at one plane unlike other folios. Where ever devotee and goddess are depicted on other illustrations, they are depicted at different planes. Painters followed the verses' sequence many a time by making such parallels between the goddess and the queen Ahilyabai's life. They found a similarity between the verses of *Saundaryalahiri* and the socio-political situations, relations between the kingdoms, political enemies, subordinates and Ahilyabai's supporters.

Material world and the Metaphysical interpretations in the text and illustrations:

Saundaryalahari text describes that goddess is the daughter of *Himavat Parvat*, Himalayas. Mountains are of material world. She being a daughter of *Himavat*, she becomes the being of physical world where as Lord *Siva* belongs to Meta physical world of extra terrestrial in nature. The text described that Lord *Siva* gifts her that position of utmost energy, *Sri Vidya* and taught her the powers. Emily Kearns while talking about 'Indianmyth' writes "some texts, such as the '*Saundaryalahari*', describe the beauty of the goddess in detailed and highly erotic terms, but it is an eroticism which is held at arm's length, its fulfillment is confined to her relations with *Siva*." While understanding the meanings of *Saundaryalahari* verses in the text one would infer Sankaracharya¹⁹⁴ mystified female form as a goddess in his verses. He attributes every mythical power to the goddess but at the same time he confirms that her final submission and commitment is towards her husband, Lord *Siva*.

Ahilyabai, a widow, probably worshipped her late husband as a being of that 'other world'. George Michel writes that *Ramachandra* temple built few hundred meters east of the *Vithoba* monument is assigned to Ahalyabai's reign. He discusses about a seated image in Ramachandra temple "The sanctuary beyond house white marble images of *Rama*, *Lakshmana* and *Sita*, next to which is placed a seated image of Ahilyabai herself. She is dressed in white sari and holds a miniature *Siva Linga* image in her left hand on to which she drops a *Bilva* leaf." ¹⁹⁵ A sculpture of

¹⁹⁴ Sankaracharya is called a seer for bringing the varied practices of the early medieval society under one institution of Neo-Brahmanism.

¹⁹⁵ Such sculptures are donor figures, commonly found in Maratha period. Maharashtra women worship 'Panchayat' goddess in Chaitramas and goddess holds Sivalinga on her head. This appears like a folk goddess form. A.S.Mate explains folk god Khandoba is worshipped by Marathas. That god holds Sivalinga on his head.

Ahilyabai holding *Sivalinga* on her hand and her worship by dropping '*Bilva*' leaf is probably an analogy of worshipping her late husband who is in other world.

Social Relevance of the illustrations:

18th century seems to be not only a period of political and social disturbances there were also very different ideals and values of *Brahman*, warrior rulers, traders and the scribal specialists. In '*Hindu*'-ruled kingdoms notably in such domains like Marathas, whose origin is not from *Kshatriya* caste were following '*Brahmin* like' '*Pure*' *Dharmic* way of life. The service class *Brahmins*, who are different from *Vedic Brahmins*, influenced the dynastic powers. A man who acted as a *Kshatriya* by preserving the order of '*Dharma*' and by supporting the performance of '*Brahmin*' rituals deserved to be recognized as a true embodiment of the scriptural '*Kshatriya varna*'. Susan Baily explains that Shivaji Bhosle who caused Maratha kingdoms belonged to '*Non Muslim Deccani tiller plainsmen*'.¹⁹⁶

Not only asceticism, the caste ideals of transcendence and social situations of that period must have played an important role in selecting *Saundaryalahiri* text for illustration. This text must have had become a ready reference on unifying principle of all the religions of non-*Vedic* practices as *Advaitam* in Sankaracharya's philosophy. Ahilyabai encouraged learned *Brahmins* to move to Maheshwar her capital. She transformed that city into a center for *Vedic* and Shastric studies with rest houses for Sanskrit experts. A library of books was established in her province. There are possibilities that such illustrated and devotional manuscripts were

¹⁹⁶ Such examples were popular in earlier times also. Chandela kings glorified their Gond-Tribal origin in their inscriptions and that is discussed by Devangana Desai. Barbara Stoller Miller while categorizing the nature of various patronages mentions that one of the patronages in ancient India rose from the need of "upwardly mobile social groups to legitimize their acquisition of social or political power."

commissioned for that *Sanskrit* library in her region. Interactions with Dwaraka Sankara *Peetham* near to her kingdom also must have influenced in such processing.¹⁹⁷

Possibilities of relocating the manuscript form Ahalyabai's Maheswar region to Baroda state-

Mairal family was the bankers and '*Diwans*' of Gaekwars of Baroda state. Gopal Rao Mairal was an ardent devotee of Lord *Ganapati* who constructed the *Ganapati* temple in Baroda. Vasudeva Sadasiva Mahaskar alias Ganapati buva Maharaja Saverkar of Saver under the Holkars of Indore was also a Devotee of lord *Ganapati* and propagated *Ganapatya cult*. Gopal Rao Mairal helped Saverkar in that mission.¹⁹⁸ One can obviously assume that in 19th C., rich and spiritual Gopal Rao Mairal might have caused the *Saundaryalahari* illustrated manuscripts to reach Baroda because of his devotional activities and contacts with Holkars region where these manuscripts were commissioned.

Inference-

Women like Ahilyabai acted on a relative position and negotiated a space within the system and within accepted norms but against *parampara* the tradition. She successfully negotiated a place for herself and her identity. Her actions retuned the words of *Saundaryalahiri* on the manifestations of feminine power and energy. Her position and capacities made the artists to visualize a similarity between the goddess and this queen's personality and celebrated her potentials in a special square in the illustrated manuscript.

¹⁹⁷ There is a photograph in Baroda-Gaekwars royal palace albums documented on Sankaracharya of Dwaraka *Peetham* visiting Baroda palace on elephant *Ambari* in early 20th C.

¹⁹⁸ *Ganeshavijayakavyam*, Edited by Bhaagavatprasad & Natvarlal Bhatt.

Women like queen Ahalyabai acted upon that relative space and negotiated their space within the patriarchal system and successfully put forward their statements to achieve what they wanted. Neither they have denied the boundaries of the system nor kept quiet and accepted only that whatever is dictated to them by the society. Such women worked within that given space, made a mark on the society and proved themselves as successful human beings. They managed to fulfill their wish while negotiating the class, caste and gender politics of the society.

Whether reciting *Saundaryalahari* by women today or artists interpreting a queen in the illustrations yesterday, there are meanings involved in it. That day Ahalyabai was celebrated for her potentials through *Saundaryalahari*. This text readily explains the capacities of a goddess to the women who recite that today. Women who recite those verses as a musical tune or for an activity on spirituality, they probably gain aesthetic sensibilities, sumptuous content feeling and confidence. [Fig.5.10 to 5.13]

There are many women in every age who viewed the tradition, culture and system more critically. In the contemporary times, choreographer Chandralekha is one such similar example. Rustom Bharucha writes while writing about the biography of Chandralekha, mentioned that she took the inspiration from Sankaracharya's texts like *Lalithasahasranamam*. Her question was to view *Bharatnatyam* in a more critical way. Her impulse contributed to her inquiry on her dance and choreography emerged from her ideological resistance to its *Parampara* the *tradition*.

The visuals or words, language of actions and gestures communicate much complex information. It is a process of reading the sign language leads to analyze the significance of that

statement. Reader can relate and relocate the materiality of the language as a zig-saw puzzle to understand the analogy of the statements and its significance.

Section-IV

Socio-Religious Politics;

7.Chapter

Strategic statements in the women's ritual worships.

On keen observation one can infer that there are many strategic statements are embedded in the women's ritual performances. They are the statements made sometimes as symbolic visual statements and at times as performances. Specific time and choice of the worship is one such aspect for an analysis, for example *Savitri-Gauri* worship. At times songs are sung as a part of the ritual and as communicating medium to spread the useful information amongst women, for example, songs of *Batakamma* festival at Telangana region and *Gobbemma* worship in coastal Andhra Pradesh. There are few case studies described in this chapter would also inform how such rituals are inclusive of modifications and followed in the present times. Extensive and analytical discussions about any worship in this chapter do not mean that discussion is pertaining only to that goddess worship and that particular case study. This is a general discussion about the various locations of women as performers, receivers and onlookers. Some of the potential symbols in the women's rituals made the society to adapt the essence of those symbols to circulate socially and politically important messages in to the society. Women's rituals though follow the categorization of the caste system there is a close fit and compatibility followed in- between the tradition and modernity, religious practices and secularism in the women's rituals.¹⁹⁹

Socio-political situations reflecting in *Batakamma*-worship;

¹⁹⁹ "The impossible subject, caste in the scene of Desire." By Susie Tharu from *Embodiment. Essays on Gender and Identity*. Ed. Meenakshi Thapar. OUP. Delhi 1997.

As per the mythical stories the local deities like *Batakamma*, *Kanyakaparameswari*, etc were born in the society as human beings, but they modified themselves to incarnate as goddess to bless the required or to punish the devilish characters in the society. '*Batakamma*' festival did not have references in Kakatiya period 12 th century literature.²⁰⁰ Goddess *Batakamma*²⁰¹ a village girl was abused by a ruling-affluent class man and she committed suicide to save her chastity. Goddess *Gauri* is worshipped in the name of *Batakamma*. This worship is performed at the courtyards of the houses in the evenings by singing songs playfully while taking circumferences. The worship is also called '*Play of Batakamma*'. Flower disc symbolizing *Batakamma* goddess is submerged in the waters on eighth or concluding day. She is given send off imagining that she is being sent to her in-laws place. Farewell bidding songs are sung at that time. [Fig.6.9]

Worship songs are compiled on mythological stories to contemporary social issues, devotional to familial issues. Most of the songs sung at this worship composed on the meanings that how the girls and women are supposed to behave at home and make adjustments with the familial system within the community. These songs are obvious teachings of submissive nature to the girls. Theme of one of the songs is about *Ellamma*, mother of a noble person *Parashurama*. She was questioned and harassed by her son to know the name of his father. She was not supposed to reveal the name of his father for 12 years because of the vow she was given. She had no way till she revealed his father's name on his becoming adamant. This story obviously informs that women are supposed to carry the identity of her husband and are answerable to their husband

²⁰⁰ Prof. Katyayini opines that.

²⁰¹ Goddess *Batakamma* is represented by *Acassia* flower is known as '*Tangedu puvvu*' in Telugu language and it has a pleasant yellow colour and silky petals. It is an auspicious symbol and women are supposed to pluck the flower to wear it in their hairdos, if they find it on their travelling through forest regions in the carts.

and son. Women do not possess the independent identity. Such message is communicated to inform the girls and women strategically through such ritual songs. Many more songs advise the women that she should possess extreme respect towards her parents-in-law, never reply back, never share her feelings with anybody, she should be quiet, walk quietly, never laugh loudly, she should be to herself alone, do not speak to neighbors about her family problems, etc. She is restricted on decorating her own body also. She is supposed to decorate herself in her husband's agreement. A daughter-in-law in the family is under the control of many tiers of patriarchal hierarchy right from parents-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband. She cannot take simple decisions, or visit her parents place without the permission of all these people. All this information is sung in the *Batakamma* songs so that the girls understand her social status and what is expected/ needed behavior out of her. Women are communicated the message that she cannot think of possessing and enjoying what she wants. She has been coaxed into the system where she should not ask questions, without thinking about herself she has to assist the system, in the process even if she becomes a slave.

Batakamma festival ironically is offering a difference in the practice. As per the expectation women are not supposed to share their feelings and not to expose their problems of the household. This celebration is a community meeting of many women. *Batakamma* ritual is defying the dictation and expected norm when they meet in the evenings for the ritual worships. The songs that are sung at *Batakamma* festival are obviously are communicating each other the regular and anticipated problems. It is one way of expressing their unhappiness about the impositions. There are also few songs advise the women that they should not get carried away by the shallow friendships and the diplomatic conversations of the people at in-

laws place including her husband. The songs have sentences and meanings to delineate the information that how the system is putting them into its clutches and making her a lonely planet though she is living amongst the family members. Probably the loneliness that women go through mentally, physically made them to come together in the rituals like *Batakamma*, *Sankranti-Koluvu* or *Haldi Kumkum* get-to-gathers. These celebrations are an opportunity for the women to spend free time away from the hegemonic patriarchal impositions. They are free from that environment where they are dictated on their every step. They created a place they can share with each other about their similar feelings. The songs may have composed on mythological or fictional plots but the women sympathize each other in such meetings and understand that there are other women also lived on this earth who went through such similar situations and lived in the similar restricted surroundings. They share their feelings while singing and they dance to the tunes emotionally. They forget their lonely feelings on these shared platforms along with other victims of the patriarchal system. In a way they are defying the system's imposition and they are critiquing the system by expressing loud while singing their problems. Their spaces of such kind what they found outside the family are very valuable. Those spaces are like safety valves of pressure vessels and outlets for the women. [Fig.6.46 to 6.48]

A Batakamma song explaining the tiers of hierarchy in the family, a daughter-in-law supposed to respect-²⁰²

"Kalavaari Koodaalu Il Kool Il Kaliki Sundaari

Kaduguchunnadi Pappu Il Kool Il Kadavalo Poosi

²⁰² Download from you tube on Batakamma songs

Vachiri Vaarannalu II Kool II Vanamulu Daati

Kaallaku Neelichi II Kool II Kanneru Pette

Yenduku Kanneeru II Kool II Yeelaa Kanneeru

Pooyi Mee Atta Maamalaku II Kool II Cheppi Raavamma

Kurchiloo koorchunna II Kool II Oh! Maamagaaru

Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi

Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru

Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika

Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne

Atlaite neeneruga II Kool II Mee Attaanadugu

Pattemamcham meeda koorchunna II Kool II Oh! Attaagaaru

Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi

Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru

Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika

Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne

Atlaite neeneruga II Kool II Mee Bavanadugu

Bharatalu chadiveti II Kool II Oh! Bavagaaru

Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi

Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru

Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika

Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne

Atlaite neeneruga II Kool II Mee Akkanadu

Vantintlo Vundeeti II Kool II Oh! Akkaagaaru
Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi
Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru
Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika
Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne
Atlaite neeneruga II Kool II Mee Maridinadugu

Bhagundlaadeeti II Kool II Oh! Maridigaaru
Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi
Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru
Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika
Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne
Atlaite neeneruga II Kool II Nee Vibhudinadugu

Rachabandi meeda koorchunna II Kool II Oh! Rajendra Bhogi
Maa Annalochaaru II Kool II Mammampaa Randi
Mee Annalosteenu II Kool II Yeemi Techinaaru
Naaku Nalla Cheera II Kool II Nemaladugula Ravika
Paapidagi Pattangi II Kool II Paalu Traagu Ginne

Yeppudu Veltaavu II Kool II Yeppudu Vastaavu
Chellella Pellillu Cheesi Vastanu
Maradulla Pelli ki Malli Vastanu
Pooyeenu Gowramma Tangeetlu Daati II"

Class and Caste hierarchy encroaching worship space-

Class and caste system of the society encroached to screen such freedom of the women's ritual get-to-gathers also. There was a bit different practice prevailed in earlier times. All the days of *Batakamam* worship, women were supposed to come together at the courtyard of village head's house. They are supposed to hold the *Batakamma* plate full of flowers in their hands, without placing on the ground, till that village head or land lord's wife come out and sit in a chair and her *Batakamma* plate/disc is displayed in the courtyard by her servants. The landlord's wife would sing and lead the show and the said verses of songs were repeated by other women. After the worship at her courtyard the goddess is taken to the lake for immersion. All other women proceed to the temples or lakes and rivers for immersion but the land lords' house women cannot. Their worship discs were taken by their servants for immersion. Women of upper class and caste cannot and should not share their time with other women of lower and middle classes. Such women are further coaxed in the family impositions or they carry the prides that brings barrier for their mixing with other women. Whatever the way it may be they are locked in the caste and class system impositions. The festivals of such kind set for the women's breathing space away from the dictations of the family could not help the women of upper class and caste.

A change is observed in the practices of rich class women in the recent times. Some of the rich class women are seen participating outside the home along with other women at the *Batakamma* celebration places. They display their riches on the jewelry and the costume they wear. Women from upper cast families come together as one group to sing and dance. The

class division was very strictly followed as a feudal system in the rural discipline for quite some time may be till couple of decades back.

Songs of Militancy-

Batakamma worships were arranged in the courtyards of the landlord's house in such a way that the men of the house can watch the women dancing. It seems slowly the men were sitting at the same place where the dancing is taking place at the courtyards. Obviously women were unable to enjoy the privacy what they required. It was stolen by land owner's power. This practice it seems continued till 1970's. The problem was identified and questioned when the communist and radical political parties started their revolts against the bourgeois class. *Naxalbari* movements of Srikakulam gave impetus in northern Telangana region to revolt against such unwanted practices and against the landlord men's behavior.²⁰³

Srijana, a revolutionary magazine of February/March, 1979 issue published a story 'Oh *Chukki*²⁰⁴-Lift your fist' criticized the insults and eve teasing by the land lord men in *Batakamma* festival. That story also narrates in detail about those insults and comments that were faced by women for generations together. Story further proceeds to say that they could not tolerate such insults and want to revolt against those eve teasing men and land lords with the support of their brothers from *Naxal* faith of their village. There is a practice in Telangana region that married young girls go to their parent's house for this festival. One young lady character in the story says that she cannot face those insults any more by those men of bourgeois class families and she decides that she would never come back to her parent' place for *Batakamma* festival.

²⁰³ "Rajanna" is a recently released film talked about the exploitation of landlords in Telangana region in early Independent India. An old lady character of the film categorically mentions that village men have to play the dhol when women have to dance in stripties. She condemns the life of that villagers' for the shame they are bearing.

²⁰⁴ Chukkamma is one of the commonly found names of rural working class women of Telangana region, means beautiful lady and commonly addressed and short form is Chukki.

Women revolted against that practice of playing *Batakamma* at landlord's courtyards and they stopped going to those houses. They wanted to regain the freedom of that space what they created for themselves or shared by women alone, as it is narrated in that story.

In practice, women explored the space of composing songs on goddess *Batakamma* to communicate the messages of their interest. They reorganized the lyrics of conventional songs to suit the contemporary situations and to convey new messages. One of the songs talks about a radical activist Peddi Sankar who died in the police firing. Women sing songs to inspire each other to work like male radical activists. Song says 'Walk slowly and reach the distances in the similar way what our activist brothers have crossed the miles of distances.

Telugu script of that song-

“ఒక్కేసి	పువ్వేసి	చందమామ
ఒక్కొక్క	జమాయే	చందమామ
అడుగేసి	అడుగేసి	చందమామ

అన్నల్లా చేరాలి చందమామ “.....

'Tighten your waist with your saree *pallu* and hold the curved axe(*Kodavali*) in your hand (to attack against exploitation) ' is the meaning of one of the songs of *Batakamma* ritual worship. Women share with co-labour women about the exploitation of the labour, gender discrimination in the wages payment and they inspire each other to participate in the radical movements to eradicate those problems and exploitation. Women used such cultural festivals to bring social changes and that effectively worked.²⁰⁵

Songs of liberation-

²⁰⁵ Araku movement of Anti-liquor movement was initiated and achieved by women.

Social injustice and un-equality about the contemporary issues are questioned through these songs. Some of the songs explain the incidents of attacks, troubles and abuses that women faced in the society. In 1954 there was a train accident at Raghunathpalli near Warangal district and Papi Reddy a landlord harassed and molested a woman called 'Mallamma'. Another lady Andamma was harassed by *Razakars*²⁰⁶. Sorrowful sagas of such helpless women are sung no less than heroic tales in *Batakamma* songs. There is a practice of installing warrior stones in the villages whose bravery is remembered for ever. Probably by singing such women's story continuously in the cultural festivals is one of the ways of remembering the women who faced heart breaking troubles and atrocities in the society. The songs also reflect the Socio-political situations of Telangana region, sparsely available natural resources and their development, the funds and the resources that are not made available for the utility of the people, funds that are not reaching the people, injustice in allocating the funds by the government and the administrators, their feeling and helplessness for those situations are some of the themes reflected in these songs and sung as *Batakamma* songs by women. Probably the aim of such questioning in the songs is to claim for the equality of women in the family and society and to highlight their work and their contribution to the society and family claiming for recognition.

For the last 3 to 4 decades the celebration of this festival on the immersion day had become a mega social festival celebration. State takes care of arrangements for commuting, queue system arrangements for the immersion, etc. Couple of years back there was a competition held for the women by a social club and award was given to the huge and beautifully arranged

²⁰⁶ It was a movement against Hindus in Nizam (Hydarebad) region when Nizam of Hyderabad refused to become a part of the Indian nation and wanted to have a separate state of Muslims in Hyderabad amidst Andhra Pradesh.

Batakamma brought for the immersion at *Bhadrakali* and *Padmakshi* temple in Warangal city. One private company that prepares cooking spices sponsored this competition. This must be a given opportunity for that company concerned with kitchen spices, where the festival is only of women. But the irony is women come out for such celebrations to be away from their routine kitchen, but such advertisements even at that place do not allow them to be free from the kitchen memory and cooking. Their private and the social space interplay with each other on such occasions.

***Batukamma*-Political symbol**

Telangana people are fighting for separate *Telangana* state for the last 3 decades. The intensity has increased recently and they needed to represent symbolic *Telangana* like *Bharatmata* represents India and *Telugutalli* represents Andhra Pradesh. *Telangana Jagriti* political parties made *Telanganatalli* a statue of a woman holding *Batukamma*-plate of flowers for worship as symbol of *Telangana*.

Comparing the situations at Telangana and Coastal Andhra regions through ritual celebration songs-

Gobbemma worship, at coastal Andhra region, by young girls at the time of *Sankranti* is a similar celebration like *Batakamma* festival celebration of *Telangana* region. Both the worships follow the similar procedure of rhythmic dancing while singing and it is called a 'play of *Gobbemma* or *Batukamma*'. [Fig.6.49; 6.50] Songs of *Gobbemma* also advise young girls and women about the behavioral pattern that is expected out of them and how the girls are to be away from the parent's place after their wedding and informs how the hierarchy prevails in the

in-laws place, etc. But the difference between the two festivals is about the later developments and the situation of women that can be understood through the songs that are prevalent.

One of the songs in Telugu script-

“గొబ్బియాల్లో	సఖియా	వినవె	చిన్నికృష్ణుని	చరితము	వినవె
దరిద్రుడైన	కుచేలునకు		దర్శన		మోసగేసే
ఆయన		కోర్కెలు			తీర్చేసే
యమునా	తీరమున	ఇసుకలందు	రాధా	మాధవ	రాత్రులందు
ఆటలాడ					నేర్చేసే
అటుకులు నములుచు ఆనందముగా అతనికి సంఘద లోసిగేసే”					

Their songs did not change much and remained mythical mostly and express aloofness. They work in isolation and are kept away from the social activities. The songs of coastal Andhra region indicate that women have to claim for their existence itself. Telagana region women's activities could explore further to revolt against the defaults in the society.

Coastal Andhra region is green and rich in natural resources. Literature and the professions excelled compared to the dry and less resourceful regions like Telangana towns in Andhra Pradesh. There were revolts against the exploitation of the peasants by bourgeois class in Telangana region. Such radical movements took a note of women's situations and women also joined the social revolts. Their songs of later times inform us that they are part of the revolutionary movements and raised their voice against the harassments and domestic violence. The change in their situations in the familial and social space is evident. But the songs of women in Coastal Andhra Region did not show any change. The coastal regions in Andhra Pradesh did not allow any development for women and they seem to be locked in the same

situations as per the songs information. Similarly the situation is about the women of rich class in Telangana region also. They were locked inside their compound walls and they were not able to move like the women of middle and working classes. Probably the riches of the men and class and caste hierarchy worked inversely for women and women are pushed down for the 'under development'.

Bonalu-Mahankali (Jatara) festival-

History and origin of the worship-

Sree Suriti Appaiah who was a *Dholi* bearer in Indian military force was a resident of Secunderabad. He was transferred on a mission to Ujjain town in central province, present Madhya Pradesh. Cholera disease broke out at his town and thousands died during that period. Appaiah along with his group members visited *Mahakali* temple at Ujjain and prayed for the welfare of his platoon. He took an oath that if the entire platoon is saved from the attack of the epidemic, they would install the idol of *Mahakali* at Secunderabad and worship her. Appaiah came back to Secunderabad in 1815 A.D. installed a wooden idol to worship her as goddess Ujjain *Mahakali*. There was another idol *Manikyala Devi* excavated near that shrine in a well and it is said as per the wish of *Manikyala Devi* this idol was installed next to *Mahakali Devi*. In the year 1864 both the idols were replaced by rock idols and family heir continued to worship the deities and the daily worships are offered in *Vaidika* and *Agamasastra* methods. In 1953 the endowments dept. of Andhra Pradesh has taken over the administration and implemented many developmental activities in the temple. It is a popularly known temple and *Bonalu* festival

became synonymous with this temple as '*Lashkar Bonalu Jatara*' in the times to come. Sundays and Mondays of *Ashadmasam* are principle worship days of this goddess.

Present day celebrations-

Bonalu is a festival celebrated in the month of *Ashadamasam*, approximately in the month of July. Goddess *Kali* is worshipped on Sundays of this month. Women carry pot full of offerings on their head to offer to the goddess. Women and men both participate in the worship and this is a ritual followed by lower caste communities. Cooking non-vegetarian and men enjoying liquor is an accepted practice in this worship. People make it a sort of picnic and outing while cooking and celebrating. *Bonalu* festival begins every year only in *Mahakali* temple located inside the Golkonda fort of Hyderabad and the celebration is followed in *Secunderabad's Ujjain Mahankali* temple also called as *Lashkar Bonalu*, *Balkampet Yellama* temple and then proceeds to the old city of Hyderabad in a sequence.

Bonalu festival is celebrated in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, some parts of Telangana and Rayalaseema.²⁰⁷ The goddess is worshipped with different names such as *Yellamma*, *Mysamma*, *Pochamma*²⁰⁸, *Peddamma*, *Dokkamma*, *Ankamma*, *Poleramma*, *Maremma*, etc. *Bonalu* must be a distorted word of '*Bhojanalu*' in Telugu means meals in English, is an offering to the goddess.²⁰⁹ This festival is also celebrated as thanks giving to the goddess for the fulfillment of vows. Women carry on their heads cooked rice, milk, jaggery/sugar sometimes onions in a brass

²⁰⁷ Both the regions are dry and frequently drought hit. The festival '*Bonalu*' is celebrated in the month of *Ashadam* the rainy season cooked rice-a meal is offered as *Prasad* to local deities. There is a possibility that these regions are celebrating the festival wishing a good meal as a blessing from the goddess.

²⁰⁸ *Pochamma* in common understanding is a folk deity and cooking non-vegetarian is allowed in those temple premises at the *Bonalu* festival celebrations. There is a temple of goddess *Kanaka Durga* at *Ameerpet* region of Hyderabad possess a shrine of *Pochamma* also. This being the temple of Vedic worships same goddess in this temple receives only Brahmanical Vedic worships and made vegetarian goddess.

²⁰⁹ There is an article covering about the history and the festival details in '*The Hindu-Sunday magazine*', news paper on Sunday, 17th July 2011.

or earthen pot decorated with *Neem* leaves, turmeric, *Kumkum* or *Vibhooti* some times and a lamp on the top. Some women fill the vessels with turmeric mixed water and offer it to the goddess along with *neem* leaves and this is called '*Saaka*'. Women carry the pots on their heads to reach the temple and at times dance to the tunes and the beats of songs of goddess balancing the pot on their heads. Male dancers called as *Potharaju* supposed to be the brother of goddess *Mahakali*, follow the female dancers to the temple. On *Bonalu* celebration day many *Potharajulu* come dancing from different parts of twin cities. It is a colorful event in itself. Those men's bodies are covered with turmeric paste, anklets on the feet, a lemon in their mouth and *Emerald Margosa* leaves are tied to their waists adding color to the roaring and pulsating trumpets and dance to the rhythm of the beats while lashing the whip on their body and proceed to seek the blessings of the goddess.

***Rangam*-[Future telling event about the social and political situations]-**

Bonalu festival is celebrated for two days. Second day '*Rangam*' fortune telling event is organized at Secunderabad temple. An unmarried girl talks about the future happenings of the country. She ties wedding knot to a sword and takes oath to stay single in order to participate in the *Rangam*. After this event of '*Rangam*' where lacks of people listen to her future predictions, goddess photo image is taken for immersion, i.e called '*Saganampu*' a Sendoff. It is believed that during *Ashadamasam* goddess comes to her maternal home and people offer '*Bonalu*' a feast to the home coming daughter.

The Hindu, a daily news paper on July 18th, 2011 published photographed images of *Bonalu* festival. On 17th of July *Secunderabad Mahakali* temple celebrated *Bonalu* festival. Women politicians participated and carried *Bonalu* pots on their heads. Congress member of legislavie

assembly Jayasudha²¹⁰, former union minister Renuka Choudhury, *Telangana Jagruti* president K.Kavitha, Hyderabad then Mayor Ms. Banda Kartika Reddy are few popularly known politicians and beurocrats participated in the procession while carrying *Bonalu* pot on their heads. Chief minister N.Kiran Kumar Reddy, *Telugu Desam* president Chandrababu Naidu, B.J.P.party state president G.Kishan Reddy, minister J.Geeta Reddy, DGP V.Dinesh and other dignitaries offered prayers. Event of *Rangam* proceeded on Monday and state dignitaries participated and asked the women who predicts about the future situation of the state. News papers reported that dignitaries and ministers asked about the welfare of the state but conveniently avoided and no one asked about the issue of separate Telangana state, which is an active issue and the people are fighting for. *Rangam* woman answers only those questions that are posed by people. [Fig.6.41 to 6.45]

The worship of *Lashkar Mahakali* temple was started by one single person and now it is expanded as a faith of millions. Women carrying the pot became a symbolic way, further extended to communicate the planned information as an effective communicative platform. Temple was installed for wish granting and oath fulfilling and now the worship is elaborated as a state sponsored festival celebration. Whether it is *Batakamma* festival or *Bonalu*, women's worships of Telangana region are noted down for the importance of its potentials and elaborated to communicate political and social statements.

Religious politics in *Savitri-Gauri* worship-

²¹⁰ Telugu film industry star of yeaster years.

Savitri-Gauri is an elaborate ritual worship followed by women of coastal Andhra region. This is performed immediately after *Dhanurmasam* and *Sankranti* festival celebration of worshipping Lord *Vishnu*, from 15th of December to 15th of January performed in the temples by men. [Fig.6.10 to 6.12]The immediate and next day is the day to worship goddess *Savitri-Gauri* on 16th of January that is known as '*Mukkanuma*'. 15th of January is known as '*Kanuma*', means end part and *Mukkanauma* means the tail end. It is believed that great fortunes and huge prosperities are brought in by women who perform this ritual for nine years and nine days every year. Family readily spends huge expenditure on this ritual celebration. *Savitri* is the goddess of virtue and is a consort of Lord *Brahma*. Goddess *Gauri* is from *Saivite* pantheon. The goddess worshipped on this ritual celebration is known as *Savitri-Gauri* a combined name.

There is a point to be noted that if men celebrate Lord *Vishnu* of *Vaishnavite* faith in the temples, women would start worshipping the consort's of two other gods of Trinity, *Saivite* goddess and Lord *Brahma*'s consort immediately after the men's ritual concludes on. Women follow relatively long celebration compared to their other rituals, after the month long men's worships.

Rangavajjula Subbalaxmi's celebrated on 16th January 2006, the ritual of *Savitri-Gauri* worship in Tenali town near Vijayawada. On early wee hours of 16th of January, before the Sun rise, women went to a lake or river banks to buy clay idols of goddess where potters would sell unbaked figures. Musical instrumental players '*Mela Talam*' or '*Band Baaja*' are taken along with them and men also many a time would accompany the women when they go to buy the idols. This ritual is worshipped in groups. Many women who ever are worshipping would reach one of the worshippers home where the venue is pre decided. They decorated a huge wooden

swing hung in the centre of Ms.Subbalaxmi's house to place the idols on the swing before the sun rise but the worship would begin after the Sun rise. Idols would contain the forms of *Ganapati*, goddess *Parvati*, *Sivaling*, *Panchanga Brahmin*, attendant girls.²¹¹ Every woman who ever is worshipping will make *Rangoli* designs of nine Lotus figures to place their plate of offerings with flowers, *Kumkum*, coconut, etc. [Fig.6.13 to 6.38]

Subbalaxmi's son himself became the priest for the group of 8 to 9 women worshippers at her home. Ritual was initiated with worshipping '*Ganapati*,' *Punyavachanam*-cleaning and making that space auspicious and *Vastu purusha*' was invited to guard that place of worship at all the eight sides of the worshipping place as a boundary. Certain noteworthy procedures are followed in continuation of usual procedure of regular worships. There are noteworthy procedures followed in this ritual. Women converse with the goddess as if they are directly communicating with her. For example both goddess and devotee imaginatively take bath together and they would offer turmeric, *Kumkum* and flowers to each other. Then women display a mirror in front of the goddess and inform the fellow worshippers to look in to and spell the sentences that 'I have seen goddess and god.' Other woman would ask her what did you see? I saw god and goddess are playing a gamble.' They would continue the conversation to say to each other, 'Who won and who lost and who is the witness for that?' They would give all those names of other women worshippers present there along with those mythical characters, *Nandi*, *Lord Narayana*, *Panchangam Brahmin* and say they have witnessed their play, goddess

²¹¹ I visited Tenali town in January 2006 to document this ritual performed at two houses in that town, one at Kalluri Rama's house and another performance at Rangavajjula Subbalaxmi's house. There were many women came together to worship at Subbalaxmi's house and the decoration was quite elaborate there. In Kalluri's house they performed arranging beside the Bommala Koluvu of Sankranti festival. The Koluvu was arranged elaborate on the scene of Ramayanam, Rama stitched the dolls on her own.

Parvati has won the game over Lord *Siva*.²¹²[Fig.6.51] On conclusion of the day ritual women would request goddess *Savitri-Gauri* to bless them for every prosperity and happiness, happy children and family. Evening worship would not have any *Sanskrit* verses to recite except the worship songs of women. They take leave while saying that if they get late they are answerable to their husbands. They bid goodnight to the goddess and inform all the eight directions' gods and Lord *Indra* on the upper direction to take care of the goddess who is sleeping in her chamber along with her husband lord *Siva*. They categorically bring out the perspective of giving importance to the goddess and focusing on her importance through songs or fiction story narrated as a part of the ritual.

The worships of *Dhanurmasam* are integral to the religious system of deep rooted assumptions that gods and goddesses are enshrined and worshipped in the temples. Equally important, and a new pantheon is emerged in women's worship with parallel and independent worship. Women's worship is placed within the four walls of their house. They reinvent their household space. Their worships interchange sacred and secular in a perfect way. The icons of men's month long worship in *Dhanurmasam* are about Lord *Vishnu's* that are made by the sculptors in stone and metal of permanent nature. Whereas women's icons are made by potters, or by themselves and they are unbaked and temporary. Mortal element of im-permanency is the undercurrent philosophy of the women's ritual. There is an involved social comment in encouraging the craft work of craftsmen. Women are encouraging the craft works every year for the worship of nine years and are becoming agents. Their choice is to walk on the path of spirituality independently as well as community togetherness on following the *Brahmanical*

²¹²Probably taking such oral witness is included because there were no written documents available for the women's worships along with their added illiteracy.

method of worships. It is also subverting the patriarchal norms of rituals by adapting variables in their worships. There are subdued political statements wrapped up in religious authority. Religious politics are played under cover when women are worshipping *Saivite goddess* and *Brahma's* consort against men's worship of *Vaishnavite* faith. There is an assertion made while choosing a parallel worship to the men's worship to make their presence felt. These are the mild statements against patriarchal impositions as well as there is a positive intention of supporting their own convictions working within the conventional values.

***Tulasi* worship-A strategy-**

Tulasi is a plant/ herb found in the courtyards of temples and residential houses. This practice of growing plant in the courtyards is unanimously found in Indian culture irrespective of the regional and religious differences. It is believed that the presence of this plant is auspicious for that house and is worshipped as a goddess form in *Hindu* religion. Few people light the lamps in front of the plant and some pour water as a process of worship and many take circumferences of the plant. There are verses available to recite for worshipping this goddess. The verses written about *Tulasi* plant are that 'She is a form of goddess *Laxmi*, great medicine, form of nector, she is very dear to Lord *Narayana*, she brings every happiness and prosperity to the people and household, etc.'²¹³ This plant is regarded as a symbol of chastity and has a divine origin. Telugu women recite the verses to worship this goddess in simple sentences of vernacular language for daily worships. [Fig.6.1 to 6.3]

Daily worship verses of *Tulasi* while taking circumferences-

²¹³ "Sri *Tulasi* Vaibhavam" is a booklet available for the worship of goddess *Tulasi* with the information compiled about *Tulasi* plant its medicinal values. Some verses about that goddess is compiled by Vajrapani and published by Gollapudi Veeraswamy son, Rajamundry, 2004.

“ఒక్కో	ప్రదక్షిణాన	గోవిందరామ	యముడు	వోడిపోయే	గోవిందరామ
రెండో	ప్రదక్షిణాన	గోవిందరామ	ఊడు	బ్రహ్మత్యాలు	గోవిందరామ
మూడో	ప్రదక్షిణాన	గోవిందరామ	ముక్తిమార్గములు	కలుగు	గోవిందరామ
నాలుగవ	ప్రదక్షిణాన	గోవిందరామ	నవధాన్యములు	కలుగు	గోవిందరామ

ఐదవ ప్రదక్షిణాన గోవిందరామ అష్ట ఐశ్వర్యములు కలుగు గోవిందరామ”

It seems this plant releases oxygen vital for breathing at both day and night times where as other plants release carbon-di-oxide in the nights. This herb is available in various varieties. One of such varieties of *Tulasi* is regarded as pious plant by Islamic cult people also. There are 18 varieties of *Tulasi* plant and some of the important names are ‘*Laxmi Tulasi, Rama Tulasi, Krishna Tulasi, Rudrajada Tulasi, Nela(Earth-Sonthi) Tulasi, Maruvaka(Karpura) Tulasi, Adavi (Dog)Tulasi*, etc.’²¹⁴ Different varieties of *Tulasi* plant is used for different medicinal values for the treatment of different ailments like bones, skin, muscles, etc.

Devi Bhagavatam, Padma Puranam, Magha Puranam, Brihanaradiyam, MahaBharatam narrated differently about the birth of *Tulasi* plant emphasizing her chastity. Every story narrates that she was a devotee of Lord *Vishnu* or his incarnation Lord *Krishna*. She is referred as *Brinda* in one of the narrations. It is unanimously narrated in all the stories that *Tulasi* plant is nothing but one of the forms of goddess *Laxmi*, consort of Lord *Vishnu*. Most of the temples of Lord *Vishnu* or *Krishna* have *Brindavanam*, i.e a grove of *Tulasi* plants in the premises.

In the month of ‘*Karteekamasam*’ approximately in the month of November, marriage ceremony of goddess *Tulasi* is organized with Lord *Vishnu* or Lord *Krishna*. Dates of that ritual

²¹⁴ There are many Puranas like *Devi Bhagavatam, Padma Puranam, Magha Puranam, Bruhannaradiyam, Mahabharatam* and literature referred to *Tulasi* plant with different names-‘*Vishnupriya, Gramya, Adeta, Bahumanjari, Rakshasa, Sulagni, Deva Dundubhi, Krishnavallabhi, Bhutaghi, Nagakoota, Surabhi, Chakramanjari, Janbhira, Kharapatra, Gauri, Phani, Shanajeeka, Susabhika, Maru Mareechika, Tekhna Gandha, Archaka, Manjureeka, Sugandhika, Sitarjaka, Suramanjari*, etc.

worship differ from region to region. In Andhra Pradesh it is a worship celebrated on 12th day of that *Karteekam*, 11th day in Gujarat and full moon day of that month in north India. She is married to lord *Krishna* on that day by women of coastal Andhra Pradesh, but in most of the other regions, it is a worship participated by both men and women.

Brief textual references:

Goddess *Tulasi* does not have iconography, an anthropomorphic form to worship like other gods and goddesses like *Vishnu-laxmi*, *Siva-Parvati*, etc.²¹⁵ Neither she has an important location in the house hold or in the regular shrines. This is not a tree worship of primitive times. As mythical story circulated in the society, *Vrinda* was demon *Jalandara's* wife. He was unmanageable for gods. His wife *Vrinda's* chastity has become a shield to protect him. Lord *Vishnu* took the form of her husband, paired with her by deceiving her. That was to break the chastity of *Tulasi*. Then alone the gods could kill Demon *Jalandhara*. After realizing the reality she burnt herself. A small plant grown out of those ashes is goddess *Tulasi*. Lord *Vishnu* blessed her that she will be worshipped by people as a symbol of purity and chastity. Other demon's wives *Mandodari*, etc, did not get the 'worshipping-goddess' status. Probably she was given that status by Lord *Vishnu* because *Tulasi* received His touch. Her location is at the courtyards but not in the shrines. That makes her an outsider in the gods' pantheon. Neither her demon

²¹⁵ T.A.Gopinath Rao describes the iconography of *Tulasi* in the sections of secondary goddesses where the sequence is *Annapurna*, *Tulasi Devi*, *Asvarudha Devi*, *Bhuvanesvari*, etc, after the primary section of the goddesses like *Parvati*, *Laxmi*, etc, in his book "Elements of Iconography" vol.I. Part-II. (Indological Book House. Varanasi, India, Delhi. 1971.) *Tulasi Devi* is dark complexioned, has four arms, two in *Abhaya* and *Varada mudras*, another two holding a lotus and a lotus bud, she is adorned with white garment and seated on a lotus or in *Padmasan* and wears *Kirita*, *Hara*, *Keyura* and *Kundalas*.

Tulasasi is never seen in an iconic form. She is worshipped in a plant form in the regular practice of worship in the society. Popular images on the books like 'Streela Vratakathalu' that narrate the procedures of women's rituals and the books of recitations of worship like 'Stotrams' do display the figures of *Tulasi* but that figures do not have authenticity of such above iconography, Those figures do not follow any consistency to compare one form with another.

husband *Jalandhara* is associated with her nor, lord *Vishnu* is placed along with her. She is popularly known for her purity and stands alone craving to meet lord *Krishna* as per the narrations.²¹⁶ Women adapted that *Tulasi* who is made to remain in the courtyards. There are rituals coastal Andhra women follow regularly to worship *Tulasi* where men hardly follow any ritual to worship her but for respecting her goddess status. *Tulasi* leaves are sprinkled to purify the water or the offerings in the men's and family rituals. She is the carrier of purity to cleanse the required.

Telugu women follow many rituals besides worshipping goddess *Tulasi* everyday. Some of the rituals are of those gods and goddesses whose iconography is difficult to find in the idols and photo frames, for example the ritual of 33 full-moon days worship, to worship the moon. For all such rituals the *Tulasi* plant becomes the fallback and dependable iconography. *Tulasi* plant for Telugu women is similar to god of fire, a carrier. The men's rituals of *Vedic* practices follow a tradition of performing the rituals by organizing *Havan*-worshipping any and every god through *Agni Dev*-god of Fire. The offerings that are made for *Vedic* gods, who do not have iconography, are made through the god of fire and this god carries the offerings to reach those specific *Vedic* gods. The *Tulasi* plant becomes the vehicle for women's worships. Moon is part of *Navagraha* pantheon, who has a secondary position in the shrines and temples.²¹⁷ Though at an abstract

²¹⁶ Chebrolu Ramabrahmam written a Telugu commentary on *Devi Bhagavatam* in 1998. According to him *Tulasi*'s name remained *Tulasi* even before she transformed to a plant form. There was no reference of the name *Vrinda* anywhere. Her demon husband's name was *Sankhachooda*. It was not *Jalandhara*. Ramabrahmam has narrated the story in length in an elaborate and in a poetic description. *Sankhachooda* was killed in the hands of Lord *Siva* when Lord *Visnu* paired with *Tulasi* by deceiving her. Both, *Tulasi* and *Sankhachooda* belong to *Golok* of Lord *Krishna* before and after this phase of her life.

²¹⁷ *Navagraha* shrines are situated with secondary importance on temple complexes. The nine planets Sun, Moon, *Bhauma*, *Budha*, *Brihaspati*, *Sukra*, *Sani*, *Rahu* and *Ketu* are placed made facing each other on the temple places. They are placed in *Zodiac circle*. Their placement becomes the probable date of construction of the temple. T.A.Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1971.

and conceptual understanding there is a similarity between the *Tulasi* goddess and Moon god because of their unfocussed iconographic forms on the practices.

Goddess *Tulasi* is situated not as an important consort of major gods' pantheon. Women while worshipping this goddess who is situated as an outsider in the patriarchal gods' pantheon, they are subverting the hierarchy of positioning the gods and goddesses of *Brahmanical* categorization. They have adapted that goddess *Tulasi* who is in 'doubly-subaltern' position for worship. She is a woman of demon's class and sexually abused by lord *Vishnu* who is from a class above the demon's class. Mortal women of this world have given an identity to that mythical and victimized woman. Patriarchal system follows an iconography to worship gods and goddesses. Women worship goddess *Tulasi* in a plant form. That is yet another subversion of patriarchal religious practice of worshipping an icon. Women are subverting the iconophilic tradition of patriarchal tradition while worshipping *Tulasi* plant.²¹⁸

A case study-

Madhavi Rayabrolu hails from Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh presently living in Baroda of Gujarat. She migrated after her marriage to live with her husband who works in the University of Baroda. She used to teach in Andhra Pradesh before her marriage. She registered for Ph.D studies in the Dept. of Education in Baroda University. She keenly follows many rituals irrespective of her busy schedules of work.

²¹⁸ Tulasi belongs to the Rakshasa community. She has been given a status of worship but not the iconography. Other women of Rakshasa community like Mandodari, though she is a chaste wife did not have a status of worship. Probably Tulasi gets it because Lord Vishnu paired with her.

That was 16th Oct. 2005 evening around 7.30 pm, Madhavi was performing '33- Full moon days ritual worship', performed on 33 Full-moon nights falls in 33 months. That is Madhavi's 30th full moon day worship. She is offering her worship to moon through *Tulasi* plant. This is one of the mentioned rituals in "*Streela Vrata Kathalu*" performed by women.²¹⁹ She arranged *Tulasi* pot near her regular home shrine where she offers her regular worships every day. She applied Turmeric and *Kum-Kum* to *Tulasi* pot. That being the 30th worship of full moon day she designed 30 lotus flowers of *Rangoli* stenciled out of rice flour around the pot after cleaning that place. That transformed the regular house hold space to an imagined sacred space, visually as well as sentimentally, after lighting the lamp. Imposing red color of *Kum-Kum*, yellow color of turmeric and white color of *Rangoli* transformed the ambiance visually. That is added to an emotional impact of the live lights flickering in a brass lamp which was releasing warmth in the late evening of October month. Flavours of various items like jaggery, clarified butter (pure Ghee) in the special lamps along with the essence of flowers, turmeric and *Kum-Kum* etc, have activated the nasal senses to add to the serene feelings of that ambience.[Fig. 6.4 to 6.8]

Ritual performer gets another opportunity along with color and design sensibilities that is to enjoy the culinary art. Madhavi prepared 30 pancakes, '*Dosa*', south Indian snacks made out of black gram and rice flour dough. That being the 30th ritual, she is supposed to offer set of 30 cakes to another married lady. She arranged the pancakes in a plate in the shape of a lotus flower. Those cakes should be offered along with ²²⁰auspicious offerings. Madhavi being a *Brahmin* woman she should offer that plate of offering to a lady who should be a *Brahmin*. She

²¹⁹ There are rituals regularly followed by women. Few rituals are followed by choice like '33-Full-Moon-Days' ritual, 'Kanya-Tulasi' ritual, etc.,.

²²⁰ Flowers, fruits, turmeric, Kumkum, beetle leaves and nuts are known as auspicious offerings.

prepared 30 small and special lights made of rice flour and jaggery and started arranging them over those cakes. Her daughter Mukta 6 years old was very curious about her mother's every act, kept asking questions and wanted to act the way imitating her mother. She was enjoying every detail and expressed "Oh! Mumma you have arranged *Dosas* in a lotus flower shape. Arrange those lights in 2 rows over the plate that fills the space."

Madhavi would have been comfortable to offer that auspicious plate of offering to another Telugu *Brahmin* lady on every Full-Moon-day ritual. Sometimes she has to invite a Maharashtra *Brahmin* lady from her neighborhood of Baroda, Mridila Ranade when other Telugu *Brahmin* women find it difficult to come from far off distances and as such there are few Telugu families available in Baroda. On this day Mridila's mother was also invited along with Mridila to watch the ritual. She lost her husband and became a widow at her young age itself. Widowed ladies cannot perform such rituals and cannot be offered such auspicious objects. Such rituals are performed and offerings are received for the well-being of the family and longevity of one's husband.²²¹

There are certain sentences stereotypically repeated at the time of rituals by women who are performing and receiving those ritual' offerings. Madhavi had to translate those sentences into Hindi for Mridula to understand. At the end of any ritual, performer is supposed to narrate a story '*Vratakatha*'. Those popular stories are some what related to epic stories. This ritual also has a story similar to the story of *Sati-Savitri* who brought back her husband *Satyavanth's* life even after his death. Madhavi read the story from a Telugu book and translated the meaning

²²¹ Longevity of husband's life is necessary for the woman to get the status of a 'Suhagan' who is known as a symbol of auspicious nature.

for Mridila and explained in Hindi. When story is read special lightings are lighted on the pan cakes. Madhavi invited her husband Rayabrolu Ramana to worship those special lightings.

Analysis of various positions and perceptions of the participants at the ritual:

What is Madhavi doing?

She is practicing the ritual similar to her previous generation's practices. But there are certain differences one needed to adapt according to the availability of materials and requirements across the state boundaries. What happens to the regional boundaries in the period of migrations? Regions did not remain as strict material boundaries as water tight compartments on such rituals of women's practices in the present days, still the differences are on language, availability of materials are found. Madhavi is practicing the rituals of her native place Andhra region's rituals in Gujarat. That ritual practice has given her a feeling of adhering to her Andhra region's culture after migrating to Gujarat. At the same time she is also communicating and transforming her emotion behind that ritual practice i.e for the wellbeing of one's family, to another region's woman by offering her the auspicious items. The feeling for the family is commonly shared emotion for both the woman whether one is from Andhra or Maharashtra and that became the common point of relation in the ritual for both the women of different regions. Migrations made Madhavi to extend her span of ritual practice both physically and emotionally. Both the women of different regions adopted a give and take relation that shared each-other's feelings.

There is another space added for their aesthetic pleasure in these days of migrations across the state boundaries. That is towards the capacities of translation. Madhavi had to translate the popular story '*Vratakatha*' from Telugu language to a commonly understood Hindi language

where both the women are comfortable and can understand. Both the women had to learn and converse in another language to communicate. This is unlike her previous generation.

Critique:

There are certain observations an observer cannot walk away without commenting. Madhavi could invite a woman of Maharashtra but not from any other region such as Gujarat, Punjab, Bengal, etc. If an Andhra woman has to find a similarity with her cultural practice, one would prefer to invite a woman from Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra than from Kerala or Gujarat. One can find the similarity with the cultural practices of Maharashtra more than to Kerala or Gujarat. Compatibility of practice becomes the better binding material on cultural platform.

Madhavi has invited a *Brahmin* woman of Maharashtra, but not a non-*Brahmin* woman of Andhra region or Maharashtra. She could readily invite some one across the state boundary only for one reason that she is from *Brahmin* caste. Caste system is thoroughly followed than the regional difference. Reasons could be of both the ways. In a way they are confirming their identity to their community. Another could be they themselves have become comfortable on their own community similarity.

Madhavi is tapping the emotional bondage of man-woman relations through this ritual story narrated in the presence of her husband and making him to visit the ritual. The popular story '*Vratakatha*' that she narrated explains that a wife rescues her husband's life from the death god '*Yamadharma*'. A woman is informing her husband through '*Vratakatha*' that wife is the protector of her husband's life. It has been informed symbolically by practicing this ritual.

Mridila's mother, a widow was also present on that evening. Madhavi did not offer her the auspicious objects because widow loses the status of receiving such objects. Widow is categorized as another class of women who cannot perform the rituals. What could be the status of this worship from a widow's point of view-Mridila's mother, a widow watching the ritual but located outside the ritual participation. Men watch that ritual from a dominant position. Both the women, performer and the receiver have to be in the constant adjustment with the patriarchal system whether it is on the cultural practices or on day to day life. Mridila's mother is an economically independent woman. Her position itself is subverting the dependence that demands adjustment with the patriarchal-familial situations. She has occupied another and different position of her own.²²²

Madhavi's daughter, Mukta, six year old, was moving along with her mother all the time and enthusiastic in understanding that ritual. She learnt a song from her mother that is to be sung at the conclusive end of worship, i.e. '*Mangalaharathi*'. Madhavi has acquired the practice through her previous generation. Now, that is transmitted to the next generation. A popular and oral tradition is transferred to the next generation. What is the consequence of watching that ritual as a child? She is constructing her memory of her childhood. An adult remembers one's childhood through many remembrances. Ritual worship and traditional practices become one of the important aspects on such memories. One wants to adhere to one's own culture practiced in their childhood along with the parents. That becomes an emotional bondage on the family systems and continuity of emotions from previous generation to the next generation. Madhavi has constructed the memory of her daughter on mother and daughter relation and

²²² Widows are supposed to wear white robes and should not wear 'Bindi' on their forehead. Mridila's mother rejected both the practices and wore colourful costume and a Bindi on the forehead.

sowed the seeds on the practiced culture of her community where rituals become one of the important institutions to give the knowledge on cultural similarities, differences and identities. The rituals are repeatedly performed by previous and present generations, time and again, seasons after seasons. That becomes a 'similarity of action' but with a difference in various contexts. Order of resemblance in worshipping that ritual may not be having equal perception at every point of time. Static position of *Tulasi* ritual remains static at every point of time, but the interiorized perceptions change, attached meanings will change from one position to every position. Core of the customs will remain but there can be strategic adaptations along with the change of regional boundaries of living.

What Mridila must have related on this ritual:

Tulasi worship is commonly practiced in every region may be with few differences on the methods of following. But the faith on *Tulasi* is translocal.²²³ That translocal and abstract faith crosses the regional boundaries to relate one to another. Mridila of Maharashtra has become part of Madhavi's ritual performance. Mridila carried the plate of pancakes along with special live lightings over the cakes to her home with all the sentimental care. Mridila is also making a statement symbolically, how much she is concerned about her family, by participating in that ritual and bringing the wishes to her family. They are making their family as their audience for the performance. Both the women have become the participants in that ritual performance to express themselves about their feelings towards their family. Both the women have tapped emotions of their familial relations and announced about their pivotal position in holding that relation. Both the women shared the same feelings and worked on similar module. Mundane

²²³ Arjun Appadurai

materials of ritual procedure have become the tangible material for their intangible expressions. Boundaries of languages and regional differences have not become the hurdles.

Ritual symbols in outer spaces:

There is a common thread of faith on goddess *Tulasi*, *Laxmi* or *Gauri* that connects the common understanding across the state boundaries even with regional and language differences. It is the similar faith amongst the people of Andhra or Maharashtra, Mridala or Madhavi and their families. They carry the similar faith at their subconscious level. Such faiths are tapped by the capitalist market to gain the popularity of their products. There was a serial play broadcasted on national television channel "*Saas bhi Kabhi Bahu thi*". The main character role of daughter-in-law is named as *Tulasi* in that serial play. *Tulasi* is the proper name given to a committed daughter-in-law character role in the play. When the people watch such television serials, the faith on *Tulasi* or such goddesses symbolically becomes a background faith to understand such character roles in the secular stories. The faith and the chastity symbol *Tulasi* goddess is invoked in the minds of the people. The faith on that goddess of purity is tapped by that proper name of that daughter-in-law in viewer's minds. That faith becomes the unit of reception on that secular story of mass media. That is explored strategically by media as a community's sentiment of the viewers.

Actress Smriti Irani played the role of *Tulasi*, a committed daughter-in-law in that television serial. The faith generated in the media further symbolically attached to the actress in her personal life also by the viewer. [Fig.6.39] Smriti Irani was symbolized as *Tulasi*. Probably that made her to receive an electoral seat at Chandini Chowk in Delhi constituency in Indian Political

elections by *Bharatiya Janata Party* even without any experience of her in the political scenario of Indian politics.²²⁴[Fig.6.40]

There are two ways of viewing such situations. If we view the mass media and Indian politics that have exploited the household women's sentiment that has a base in the household women's practices, then we are expecting the *Tulasi* worship should be confined only to a home corner and as an immovable ethnic entity. But the symbolic and abstract form of household religious practice has been transformed in to a secular form. It has the potential and that was commercialized by mass media and also carried the electoral seats in the '*Hindutva*' political games. In the process of de-centering this faith of household to spread its span to social space by mass media or Indian politics, there are certain other actions that are taking place. *Tulasi* faith of household courtyard place has been activated to enter the space of social interaction. That faith was circulating only amongst women alone in the household private space earlier has entered the public space to share the social communication.

²²⁴ Deepika Chikaliya was given a BJP seat for political elections in Gujarat after her role as goddess Sita in Ramanand Sagar's "Ramayana" a television serial in 90's and late 90's.

8. Chapter

Writers on Culture & Identity Politics-

Chandra Mohanty brings in the arguments and also of other scholars like Pratibha Parmar who said western feminist theories examine our cultural practices as 'feudal residues' or label us as 'traditional' and portray us as politically immature women who need to be versed and schooled in the ethos of western feminism. Probably the professional, working and scholarly women of India also place the household women of their own region as ignorant and and view them from the point of feudal residue. Such discussions are to be challenged.

On public culture-

The explanation of Mbembe is that dominant and dominated share the same semiotics and gestures of a system with in the same epistemological field. Faith of rituals has become an identity of specific groups in the society. Agency of ritual faith and domestic aesthetics are contributing to the 'public culture' in the social space where there are no dominant/marginal positions which are opaque to each other. While watching the television serial of *Tulasi* concept or listening to *Rangam* fortune telling woman of *Bonalu* festival, there is no hierarchy of men or women, upper and lower class and castes to view and occupying the dominant or marginal positions.

As Asha Kasbekar writes, public culture acknowledges the composite nature of its nation-wide public and privileges the visual and non-verbal, while commercializing audience leisure, fantasy through iconic representation of dramatic tensions.

As Ipshita Chanda writes the survey details, women interact with popular media texts published about cinema or television stories. They use these texts as self-expression while reading and wish fulfillment devices. This can be another useful aspect of mass media that adapted the women's space of *Tulasi* worship or *Rangoli*.

As Vidyut Aklujkar talks, great myths travel through time and again to acquire volume and substance. Some disappear and some survive coupled with consistency and creativity. Probably myths like *Tulasi* or *Gauri* remained time and again. Mass media or political elections may not be citing those mythological texts, neither they are evacuating that religious contexts. They are making new religious modes and new mythical characters, new canons of faith by imposing that mythological charisma of belief system in the stories of television serial plays or adapting in to social and political arena.

Western feminist writings-

Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes that Western feminist discourse employs the scholarship and knowledge about the 'Third world' as a monolith. Those feminist writers codify non-western community as others and implicitly themselves as western, a superior category. There is an assumption, suggested and implied the image of 'average third world women'. These average third world women leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender, sexually constrained, and third world means, ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family oriented, victimized, etc,. These characters of third world women are in contrast to the self-representing western women as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities and possess the freedom to make their own decisions. Such references

are made normative in the binary analysis that people who have power are men, first world women and who do not have are women and third world people.

Deconstructing the western feminist and dominant discourse is an important step. As per Chandra Talpade Mohanty, it is necessary to retrospect and offer critique pertaining to those third world scholars also who write about their cultures employing identical strategies like western scholars looking at third world as others.²²⁵

Analyzing Post Euro-American Feminist writers-

Rajeswari Sunderrajan speaks about the issues of *Sati* and European writers' reactions on that subject. In the process of her anxiety to talk about the European writers and their dominant positions she looked at India as one monolithic category mixing the regional differences that made the South India and North India as one category. In a popular understanding South India is pushed to a marginal position, may be because of their dark complexion and *Dravidian* lineage, and North India as fair complexioned and heroic. South Indian women occupy the 'Doubly Subaltern' position, as per Gayatri Spivak's words, because they have double drawbacks, one as women and secondly as South Indians.

Rakshabandhan is a festival of sisters request the brother to protect them and the *Karvachauth* is a festival that offers complete submission of the wives to their husbands informing their helplessness or in the need of male protection at every point. Women in North India also follow

²²⁵ 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.' From "Contemporary Post Colonial Theory" Ed. By Padmini Mongia. Oxford university press. Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Mumbai. 1997. She writes, western feminist writings on third world women like most other kinds of scholarship, these are also not a mere production of knowledge about a certain subject. Feminist scholarly practices are inscribed in relations of power relations which they counter resist or even implicitly support.

the '*Purda*' veil system to cover their heads. There is no such ritual followed by South Indian women of wearing the '*Parda*' system or the similar rituals like *Rakshabandhan* or *Karvachauth*. We may give the explanation that regular attack and wars, Muslim invasions must have caused the necessary protection for the women on the regular basis. This answer can satisfy partially because Muslim invasions and Islamic ruling was part of South India also. The *Sati Sahagaman* or women dying on the pyre along with her diseased husband is seen as more prevalent practice in North India than South India. Probably the restrictions on women are more prevalent in North India. One can evaluate the position of women in the upper casts, class and race to infer that women's position is always precarious and majority groups' upward growth has worked inversely on gender discrimination. This aspect is observed in Andhra region rituals while comparing less developed Telangana region's '*Batakamma*' festival and coastal Andhra region', more irrigated and green, '*Gobbemma*' festival.

Minority/majority, dominant/recessive, self/other positions are relative and have shifting positions. If south India has been seen as lesser position in North Indian understanding, then the Coastal Andhra region has dominant position over Telangana region within that region of South India. The women of developed region are showing a lesser growth and development. Gayatri Spivak has placed lower cast women as doubly oppressed women, one disadvantage as women and secondly from lower casts. But class and race hierarchy works opposite on the gender discrimination unlike her reading. Such women of higher casts and class are on the wrong side of the coin.

Recognition-

It is always assumed that religious, legal, economic and familial systems are implicitly constructed by men. This is to appropriate every value to the men's identity to increase their order of recognition and non-recognition to the women. 'Recognition' is the driving force behind contemporary politics. The demand comes nowadays by civil and legal systems to recognize women, tribals, subaltern-minority groups and recognize their requirements. There are supposed links between 'Identity' and 'Recognition' as explains by Charles Taylor.²²⁶ He explains that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others. Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

"Thus some feminists have argued that women in patriarchal societies have been induced to adopt a depreciatory image of them-selves. They have internalized a picture of their own inferiority, so that even when some of the objective obstacles to their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities. And beyond this, they are condemned to suffer the pain of low self-esteem." says Charles Taylor. Contemporary feminism discusses about the premise that withholding the recognition can be a form of oppression. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe the people, it is a vital human need.

Modern preoccupation made two changes, identity and recognition are inevitable. These are different from the honor that created inequalities in ancient regime and had social hierarchies that are collapsed by these modern preoccupations. Modern notion of dignity underlies the

²²⁶ Charles Taylor "Politics of Recognition" from 'Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition. Ed. By Amy Gutmann, Princeton, Princeton University press, 1994.

premise that everyone, men or women, shares the dignity that is citizen dignity.²²⁷ Democracy has ushered politics of equal recognition and demands equal status of cultures and of genders.

Subaltern groups-

The subalterns want and make changes or additions to the existing system to put forward their statements seeking identity. They make the changes taking the clues from the previous and hegemonic sign system and bring the crisis in the previous functions where they were made submissive and inferior.²²⁸ They look forward for the circumstances for unification, reasons for change in the ambiguity of the hegemonic system. They can create unease can even turn the tables upside down, bringing the hegemonic historiography to crisis to make their point of identity recognizable. The possibility of the action of the subalterns lies in the dynamics of the disruption of the system, the breaking and re-linking of the chain to make a new chain that can identify and acknowledge them. For example- some of the rituals like above are politically appropriating the popular to work on the different platform away from the men's rituals, perform those worships that are not worshipped by men at that particular time period, make a comment on the lack which is not present in the men's rituals like creativity through colors and agency of promoting the craft works for creating a dramatic difference with the hegemonic practices of dominant class.²²⁹

Subalterns' Assertions and Identities:

²²⁷ Dipesh Chakravarty writes further, this concept of dignity compatible with a democratic society and it is inevitable that the old concept of honor is superseded.

²²⁸ Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." Ed. Ranjit Guha-"Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society". Oxford University Press, 1985.

²²⁹ Ali AL Muqri is in conversation with Subash Jeyan. "The other inside us." The Hindu, Sunday magazine news paper. September 25th 2011. /

Dawyer-Pinney explains that subalterns work at many levels for claiming their identity, by occupying that space where there is a lack or vacancy, over assertion of their statements or mimicking the dominant class or making a parody, etc. Stuart Hall explains that acquiring a mark on identity is a process of articulation, a suturing or an over determination. It is a subject of dramatics played with difference in comparison or to compete with the hegemonic activities. Worshipping a plant form of *Tulasi* differing from the iconophilic tradition of hierarchy of patriarchal practices, worshipping goddess *Savitri-Gauri* as a competing worship to Lord Vishnu's worship, making *Batakamma* worship as a heroic saga of a victimized woman, etc. are the statements negating or/ and against the hierarchy of men's hegemonic practices or to claim their identities. Such choice of worships is playing upon the difference dramatically.

Dipesh Chakrabarty describes the point in the postcolonial project of subalternity and the writings by third world researchers that, for the first time Indians are showing sustained signs of re-appropriating the capacity of representing themselves. Third world historians feel a need to refer to works in European History, and the historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate. They produce their work in relative ignorance of non-western histories and this does not seem to affect the quality of their work. This is a gesture, however, that we cannot return. Dipesh Chakrabarty further says "these theories in spite of their inherent ignorance of 'us' eminently useful in understanding our societies. What allowed the modern European sages to develop such clairvoyance with regard to societies of which they were empirically ignorant? Why cannot we once again return the gaze?"

Repetition and the Difference in rituals and festivals-

Deleuze's explanation "Repetition" of festivals is not suitable for Indian festivals and celebrations.²³⁰ He says festivals carry the same power from the first time celebration to the nth time. What one can draw the meanings is first festival can resemble the tenth one. If we take the celebration of one festival when the child is in her fifth year, the same festival celebration and the power of enjoyment for the same child is different in her tenth year. Both the situations do not resemble with one another. First year festival character cannot be replaced by another. What one enjoys at the age of five cannot be replaced by fifteenth year festival celebration. Names of the festivals and rotation of the seasons might sound that they are repeated but nature of celebration is not replaceable. They repeat something 'unrepeatable' in such situations.

The celebration is not necessarily the same as an echo of a water drop character of difference too. Folk practices, conventional/traditional, cultural activities associated with singing, dancing, theatre, proverbs, religion, faiths, etc are the repetitive acts draw aesthetic pleasures and are not the examples of repetition and difference of Deleuze's explanation about festivals.

²³⁰ This explanation is not in comparison with western festivals.

9.Chapter

Epilogue-

The classification of the rituals made in the discussions about aesthetic, spiritual and strategic socio-political statements remained at the outset making me to realize that the ritual practices of women are amalgamation and a perfect mix of many such elements and cannot be separated as water tight classification.

Women are storing the historical and cultural information data about their ritual practices and the way women followed and continued till today through the oral information. Women are given the know-how of previous generations' practices. Women process their epistemological understanding and their praactices stand as a perfect mixture of her historical, social and personal understanding to develop an aesthetic dialogue with their space available.

Customs and Traditions-

Every time and again the basic principles of the customs do not change. Women follow principally the customs and do not contradict it. But they create a variation within the system by adapting every time a different method of following the rituals as per the requirement of changing time and changing environment and surroundings. That is a following depending on the concept of the custom but changing the tradition of following as per the availability of materials.²³¹ It is true for decorating the self or the surroundings also. For example if they are supposed to wear the *Kumkum* on their fore head, to make a focus point on the vital Chakra of the body, that custom is followed in a traditional method to put the *Bindi* on the forehead but

²³¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger."Invention of Tradition" Cambridge University press. 1983.

they may replace that material with dry powders of *Kumkum* or wet colours or with stickers of different shapes and colours. Women get the approval from the society for such acts because they retain the custom to keep up with their activities on the social organization. Their activities should be in tandem with the macro level setting of the community, custom of the society. They create a difference within that organization and incorporate a difference at micro level to voice their interests and expressions, while bringing a change in the traditions. If the customs are transported as a basket from time to time within the family and from one generation to another generation, women change the organization's inner material as per the individual interests. What is organized in the system, as a traditional practice, with the given material is difficult to view the changes after a while. To get the perspective of the History purely becomes a difficulty at large. They encounter the traditions imposed by male regulated society with their perspective and negotiate to bring slow variation rather than to react. That is visible in their ritual practices. Women find an alternative method and platform to voice their wishes without reacting against the orthodoxy of patriarchal dictation.

One can observe from the chapters discussed that rituals can be traced back at 2nd C.B.C. in Dhauli elephant inscription of Mauryan period. Similar Rangoli practices can be traced back to sixty four arts of 4th B.C. period. Why and how conventional rituals of women continued till today? Why men are supporting them? Reasons could be different for both men and women. Women are adhering to the rituals for their pleasures. Men want to project and want women to believe and always spread in the air that women are passionate, emotional, religious and they can be controlled on the same.

It is also difficult to make any binary opposites on the discussions like male/female, minority/majority, self/other, etc. after processing all the data of rituals. If men are on the dominating positions women negotiate their available space skillfully, play the same dice coined by the patriarchy and bring out the results of their interest many a time. It is difficult to state they remained in the voiceless recessive position even if they have not reached the dominant position.

A minor literature of minority groups or 'third world' does not come from a minor language; A minority constructs within a major language.²³² The question of minority cultures is in-separable from power. If one associates power with majority culture and disempowerment with minority status, logically it is not inconceivable. Minority-majority and majority-minority are a paradox. The group that might be a minority within one particular context can be a majority culture in another context.²³³

Few people may be following the conventional rituals as authentic as possible but few may not be following due to many reasons like space, time constraints, long urban distances and expanding cities. As rituals impart some root confidence to the performer, the people who do not follow the conventional rituals, may be following the different for root adherence or for the sense of supreme. They follow their "*Ishtha devatha*" worship and in the process rituals are changing or modified accordingly. [Fig.7.5 to 7.10]

An example-Vastupuja-

²³² Kafka: "Toward a Minor Literature". By Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (Minneapolis; University of Minneapolis Press.1986.

²³³ "Inclusions"-Psychoanalysis, Transnationalism, and Minority Cultures. Ed. Francoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Brahmanical practices in south India make cow and calf to walk in the new house just before they enter the new house at *Vastu Puja* time.²³⁴[Fig.1.84; 1.85; 1.86].People carry *Ishta Devata* images when they perform the *Vastupuja* to enter their new houses. Mr. Venkateswarlu and smt. Sunita carried the image photograph of *Shirdi Saibaba*. Lord *Venkateswara* and *Padmavati* and *SeetaRama*'s frames are the commonly found images on entering the new house premises. Modern Day individual preferences of worships and rituals like "*Satya sai*" cult to normalize the caste system is one of such changing Modern day rituals but that could not normalize the gender issues. Moreover they made the gender distinction furthered as a strict rule. [Fig. 7.1 to 7.4]

There is a change in the practices but basic ritual procedure does not seem to change. There is a painting by a French artist Francois Balthazar Solvyns titled '*Bibaha*' dated 1792-96. This is about a wedding ritual of a Bengali family. What is noticeable in the water color and pencil on paper painting is it is a record of that time wedding where men alone were attending the wedding and women were watching the ceremony from the terrace windows. Father alone was performing the ritual of '*Kanyadaan*', i.e, offering daughter to a groom in the marriage.²³⁵ Present day ritual of marriage ceremony women are part of the wedding ceremony and participate in '*Kanyadaan*' ritual.

²³⁴ If it is difficult to bring cow and calf walk up to the apartment houses in the flat system, on the eve of house warming ceremony of new houses people sprinkle '*Gopanchitam*' cow dung and urine at the new house as an auspicious material. Cow and calf figures are printed on the invitation cards of *Vastupuja* of new houses. Foot prints of cow and calf are designed in the form of *Rangoli* at the worship places.

²³⁵ This painting is in the collection of Victoria & Albert museum and I happened to see this in Salarjung museum Hyderabad when they had a travelling exhibition of British India paintings of Victoria & Albert museum collection, in February to March 2010.

Activities like *Harikatha*, *Burra-katha*, etc. of narrating the historical stories in the form of songs was performed only by men in the previous times. A change started appearing for the last decade that women performers are active in this form of performances. [Fig.7.11; 7.12]

Rituals of women are careful about seeking the coexistence between the family members and the women and their congenial placement. Women went to the maximum extent in exploring the possibility of dismantling the patriarchal authority and re arranging the familial and social system opting for their identity. The conventional rituals of women are more than the meaningful acts. They enjoy the privilege of taking the family bound cultural activities through their household rituals. Neither, they are protesting a strong disagreement nor an agreement to the cultural hegemony of men's high order and position. They make sure through various rituals that the importance of their acts is identified. They created such rituals of their own within the space of their domain, household. They are communicating a voice of subalterns through their actions. As Dipesh Chakravarty mentions, 'Subalterns subscribe their agency of their voice to some god to put forward their negotiating statements.' Their voices are mostly non verbal and are performative. Their knowledge is an epistemic knowledge to carry from generation to other. Their rituals being continued right from earlier times travelling from one generation to another along with entertainment and as an aesthetic pleasure, becoming agents to support the artisans, with a sense of retaining regional arts, asserting a strong sense of oneness with the community and family and experimenting with newness, along with amalgamating the new to suit the changing times, incorporating the changes that occur in the contemporaneous times. Their practices are far from demonstrating mindless acts. Their rituals are serving both, as a

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- 4.15.Flower hair stiching-a pass time activity of summer vacation
- 4.16.Oleographs are stiched with silk costumes and decorated with ornaments in 1920's by

J.Sundaramma

4.17.J.Sundaramma made *Tulasi* pot with cement in 1930's

4.18.Goddess *Tulasi* decorated for worship

4.19.Smt. Vimala made goddess *Durga* for *Navaratri* worship

4.20.Smt. K.Rama arranged Ramayanam scenes as *Sankranti Koluvu* with soft toys she made

4.21.Smt. Kalluri Rama made soft toys of Epic *Ramayanam* to arrange *Sankranti Koluvu*

4.22.*Ramayanam* of soft toys by Smt.K.Rama

4.23.Smt. Rama decorating a swing for *Savitri-Gauri* worship along with *Sankranti Koluvu*

4.24.*Ravana's* court, lord *Hanuman* sitting on his tail.

4.25.Smt.J.Hymavathi preparing home made medicines out of her kitchen cabinet

4.26.An amatuer artist Laxmi Suhasini's herbal-collage work

4.27.Smt. Laxmi Suhasini's herbal-collage

4.28.Smt. Laxmi Suhasini's herbal-collage

4.29.Arranging *Koluvu* is an aesthetic activity

4.30.Village scene along with *Sankranti Koluvu* by Ms.Balamani

4.32.*Seeta Rama Vanavasam*- another year *Sankranti Koluvu* scenery by Ms. Balamani

4.34.Lord Ganesha with Bengal gram flour, turmeric, tooth picks, etc. by Ms.Balamani

4.35.Embroidery stitching is a great pass time activity

5.Spiritual Pleasures

5.1.*Saundaryalahari* worshipping goddess *Balatripurasundari*

5.2.Arranging for recitation of *Saundaryalahari*

5.3.Reciting *Sivanandalahari* and *Saundaryalahari*

5.4.Reciting *Lalitasahasranamam*

5.5.Reciting at Smt.Laxmi's house

5.6.Applying *Parani* as a part of *Saundaryalahari* recitation worship

5.7.Worshipping with white lotui

5.8.Pleasure of worshipping with various flowers

5.9. Devotee with folded hands

5.10.Smt.Visalaxi performing the ritual of *Lakshavattula nomu*

5.11 *Godaanam* by Visalaxi at the time of *Lakshavattula nomu*

5.12.Cow decorated for gifting at *Lakshavattula nomu*

5.13.Back side cover of *Streelavratkathalu*

5.14.*Saundaryalahari*-illustrated manuscript

5.15. *Saundaryalahari*-illustrated manuscript

5.16. *Saundaryalahari*-illustrated manuscript

5.17. *Saundaryalahari*-illustrated manuscript

5.18. *Saundaryalahari*-illustrated manuscript

6.Socio-Religious Politics

6.1 A booklet of procedure to worship goddess *Tulasi*

6.2 Daily worship of *Tulasi* plant

6.3 '*Ksheerabdi Dvadasi*' marrying *Tulasi* with lord *Krishna* on 12th day after *Diwali*

6.4 Offering 33 full moon worship-through *Tulasi*

6.5.Applying turmeric

6.6 Pan cakes and the rice flour and jaggery dough for the special lights

6.7 Madhavi offering lights on pan cakes to Mridula Ranade

6.8 Smt.Mridula carrying lights to her home

6.9.'*Batukamma*' festival at the time of *Navaratri* in *Telangana*

6.10. Palanquin to carry the gods' idols on *Sankranti* day

6.11 Preparing idols for a procession in the palanquin

- 6.12 *Dhanurmasam* worships at the temple
- 6.13 Reaching river bank early morning to fetch *Savitri-Gauri* worship idols in Tenali region
- 6.14 Travelling along with trumpets
- 6.15 Potter selling unbaked clay idols
- 6.16 Selecting idols
- 6.17. Carrying the idols with care
- 6.18. Swing at the centre hall kept ready to place the clay idols
- 6.19 Clay idols are placed on the swing
- 6.20 Smt. Subbalaxmi lighting the lamp to initiate the worship, her son a priest to preside
- 6.21 *Savitri, Gauri, Panchagn Brahmin, Ganapati*
- 6.22. Placing the idols on a swing
- 6.23 Invoking the goddess
- 6.24 Many women together worship *Savitri-Gauri* at one place
- 6.25. Nine lotus *Rangoli* to symbolize nine days and nine years of worshipping *Savitri-Gauri*
- 6.26. Offering a seat to the goddess
- 6.27. Showing a mirror to the goddess and co-worshippers as a process of worship
- 6.28. Showing a mirror to the goddess

6.29 Worshipping with various flowers

6.30 Evening worship

6.31.Worshipping the feet of *Suhaagan*

6.32.Nine *Suhaagan* women are offered auspicious objects at *Savitri-Gauri* worship

6.33.Bidding goodnight to the goddess at evening worship

6.34.Smt.Rama and her husband lighting a lamp to initiate the worship

6.35 Smt.K.Rama's clay idols on a swing

6.36.Clay idols at smt.Rama's place

6.37.Smt Rama at her worship

6.38.Worship at Smt.K.Rama's place

6.39.Photographs of Smriti Irani are popularly found who is named *Tulasi* in a television serial

6.40.B.J.P. political leaders and illustrious personalities on *Tulasi* worship day in Baroda

6.41.*Bonalu* carried by Jayasudha-film star of yester years

6.42. *Bonalu* by then Mayor of Hyderabad Banda Karteeka Reddy

6.43.*Bonalu* by K.Kavitha, *Telangana Jagriti* president

6.44. *Bonalu* by a devotee on ecstasy

6.45.*Potharajulu*-known as brothers of goddess

6.46.*Batakamma* painting by K.Rajaiah

6.47.K.Rajaih painted *Batukamma*

6.48.*Batukamma* image

6.49.*Gobbemma* in huge *Rangoli*

6.50.*Gobbemma*

6.51.*Siva Parvati* playing *Chaupar*, Basholi painting, 17th c

7.Ishta Devata worships

7.1.Woman devotee sweeping at *Sivam-Satyasai* temple in Hyderabad

7.2.*Satyasai-Naaridal* palanquin procession

7.3.*Satyasai- Naaridal*, gifting sewing machines to women for self employment

7.4.*Satyasai -Naaridal* gifting wet grinders and sewing machines for self employment

7.5.*Ishtadevata* worship-home shrine of a *Satyasai* devotee

7.6.*Ishtadevata* worship at house warming ceremony

7.7.*Ishtadevata* worship after entering new work premise

7.8.Goddess installed at tree trunk near vegetable market-Amaravati

7.9.*Neem* tree applied turmeric by a seive vendor

7.10.Lord *Veerabhadreswara* [worshipped on Gurunadhudi Pongallu] [from web page]

7.11.*Harikatha* by a woman narrator

7.12 Rao Kamala Kumari continuing the legacy of her father Manda Suryanarayana sastry's
Harikatha narration along with music and dance-5th Oct.2012, The Hindu-news papers.

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Rituals and Worships



1.1.Ugadi offering of six tastes at home shrine



1.2.Neem leaves at the door on Ugadi



1.3.Ganeshapuja



1.4.Varalaxmi Vratam



1.5.Worshipping cobra-hive, Warangal



1.6.Worshipping cobra-hive on Naagulachavithi



1.7.Subramanyam and Purushottam worshipping cobra-hive



1.8.Worships of Naagulachavithi



1.9.Pouring milk at cobra-hive



1.10.Pouring milk in to a cobra-hive on Nagulachavithi



1.11.Offered eggs at cobra-hive



1.12.Offering worships to the cobra-hive on Naagulachavithi,Hyderabad



1.13. Offereing food and clothes to a Brahmachari-unmarried man on the next day of Nagulachavithi



1.14. Offering worships to the grinding stone as Gauri on Sankranti



1.15.Offering worships to goddess Pentamma-Peepal tree at Alugubilli village



1.16.Worshipping 'Pentamma' goddess



1.17. Agriculture labour taking grains from the farmer's house on Kanuma day-15th Jan.2006, Alugubilli village



1.18..A farmer offering to a priest on Kanuma, 15th Jan.2006,Alugubilli village



1.19. Offerings to a priest on Kanuma. 15th Jan. 2006



1.20. A Christian convert offering to a priest on 15th Jan. 2006 at Alugubilli village



1.21. Offerings to a priest by a Christian convert on 15th Jan. 2006. Alugubilli village



1.22. Sacrificing pumpkin at the cross-roads at Sankranti times



1.23. Offerings made to a priest on Sankranti day by a Brahmin couple



1.24. Bommalakolu



1.25.Bommalakolu, Sankranti display of dolls



1.26.Bhogi fire, early morning hours, 13th Jan.2006, Rajuhmundry



1.27.Gobbemma, Katyayini worship. Tenali, Sankranti, Jan.2006



1.28.Suvarchala-'13 Kumkuma Bharani Vrat'



1.29.Offerings at the time of Kumkuma Bharina Vrat



1.30.B.Suvarchala on her Vrat



1.31.C.Vijayalaxmi, Kailasa Gauri Vrat



1.32.Chervu Vijayalaxmi performing Kailasa Gauri Vrat, 7th Nov.2005



1.33.Turmeric, Kumkum, fruits, flowers,Beetle leaves and nuts, bangles are on Vrat offerings



1.34.Many women accepting Vrat offerings



1.35.Worshipping 16 fruits as goddess Gauri



1.36.Performing 16 fruits Vrat Offerings made by Ms.Balamani & accepted Ms.Lata



1.37.Vaibhavalaxmi Vrat performed by R.Madhavi



1.38 Performing Vaibhavalaxmi Vrat



1.39.Vaibhavalaxmi Vrat by Smt.Mangatai, Hyderabad



1.40.Offering pairs of winnower to Suhagan-A Vrat by Smt.Bharani lives at U.S.A performing at Hyderabad



1.41.Winnower Vrat



1.42.Winnower Vrat by Smt.Viraja, lives at U.S.A



1.43.Winnower Vrat Smt.Madhavi, Baroda



1.44.Worshipping cow and calf



1.45.Special offerings by Smt.Maheswari at Navratri time at her home shrine



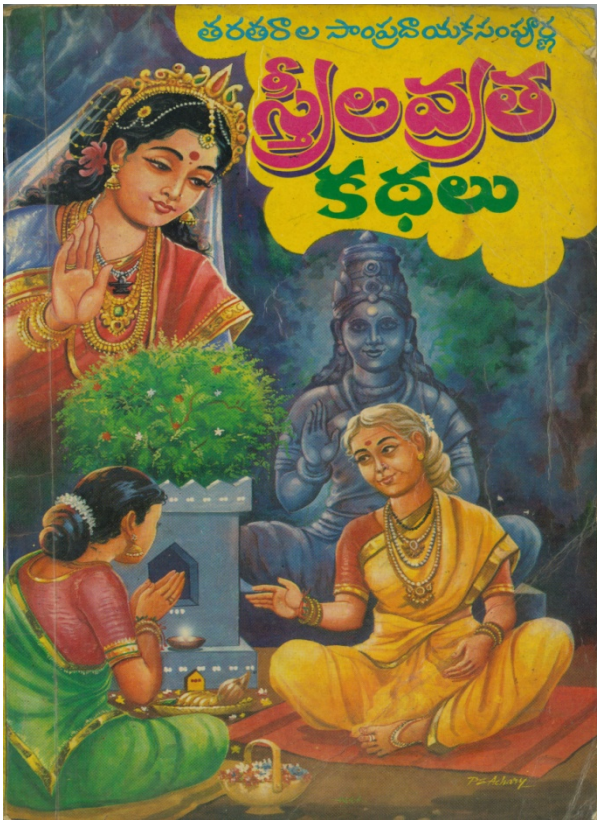
1.46.Siva Kumar Vora ,a priest narrating Santoshimata story in Hindi to devotees,Hyderabad



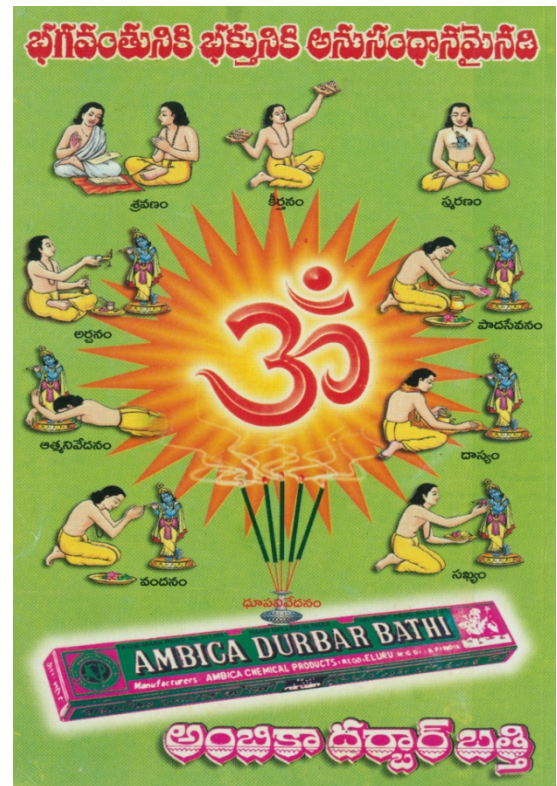
1.47. Offering worships to Tulasi on Ksheerabdidvadasi



1.48. Printed book on Streelavrata kathalu, later edition



1.49. Printed book on Streelavratkathalu, earlier edition



1.50. Different kinds of worships printed on the back page of Streelavratkathalu



1.51.Kameswari Vratam performed by Ms.K.Laxmi along with her husband



1.52.Akkalamuthaiduvalu at the time of Kameswar vratam



1.53.Offerings made to Suhagan,Kameswari Vratam



1.54.Worshipping Suhagan women in the name of goddess Kameswari



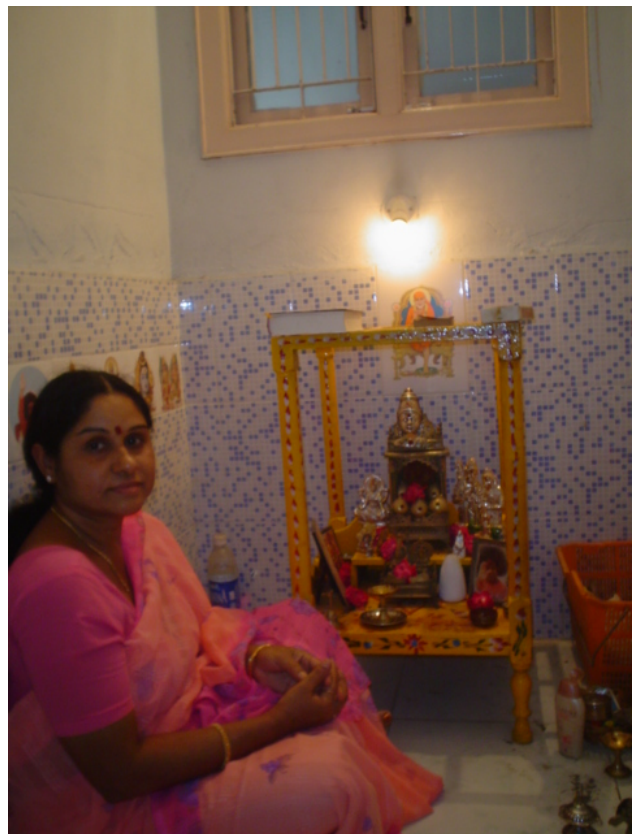
1.55.Smt.Laxmi's husband collects back the blessings from the Suhagan women after the worships offered to them by Smt. Laxmi



1.56.Home shrine



1.57.Home shrine of Smt.B.Janaki, Hyderabad



1.58.Home shrine-Rajuhundry



1.59.Offereing worships to Peepal tree at
Smt.Maheswari's house



1.60.Pumpkin regularly hanging at the door along with Toran at Ms.Ambika's
house in Hyderabad



1.61.Tuesday-Rahukalam worship. Lighting in lemon halves at Skandagiri temple



1.62.Offereing lights in lemon halves, Rahukala puja



1.63.Ganesh puja



1.64.Worship of beetle leaves to Lord Hanuman



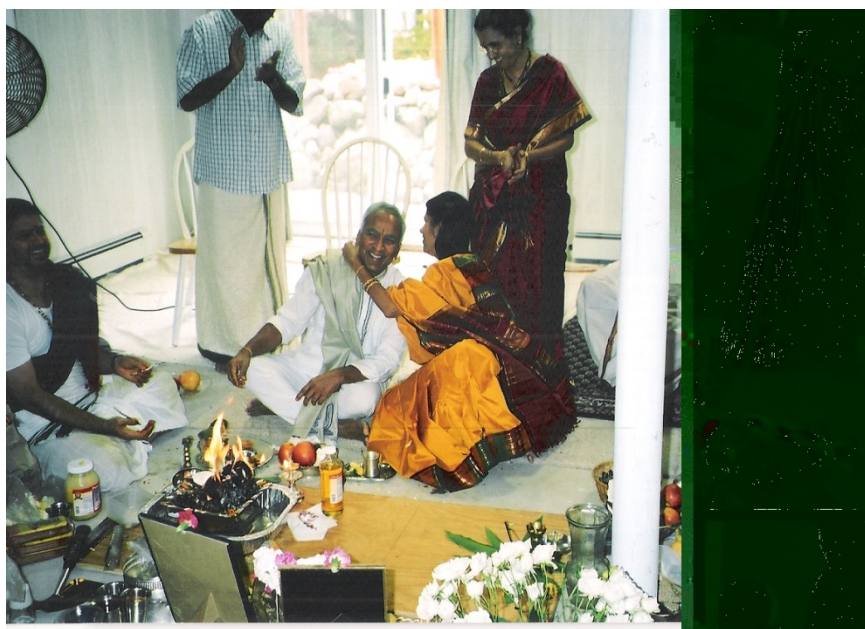
1.65.Satyanarayana Vratam in a Tamilian house



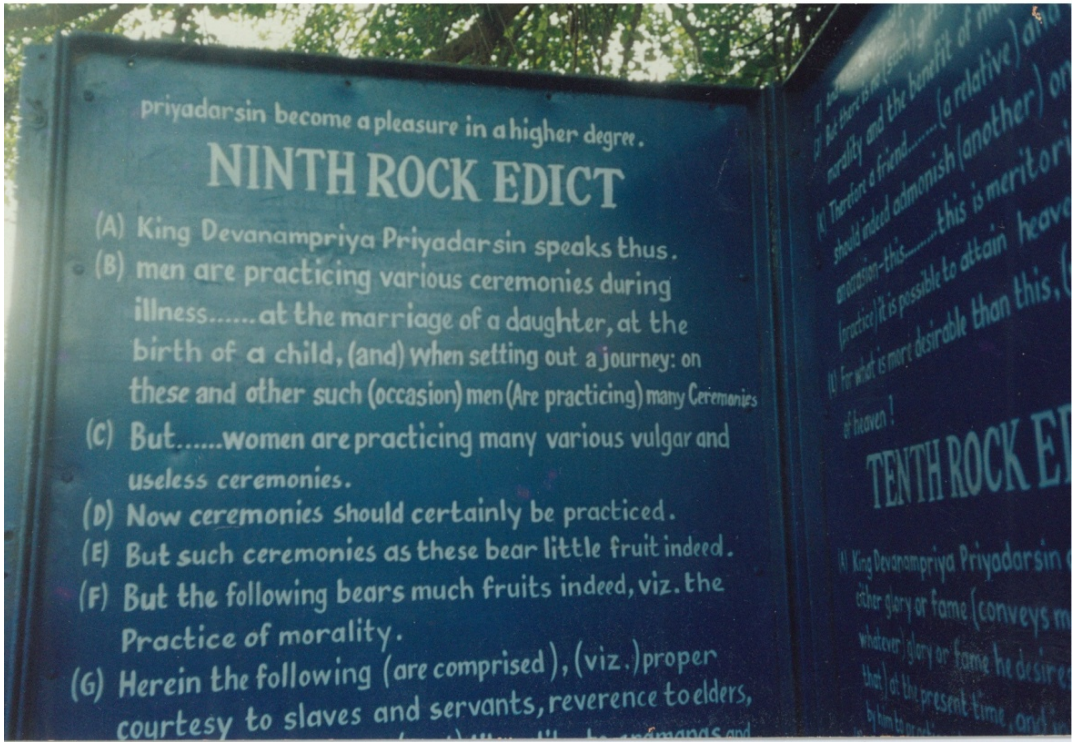
1.66.Satyanarayana Vrat at U.S.A.by Dr.Dinkar and family



1.67.Sashtipurthi-60 th birthday of Mr.Sarma at U.S.A



1.68.Sashtipurthi, 60th birthday ritual at U.S.A



1.69.Dhauli Elephant orissa rock edict display



1.70 News paper wishing Sankranti festival



1.71 Pothuramudu



1.72 .Haridaasu and Pothuramudu at the time of Sankranti



1.73. Collecting money at the time of Sankranti-Rajuhmundry streets



1.74. Godbharai-mother filling her daughter's lap wishing her safe pregnancy



1.75.Naamkaran-naming ceremony of a new born child



1.76.Decorating a bride and an accomanying jr.bride



1.77.Initial blessing to the would be bride



1.78.Pounding turmeric to begin the ritual of wedding



1.79.Worshipping Gauri, part of wedding ritual



1.80.Muhurat- auspicious moment of wedding



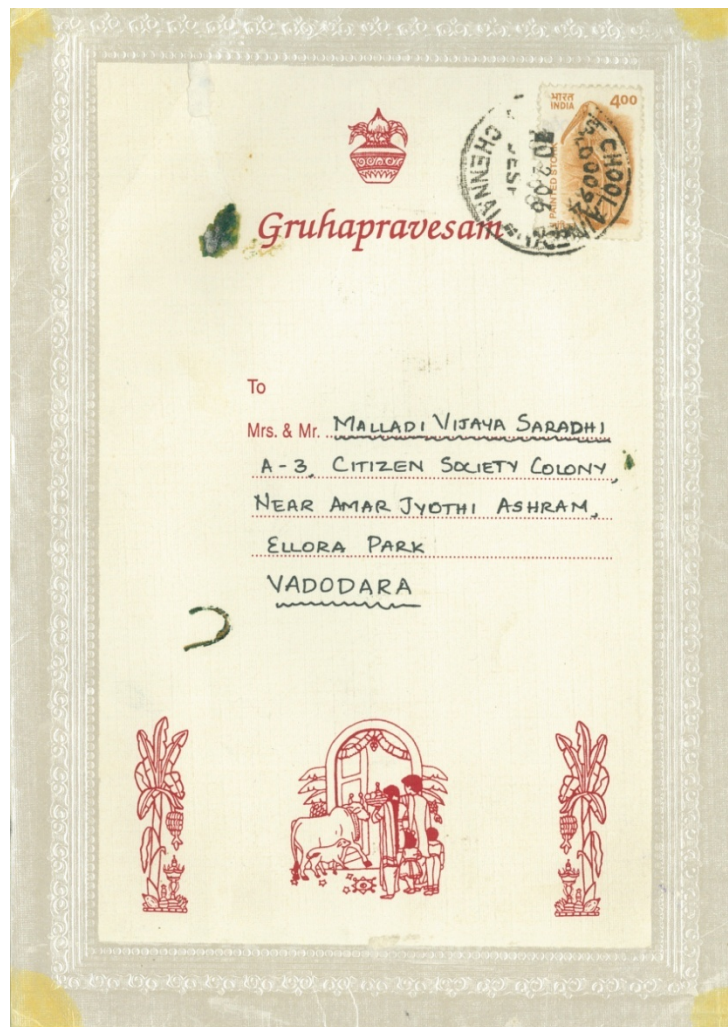
1.81.Wedding



1.82.One of the wedding rituals



1.83. Good health and the entering of new bride's feet has a relation as per the pharmaceutical advertisement



1.84. Images of cow and calf entering a new house on an invitation card



1.85.Entering a new house



1.86.Boiling milk to spill over, auspicious sign, after entering the new house premise



1.87.Ganesh Chaturdhi in America. Artificial flowers and fruits used to decorate the Mandap

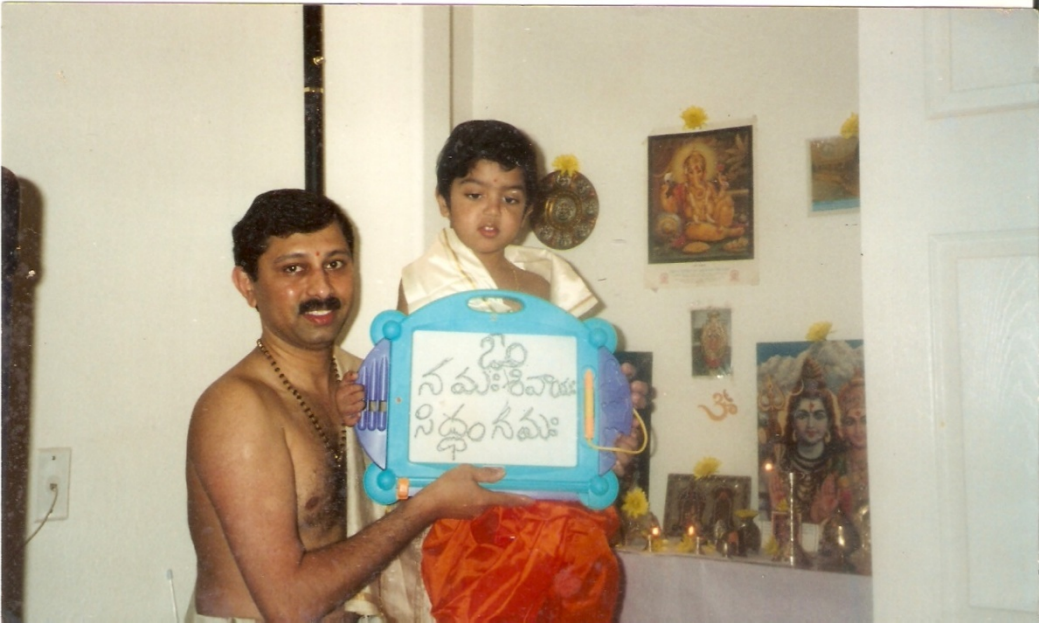
Glowing Six Diyas



US\$14.44 / Rs.720

Buy Now

1.88.Diwali market in America [web pages]



1.89.Akshrabhyasam in America



1.90.Sankranti Koluvu at America



1.91 .Radha Krishna playing Holi



1.92.Sivaabhishekam. Men alone following ritual



1.93.Lingaabhishekam, men alone following ritual



1.94.Father initiating his son to perform Agnikaryam afeter Upanayanam, men alone performing ritual.



1.95.Dwija, after performing Upanayanam



1.96.Nityagni homam-evening worship of Agni-Men alone performing ritual,Tenali town



1.97.Sandhyavandan and Devatarchana. Men alone following ritual



1.98.Sandhyavandan by J.nataraja Sarma
men alone performs



1.99.Bhagavat Saptah at Sankaramatham.Hyderabad. Nov.2005

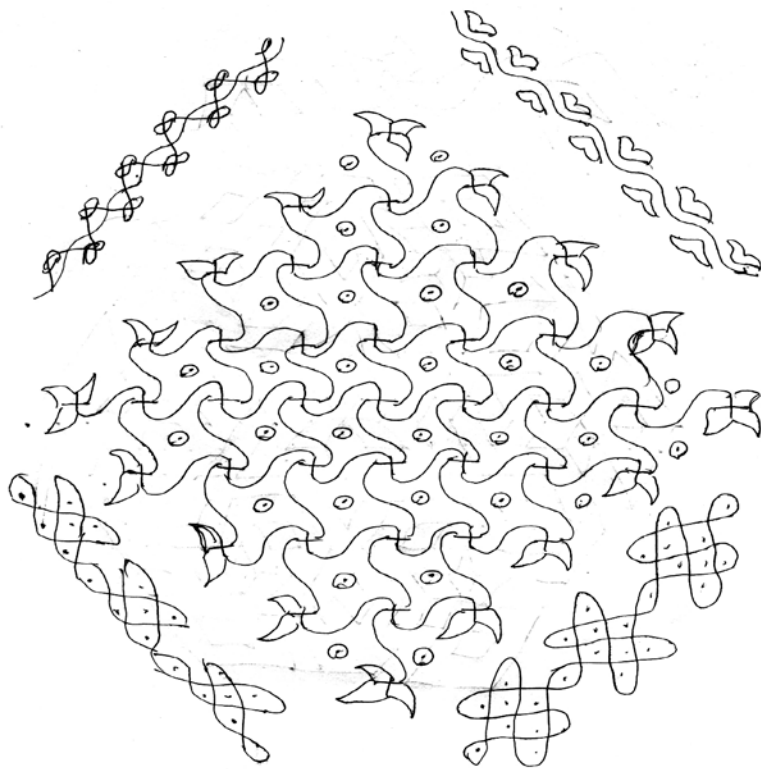


1.100.Bhagavat Saptah at Sankaramatham,7th Nov.2005



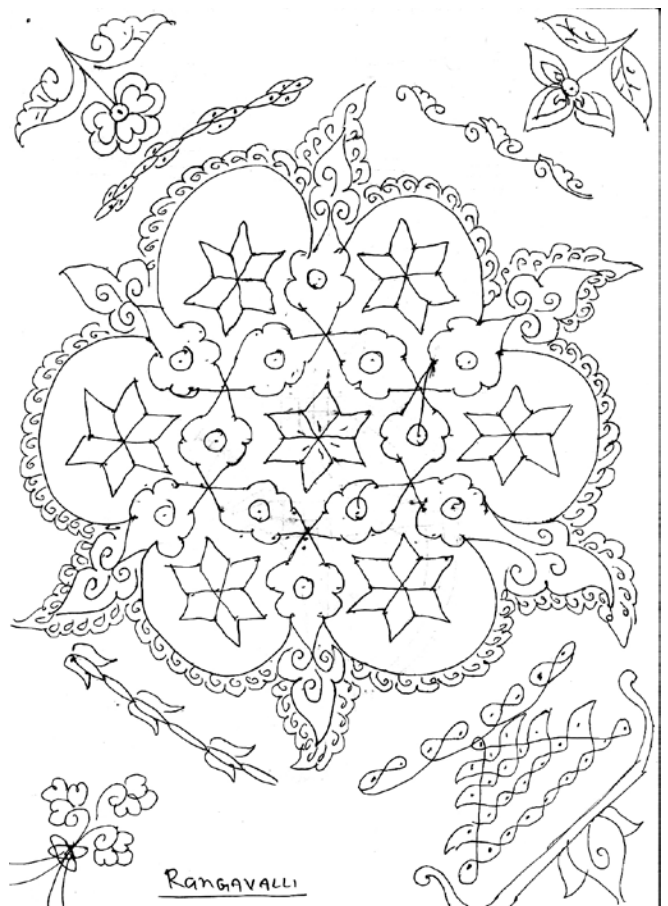
1.101.Engagement ceremony-Confirming the bride

Rangoli



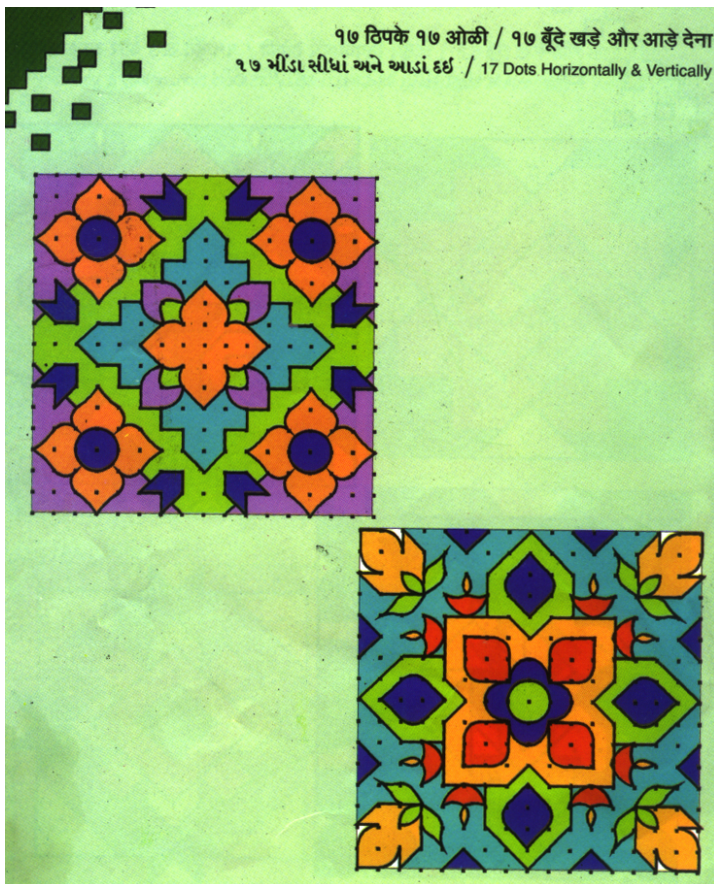
RANGAVALLI

2.1 Rangoli designs

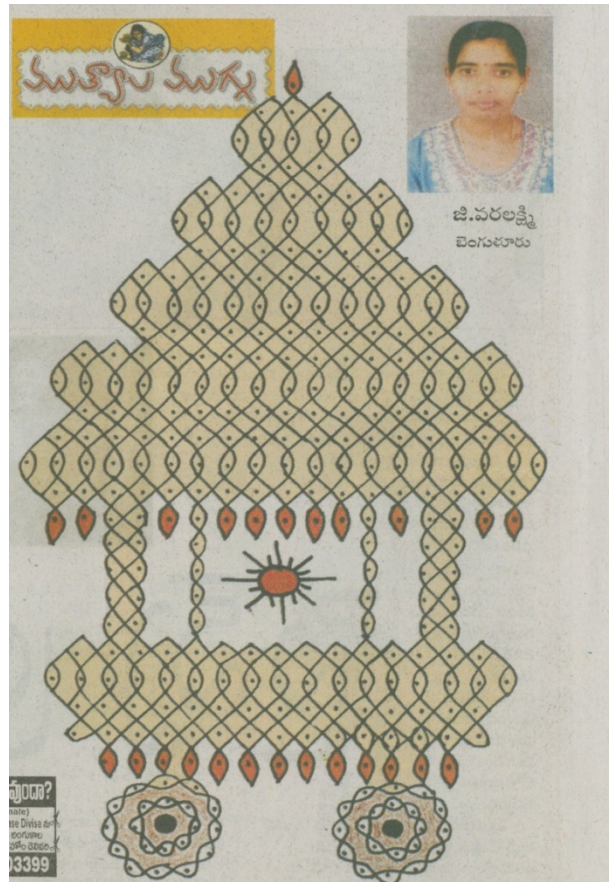


RANGAVALLI

2.2 Rangoli designs



2.3 New patterns of Rangoli-
color filled designs



2.4 Chariot design of Rangoli by G.Varalaxmi,
Bangalore,printed in a News magazine



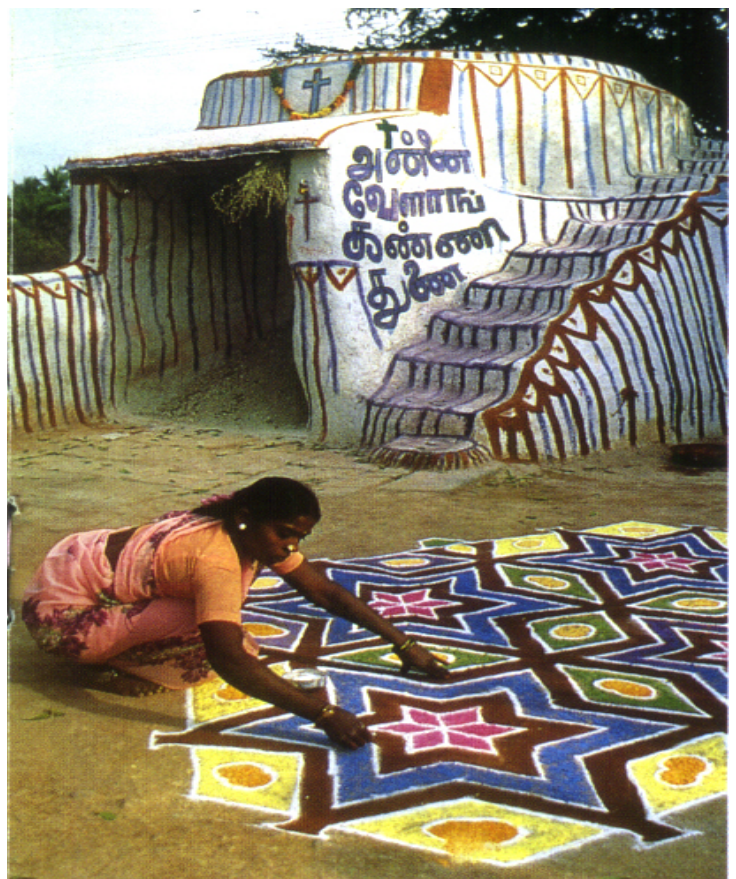
2.5 Smt.Syamala at Visakhapatnam on 14th Jan.2006



2.6 Sloka making Rangoli on the early hours of 14th Jan.2006 at Visakhapatnam



2.7 Alpana on the walls-Bengal



2.8 A Christian woman decorating Rangoli at the courtyard of their kiln-Tamilnadu



2.9 Nookaratnam making Rangoli below Christ's image at her courtyard, 13th Jan.2006,near Rajuhmundry



2.10 Rangoli filled with sawdust-Etikkoppaka,14th Jan.2006



2.11 Smt.Vishala making Rangoli in-front of her courtyard as a daily chore-Guntur



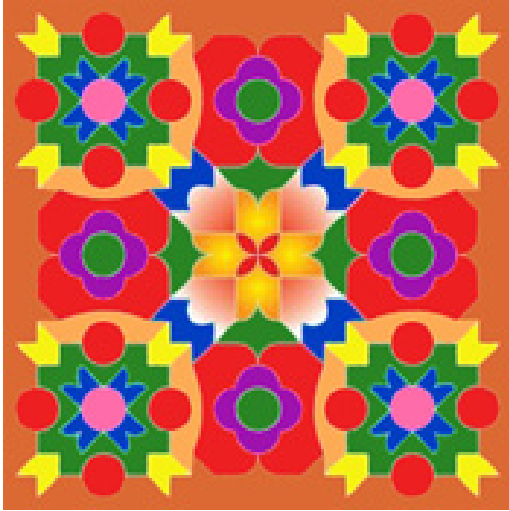
2.12 Rangoli of a chariot of Puri Jagannath by Kalyani Kunungo for Orissa Lalit Kala Academy competition



2.13 Chariot design on Sankranti day at Tenali



2.14 Aalugubilli village



2.15 New designs [web pages]



2.16 Colorful Rangoli designs-Karrivanipalem near Visakhapatnam



2.17 Defferent designs of Etikoppaka



2.18 Etikoppaka wood carving
artist's village



2.19 Etikoppaka wood carving toys village,14th Jan, 2006



2.20 Rangoli decoration at fire place-Karrivanipalem



2.21.Etikoppaka-Rangoli designs filled with saw dust powder



2.22.Etikoppaka-artists village



2.23. Rangoli with colors



2.24 Kadium village-13th Jan,2006



2.25.Kadium village near Rajuhmundry on Bhogi of Sankranti festival-13th Jan 2006



2.26.Rangoli designs with lime paste through out the courtyard



2.27.Rangoli in the courtyards of Karrivanipalem near Visakhapatnam



2.28.Visakhapatnam-14th Jan,2006



2.29.Visakhapatnam-14th Jan.2006



2.30.University quarters of Visakhapatnam 14th Jan.2006



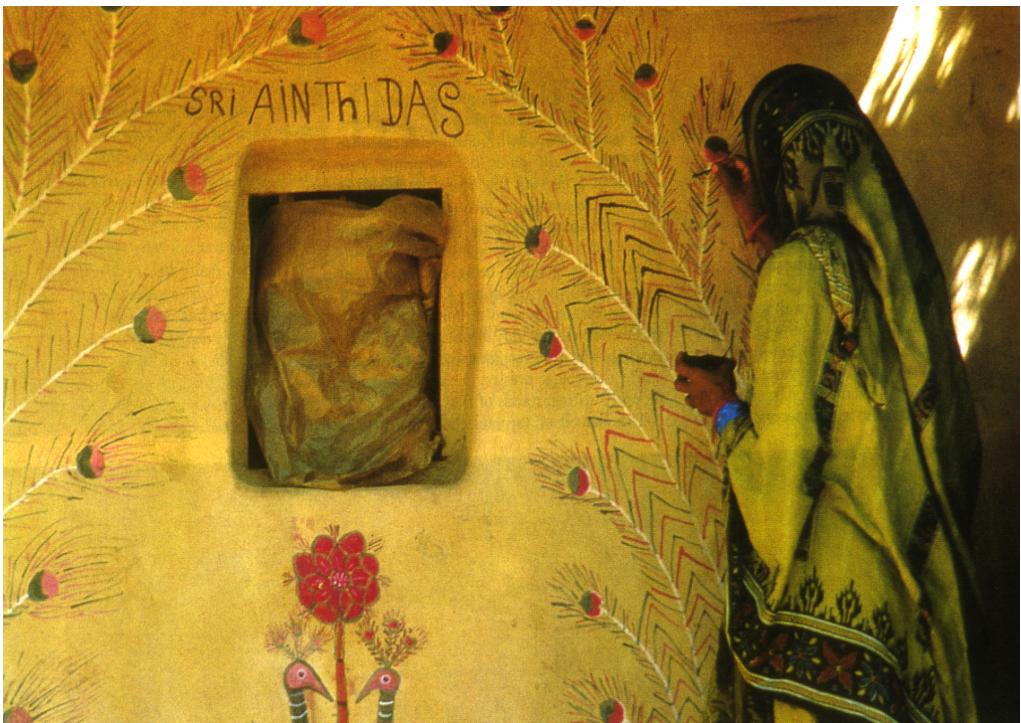
2.31.On Sankranti day-Karrivanipalem



2.32.Rangoli in Sankarmatham Hyderabad



2.33.Rangoli for new years day



2.34 Wall designs in Orissa



2.35. Chariot design for Sankranti made by Balamani



2.36 Lotus, Sankh, Chakra and cow feet with rice powder. Rangoli to install the gods at home for special worships



2.37. Crossed snake format similar to Rangoli designs on Badami caves



2.38. Architectural formats similar to Rangoli designs

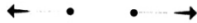


2.39.Swastik symbols in Badami temples

CHANDRALEKHA'S - GRID

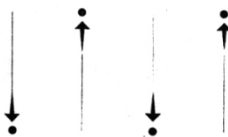
undercurrent of a wave that compels it to ebb. The horizontal line, therefore, is not so much a 'formation' as the caesura in a flux of movements, a breathing space, and also paradoxically, the moment of maximum energy.

As the dancers 'break' the horizontal line, either to form pairs or to stand in a vertical line or dart across the stage in a criss-cross of diagonals, the space is once again activated through new configurations. Some of these are shaped through the contrary energies of dancers, dancing to and against each other.



In this formation, for example, two dancers hold each other backstage within a tight orbit of energies, facing each other and almost blending into one dynamic unit, while the individual dancers on the sides throw out their energies from the back while dancing in opposite directions. It is through such contrary pulls of energy that the entire space is dynamised.

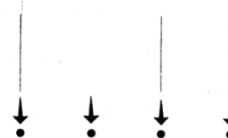
Yet another recurring pattern of energy in Chandra's choreography creates the sense of the entire space being pulled vertically in contrary directions.



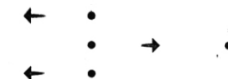
Or more startlingly, in her now classic way of 'cleaning the space' through horizontal slashes of energy across the stage:



All these particular movements 'return' to the *sum* with the four dancers neatly punctuating the horizontal line down-stage.



Then, in a sudden shift of energy, the horizontal line could be replaced by a vertical line made up of three dancers with one dancer 'out of orbit' as it were, creating her own sense of time and space. For example:

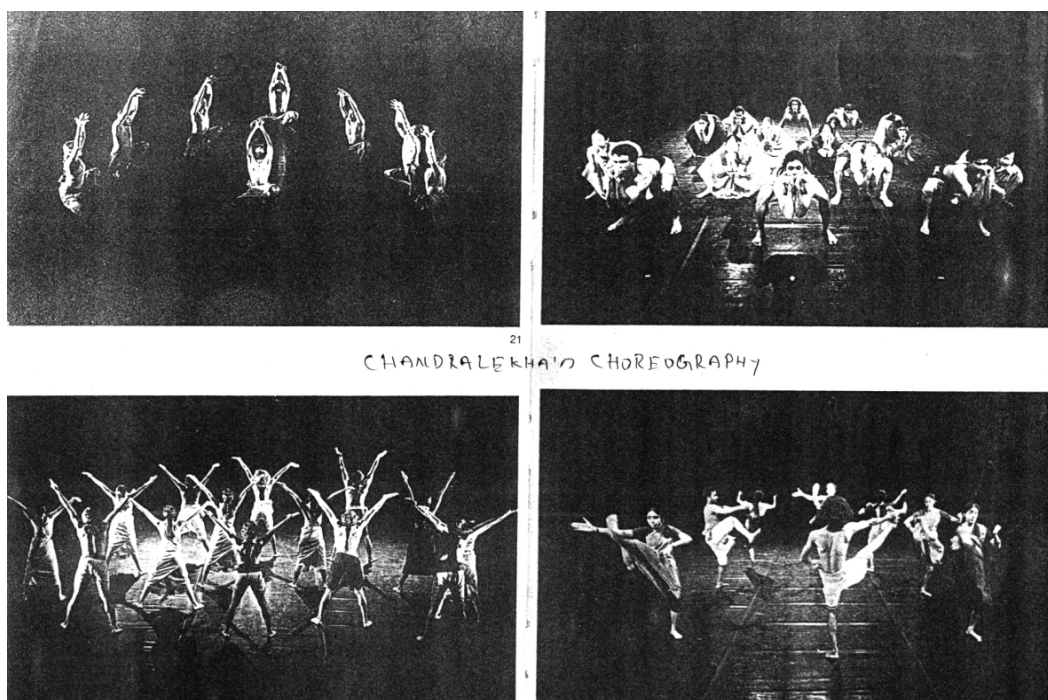


This juxtaposition of 3:1 is typical of Chandra's consciously crafted asymmetries. Moreover, this idea of never

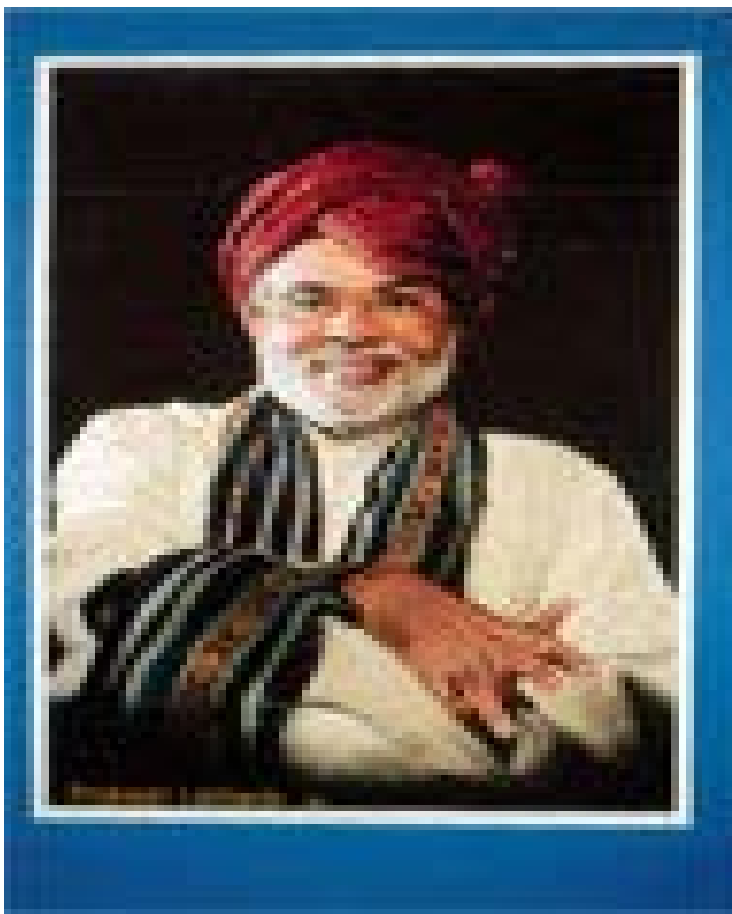
2.40.Chandralekha making grid similar to Rangoli format for designing her choreography



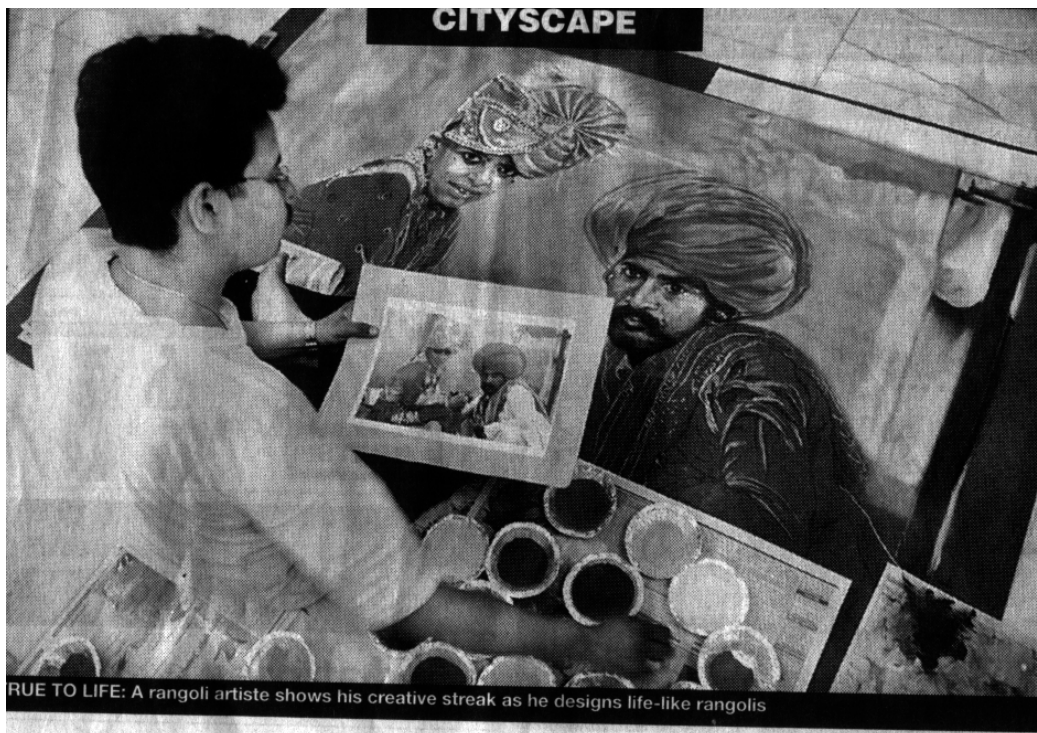
2.41.Chadralekha's choreogrpghy based on Rangoli grid



2.42.Chandralekha's3-D. choreography based on grid of Rangoli dots



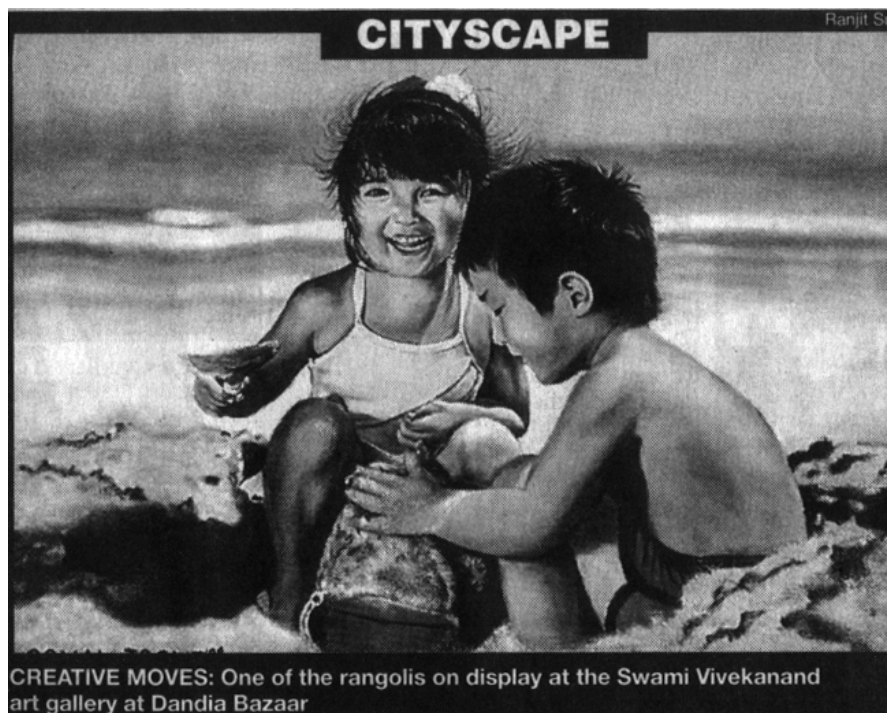
2.43.A portrait of Narendra Modi made of Rangoli powder by Swastik Kalaakar group



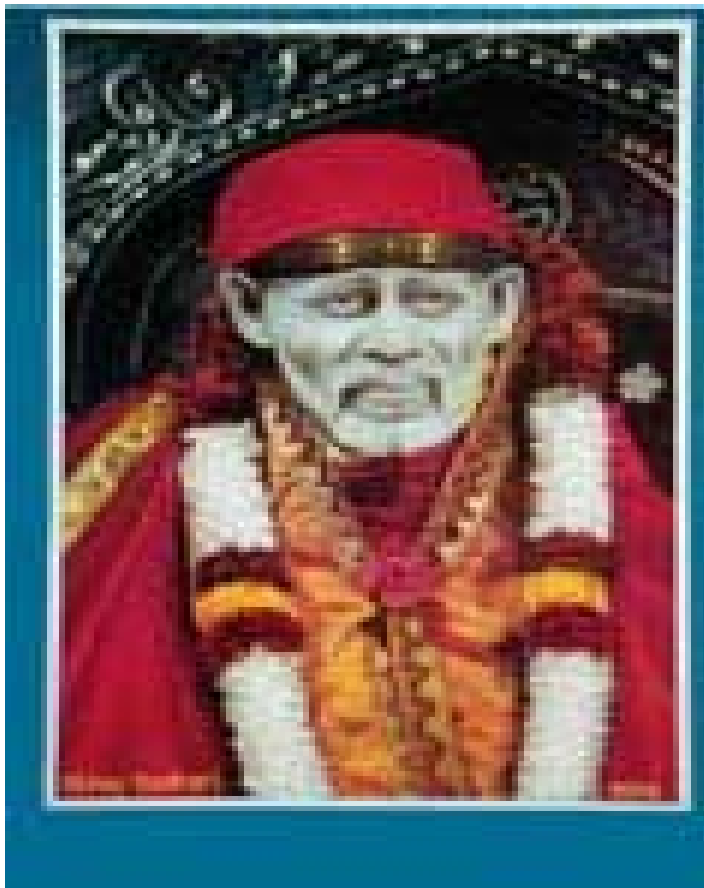
2.44.Making painting out of Rangoli powder



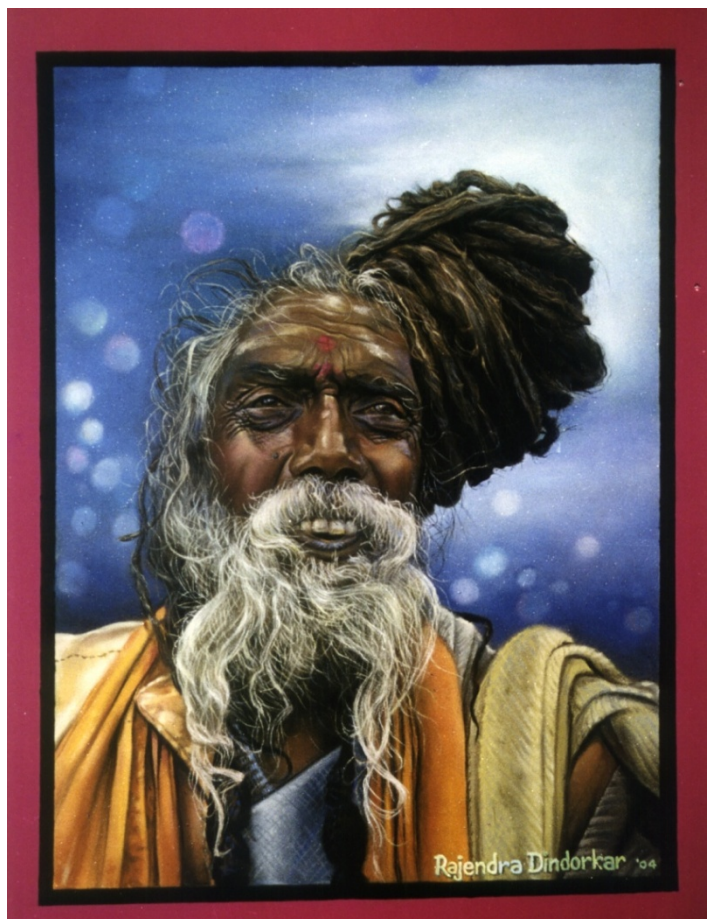
2.45,Manohar Khedkar sat in front of his Rangoli painting of food composition



2.46.News paper image about a Rangoli painting



2.47.Out of Rangoli powder by Swastik Kalaakar group



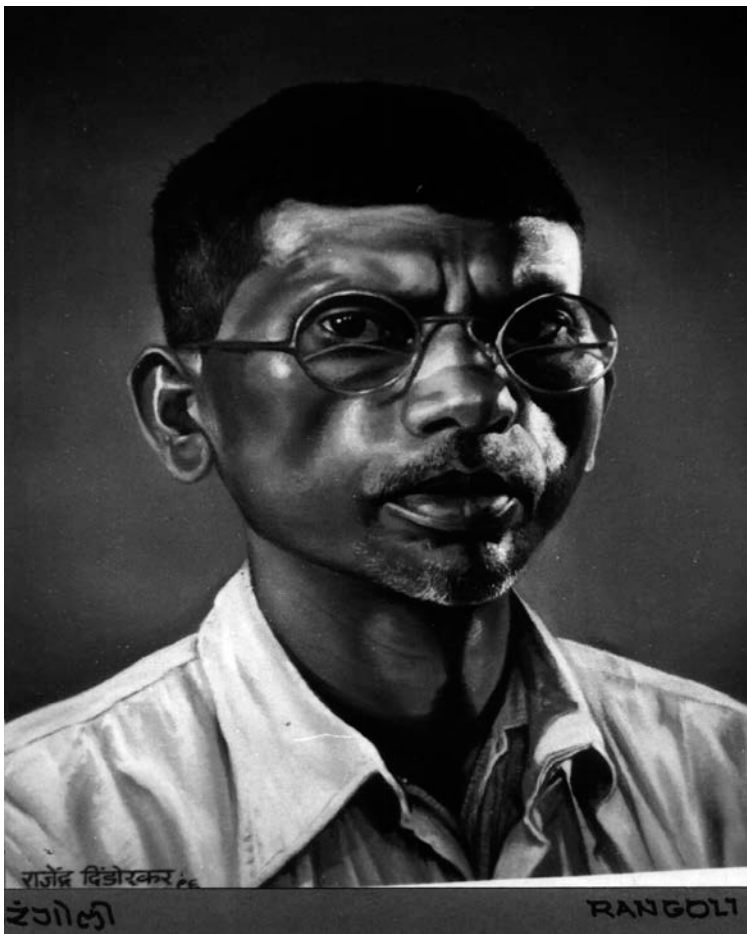
2.48.painting made of Rangoli powder



2.49. painting with Rangoli powder by Devdhar



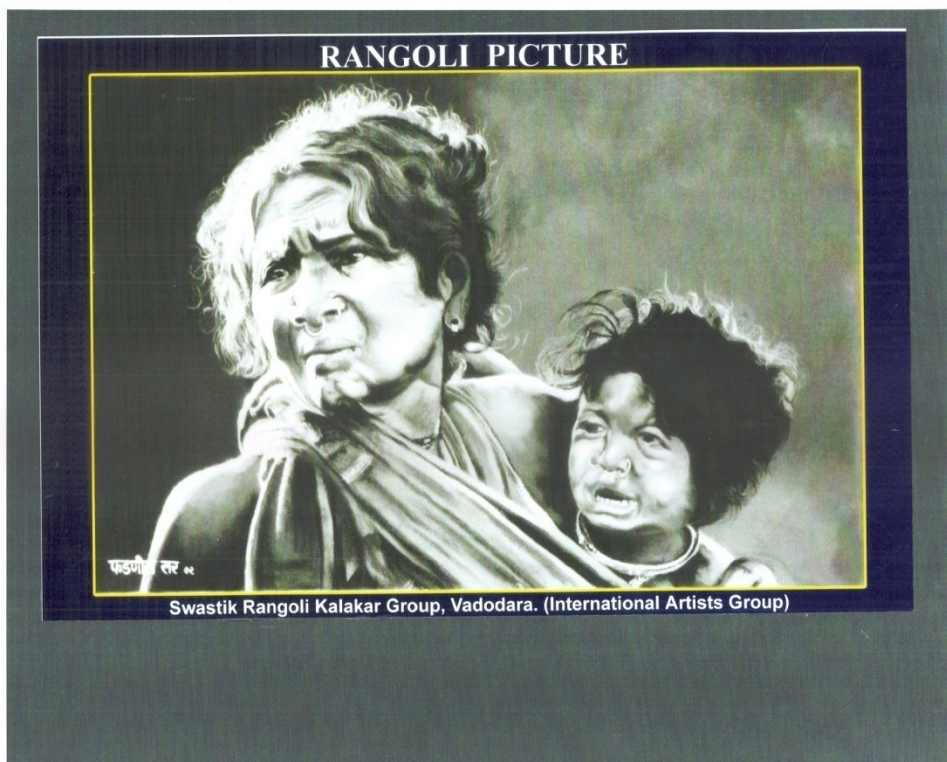
2.50. Painting with Rangoli powder by Sadashiv Fadnis



2.51. Rangoli painting by Rajendra Dindolkar



2.52. Rangoli painting by Raju Chauhan



2.53.Rangoli painting by Sadashiv Fadnis



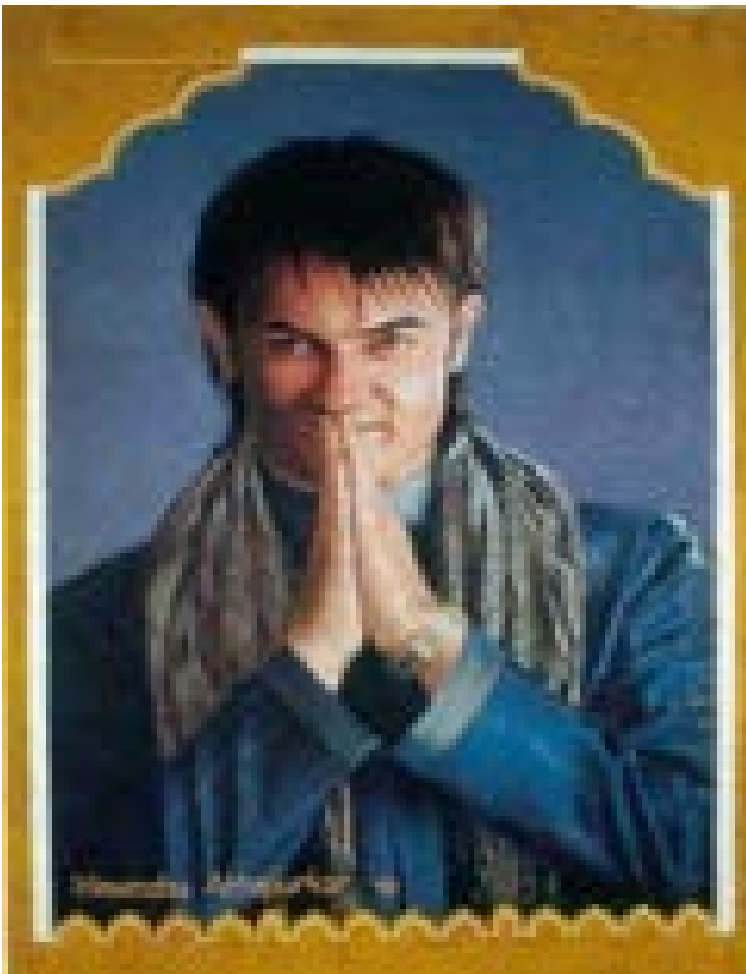
2.54.Rangoli painting by Sadashiv fadnis on working class people



2.55.Rangoli painting by Santanu and Sandeep



2.56.Rangoli painting from exhibition display



2.57.Rangoli painting on Amir khan, a film actor



2.58.Rangoli painting-Baji Rao-Mastane by Rajendra Dindolkar



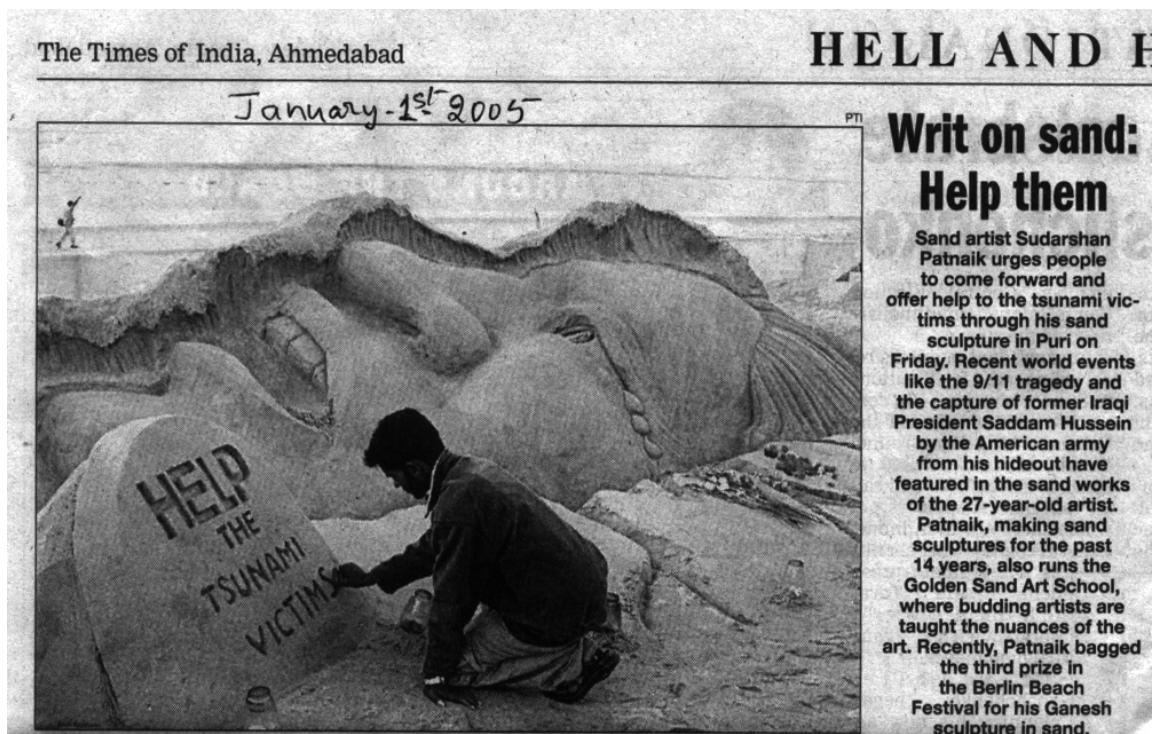
2.59.Real looks of carpet made out of Rangoli powder by Sadashiv Fadnis



2.60.Real-looking composition made of Rangoli powder



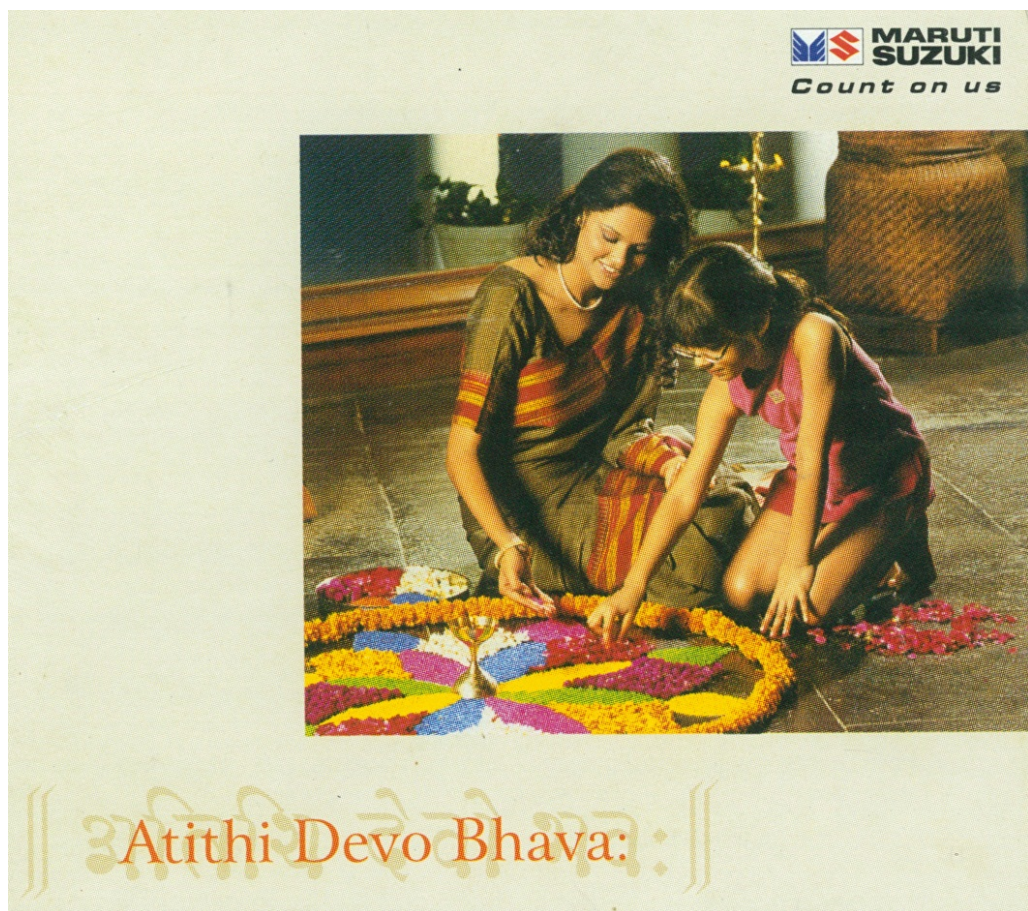
2.61. Still life painting out of Rangoli powder



2.62. Sudershan Patnaik-Sand image on Orissa beach



2.63. Wishing the readers with Rangoli on Deepavali festival by a news paper



2.64 Advertisement of a four wheeler vehicle with Rangoli design at the time of Deepavali

Body Decoration



3.1.Helping each other to decorate flowers in the hair do's



3.2.Bride's hairdo decorated with flower hood



3.3 Mehendi Design



3.4.Mehendi designs on bride's hands



3.5.Mehendi designs



3.6 Man of 'Marwadi' community apply Mehendi designs as a part of special celebrations



3.7.Tattoo designs on the hands found as part of present day decorations



3.8.Applying 'Parani to decorate the feet is part of special rituals



3.9.Decorating the feet by applying 'Parani'



3.10 Designing 'Parani' a mix of turmeric and lime



3.11.'Parani' application at the time of 'Savitri-Gauri' ritual



3.12.Traditional style of wearing saree at special rituals



3.13 Wearing waist girdle 'Vadhannam' and ornaments on special rituals



3.14.A saree and auspicious materials that women gift each other



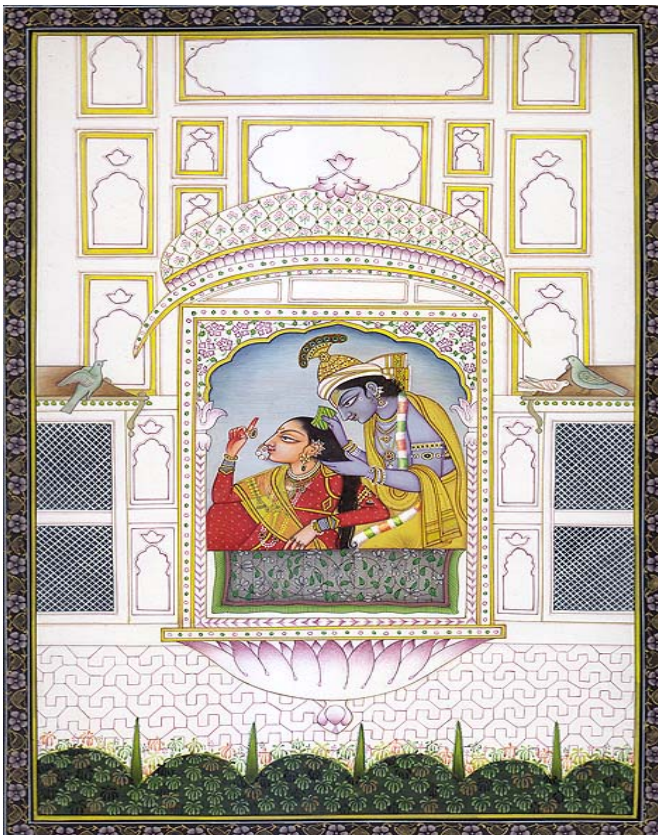
3.15.Mother is gifting saree, auspicious and valueble materials to her daughter.



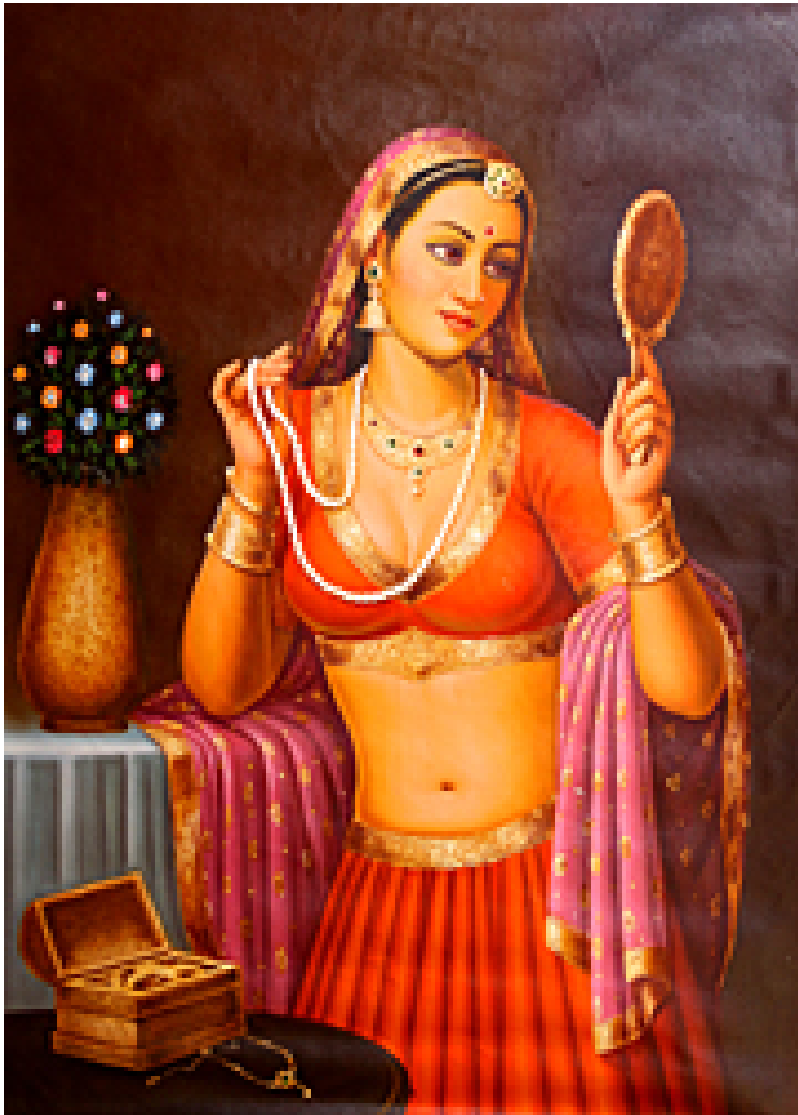
3.16.Smt Mangatai gifting sarees and fruits to other women



3.17.Princess's photograph on a book cover

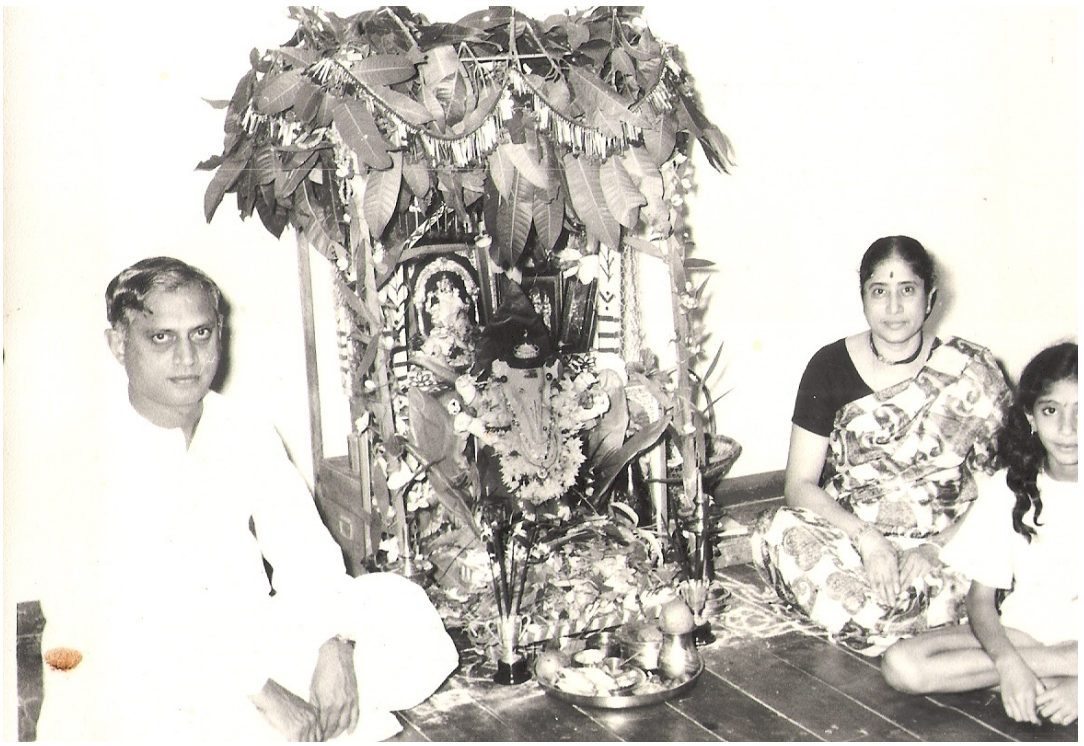


3.19.Krishna combing Radha's hair



3.20.Nayika dressing herself

Prodigal Aesthetics



4.1.Smt Janaki made Ganesha idol out of vegetables and bamboo



4.2.Smt.Janaki on a music concert



4.3.Smt.Janaki made toys out of waste bottles



4.4.Smt.Janaki made toys out of waste materials



4.5. More toys of Smt. Janaki



4.6. Smt. Janaki made toys out of dried vegetables



4.7.A frame stiched by smt.Janaki



4.8.Smt.Janaki on club activities



4.9.Fancy dress programme at Digboy oil mills-Assam. Participated by Smt. Janaki's family



4.10.Smt. B.Janaki along with her husband on a fancy dress programme of a social club activity



4.11.Skit play. Smt Janaki [with goggles]



4.12.Skit play. Smt. Janaki in a man's costume



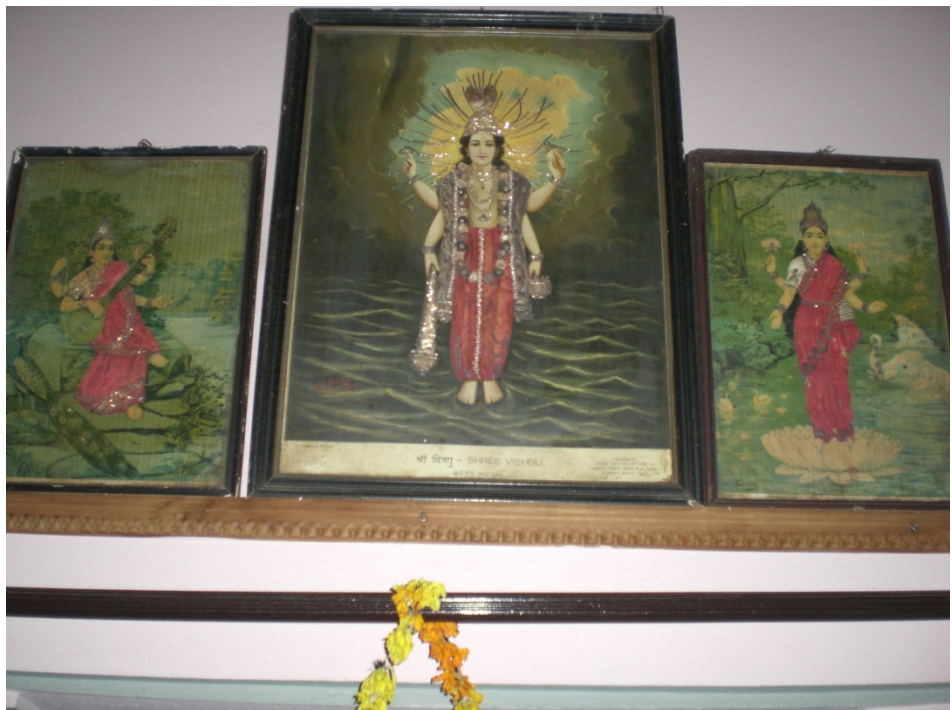
4.13.Smt. Janaki displaying her craft works at club activities



4.14.Smt. B.Janaki making a flower plaited hair for her daughter at her wedding



4.15. Flower stitching on a plaited hair-a pass time activity of summer vacation



4.16. Oleographs are stitched with silk costumes and decorated with ornaments in 1920's by J. Sundaramma



4.17.J.Sundaramma made Tulasi pot with cement in 1930's



4.18.Goddess Tulasi decorated for worship



4.19.Smt. Vimala made goddess Durga for Navaratri worship



4.20.Smt. k.Rama arranged Ramayanam scenes as Sankranti Koluvu with soft toys she made



4.21.Smt. Kalluri Rama made soft toys of Epic Ramayanam to arrange Sankranti Kolu



4.22.Ramayanam of soft toys by Smt.K.Rama



4.23.Smt. Rama decorating a swing for Savitri-Gauri worship along with Sankranti Kolu



4.24.Ravana's court, lord Hanuman sitting on his tail.



4.25.Smt.j.Hymavathi preparing home made medicines out of her kitchen



4.26.An amatuer artist Laxmi Suhasini-herbal collage work



4.27.Smt. Laxmi Suhasini's hebal collage



4.28.Smt. Laxmi Suhasini's herbal collage



4.29.Arranging Koluvu is an aesthetic activity



4.30.Village scene along with Sankranti Koluvu by Ms.Balamani



4.31.Jagannath Rathayatra as one of Sankranti Koluva scenery by Balamani



4.32.Seeta Rama Vanavasam- another year Sankranti koluva scenery by Balamani



4.33.Lav and Kush holding the Aswamedh horse of lord Rama- another year scene of Sankranti kolu by Balamani



4.34.Lord Ganesha with Bengal gram flour, turmeric, tooth picks, etc. by Balamani



4.35.Embroidery stitching is a great pass time activity

Spiritual Pleasures



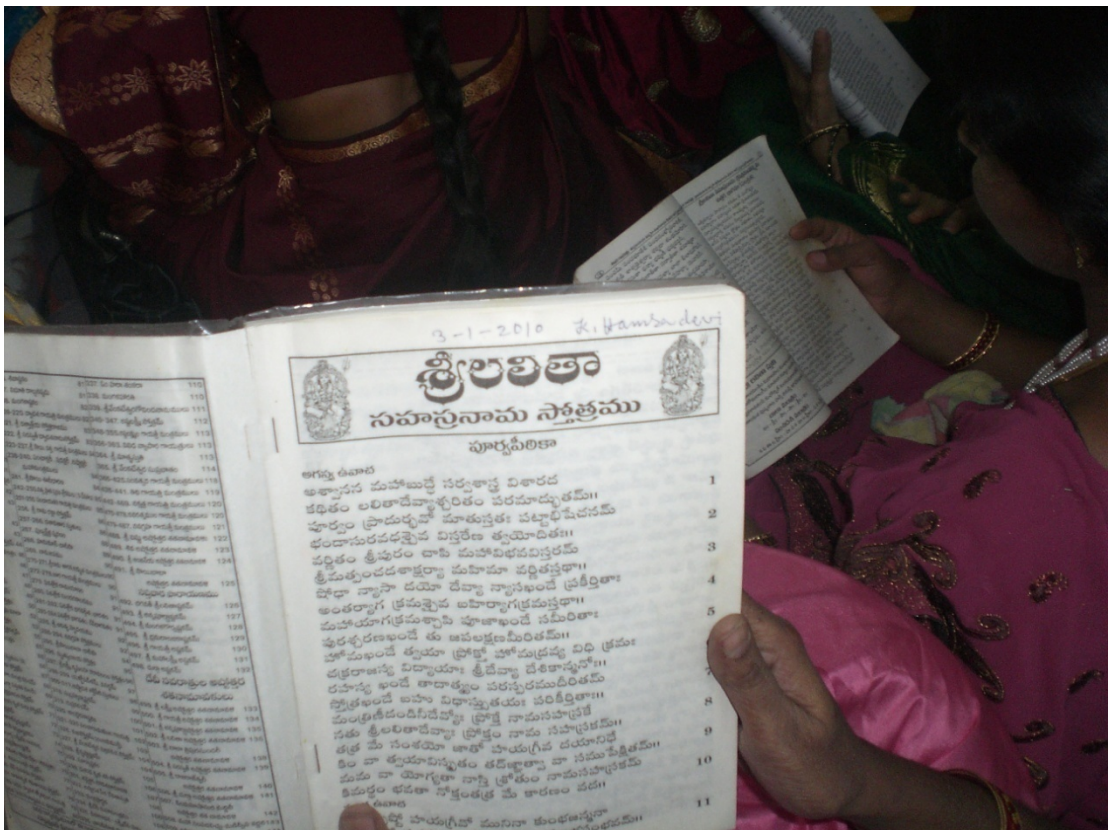
5.1.Saundaryalahari worshipping goddess Balatripurasundari



5.2.Arranging for recitation of Saundaryalahari



5.3. Reciting Sivanandalahari and Saundaryalahari



5.4. Reciting Lalitasahasranamam



5.5.Reciting at Smt.Laxmi's house



5.6.Applying Parani as a part of Saundaryalahari recitation worship



5.7.worshipping with white lotui flowers



5.8.worshipping with various flowers



5.9. Devotee with folded hands



5.10.Smt.Visalaxi performing the ritual of Lakshavattula nomu



5.11 Godanam by Visalaxi at the time of Lakshavattula nomu



5.12.Cow decorated for gifting



5.13. Back side cover of Streelavratakathalu



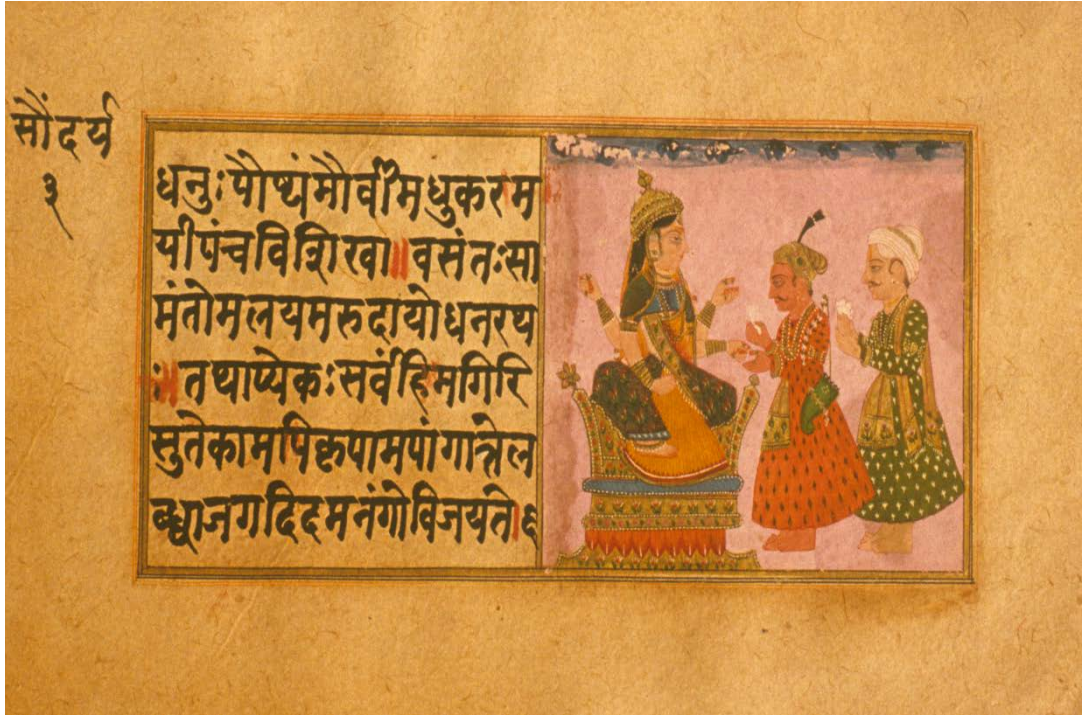
5.14. Saundaryalahari-illustrated manuscript



5.15. Saundaryalahari-illustrated manuscript



5.16. Saundaryalahari -illustrated manuscript

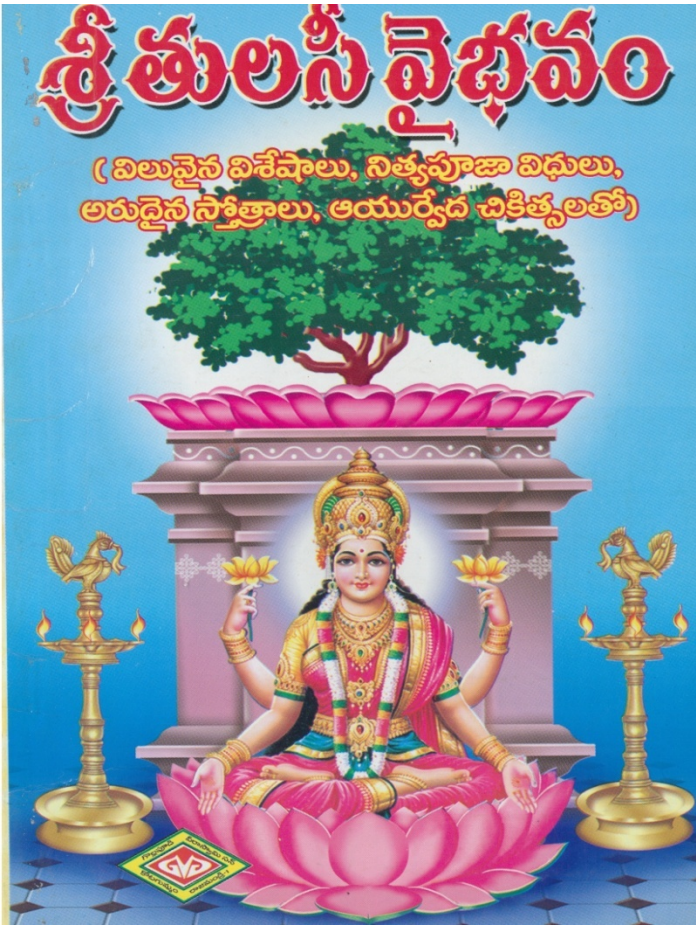


5.17. Saundaryalahari-illustrated manuscript



5.18. Saundaryalahari-illustrated manuscript

Socio – Religious Politics



6.1 A booklet of procedure to worship goddess Tulasi



6.2 Daily worship of Tulasi plant



6.3 'Ksheerabdi Dvadasi' marrying Tulasi with lord Krishna on 12th day after Diwali



6.4 Offering 33 full moon worship-through Tulasi



6.5.Applying turmeric



6.6 Pan cakes and the rice flour and jaggery dough for the special lights



6.7 Madhavi offering lights on pan cakes to Mridila Ranade



6.8 Smt.Mridula carrying lights to her home



6.9. 'Batukamma' festival at the time of Navaratri in Telangana



6.10. Palanquin to carry the gods' idols on Sankranti day



6.11 Preparing idols for a procession in the palanquin



6.12 Dhanurmasam worships at the temple



6.13 Reaching river bank early morning to fetch Savitri-Gauri worship idols in Tenali region



6.14 Travelling along with trumpets



6.15 Potter selling unbaked clay idols



6.16 Selecting idols



6.17.Carrying the idols with care



6.18.Swing at the centre hall kept ready to place the clay idols 135



6.19 Clay idols are placed on the swing



6.20 Smt. Subbalaxmi lighting the lamp to initiate the worship, her son a priest to preside



6.21 Savitri, Gauri, Panchagn Brahmin, Ganapati



6.22.Placing the idols on a swing



6.23 Invoking the goddess



6.24 Many women together worship Savitri-Gauri at one place



6.25.Nine lotui Rangoli to symbolize nine days and nine years of worshipping Savitri-Gauri



6.26.offering a seat to the goddess



6.27. Showing a mirror to the goddess and co-worshippers as a process of worship



6.28. Showing a mirror to the goddess



6.29 Worshipping with various flowers



6.30 Evening worship



6.31.Worshipping the feet of Suhagan



6.32.Nine Suhagan women are offered auspicious objects at Savitri-Gauri worship



6.33.Bidding goodnight to the goddess at evening worship



6.34.Smt.Rama and her husband lighting a lamp to initiate the worship-at Tenali



6.35 Smt.K.Rama's clay idols on a swing



6.36.Clay idols at Smt.Rama's place



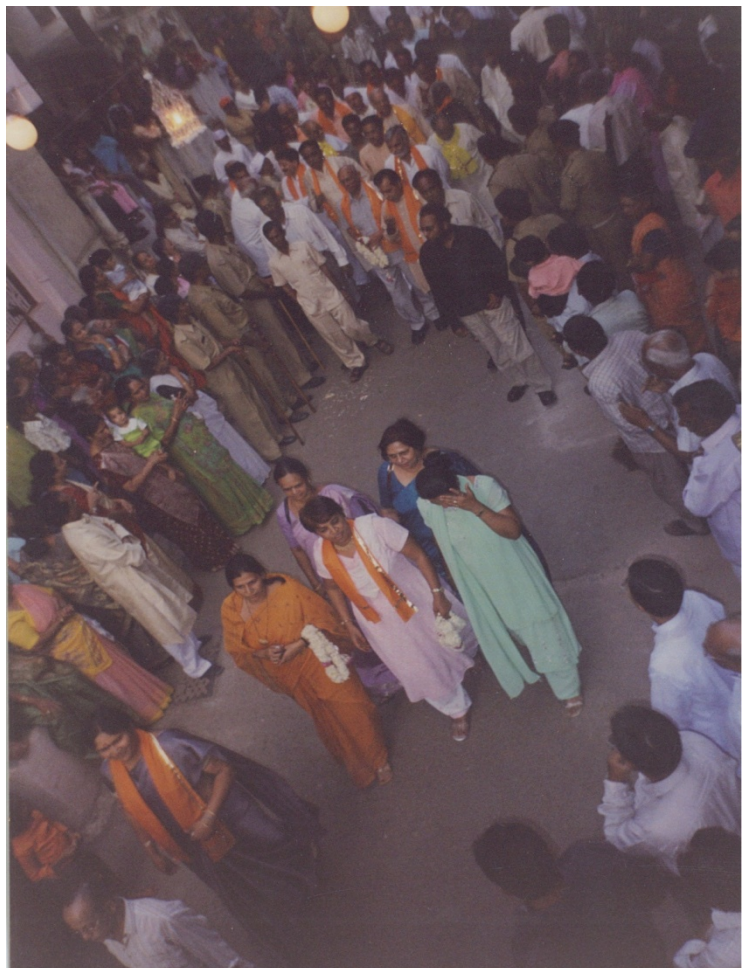
6.37.Smt Rama at her worship



6.38.Worship at Smt.K.Rama's place



6.39. Photographs of Smriti Irani are popularly found who is named Tulasi



6.40. B.J.P. political leaders and illustrious personalities on Tulsi worship day in Baroda



6.41. Bonalu carried by Jayasudha-
film star of yeaster years



6.42. Bonalu by then mayor Banda Karteeka Reddy



6.43. Bonalu by K.Kavitha,
Telangana Jagriti president



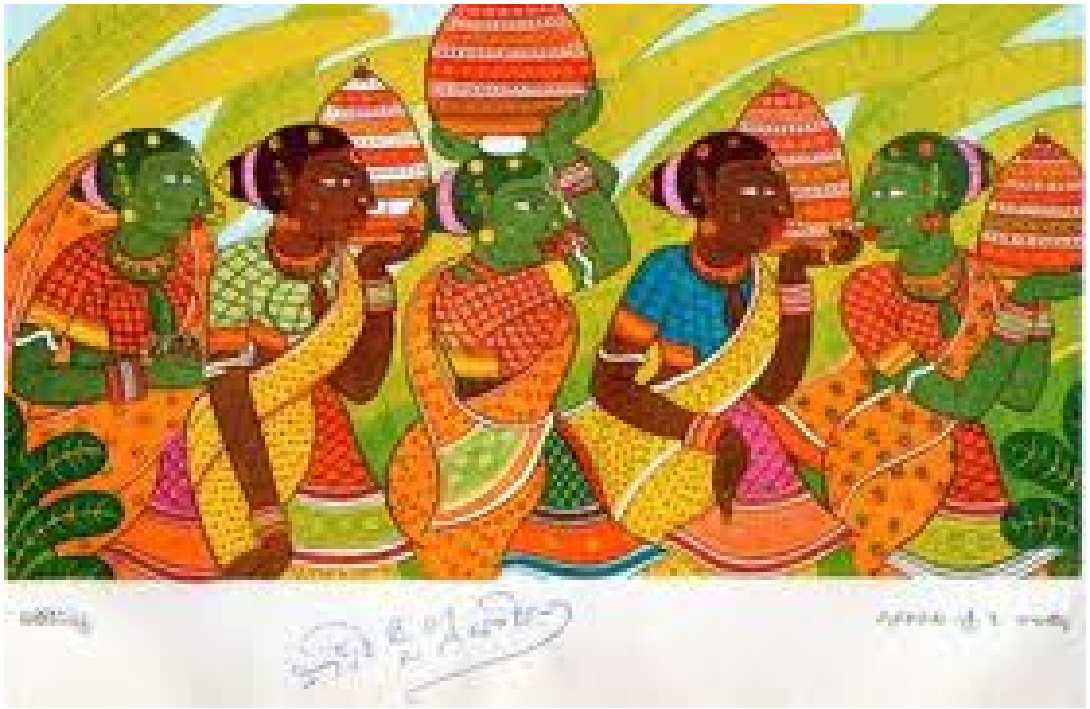
6.44. Bonalu by a devotee on ecstasy



6.45.Potharajulu-known as brothers of goddess



6.46.Batakamma painting by K.Rajaiah



6.47.K.Rajaih painted Batukamma



6.48.Batukamma image



6.49.Gobbemma in huge Rangoli



6.50.Gobbemma



6.51..Siva Parvati playing Chaupar -Basholi 17th c

Ishtha Devata Worships



7.1.Woman devotee sweeping at Sivam-Satyasai temple in Hyderabad



7.2.Satyasai-Naaridal palanquin procession



7.3.Satyasai Naaridal, gifting sewing machines to women for self employment



7.4.Satyasai Naaridal gifting wet grinders and sewing machines for self employment



7.5.Ishtadevata worship-home shrine of a Satyasai devotee



7.6.Ishtadevata worship at house warming ceremony



7.7.Ishtadevata worship after entering new work premise



7.8.Goddess installed at tree trunk near vegetable market-Amaravati



7.9.Neem tree applied turmeric by a seive vendor



7.10.Lord Veerabhadreswara [worshipped on Gurunadhudi Pongallu]
[from web page]



7.11.Harikatha by a woman narrator.



KEEPING MEMORIES ALIVE Harikatha artiste Rao Kamala Kumari.

7.12 Rao Kamala Kumari continuing the legacy of her father Manda Suryanarayana Sastry's Harikatha narration along with music and dance-5th Oct.2012.
The Hindu-news