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RELIGIOUS LIFE AND CULTURAL LIFE

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6.1 Introduction:

Fear and desires attract human beings towards religion and magic. When a house of a tribesman got burnt or his household may have been swept away in floods or his relatives may have been killed in a terrible earthquake, he may have tried to find solution to these problems in nature. But, when he may not have found a solution, he may have started worshipping the moon, fire, wind, water, the earth, etc. believing them to be divine elements. This is how religion may have originated.

It could be said that religion is the way of worshipping a divine element in order to get a desired goal but when this divine element is controlled to get a desired work done, it could be called magic.

The *Karadiya* Rajput community has a deep faith in divine elements. It believes in many gods and goddesses, which safeguard their village, agriculture and animals (cattle). They present offerings to certain gods and goddesses in order to save themselves from their anger and to please them. At the same time, they may have also adopted Hinduism. They have faith in the Hindu gods and goddesses and celebrate the Hindu festivals. Connected to the above religion and magic, their festivals and dancing-singing could also be included in their non-physical culture which they call religion. In this religion, they give place to their gods and goddesses in the presence of which their fairs are held. There are certain persons who perform worshipping, rituals and offering and who act as intermediaries between them and their non-physical elements.

Religion holds an important place in the social structure of the Rajput community. Religion is observed in social events and institutes like family, marriage, caste, economic structure, community life, stratification, cultural activities, art, style of habitation and its form and so on besides mutual relationships, their behavior and tendencies. Any obstruction in the way of their activities of life creates fears which arouse faith in the existence of an occult divine element. Not only that but they also develop rites and rituals in order to please these powers by worshipping them as well as to facilitate their lives.

As compared to other castes and communities, the impact of religion on the *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, is found to be very deep due to their

backwardness in education. Their social life is also found influenced by religion; sometimes they appear to be living under fear in the name of religion. Religion indicates relation between man and the divine element (powers). They believe that these invisible superpowers which are beyond the comprehension of human beings do exist. According to man's beliefs, faith is an important aspect of religion. The *Karadiya* Rajput people believe in many gods and goddesses and worship them on different occasions.

Every human being manifests his own culture in order to build up different qualities, obligations and values by developing his unique and characteristic ideology and creating a new group in the name of religion like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and so on divided into branches. Of all these, India has an ancient tradition of religion. So, it is religion only that maintains good extensive traditions in the human society.

Scholars believe that man must be aware about religion but religion has also been subject to criticism. Religion is not formed by human mind. According to Pandurang Athavale, "it is believed that religion is formed and developed from human mind but it is not proper (to think so). Religion can never be subject to any criticism." ⁽¹⁾ Lord Krishna also says that religion cannot be taken to task but it does not mean that Hindus should think of religion as a matter of blind faith. Religion, all the same, is religion only. It is required as a part of culture. Therefore, in this chapter an effort has been made to study different aspects of religious and cultural life of the *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* region.

6.2 Religion: its meaning and importance:

6.2.1 Meaning of religion:

Religion means that concept which contains thoughts of only benevolent matters. A better explanation is: 'Yato abhyuyamaha Ni shreyasaha siddhi sa dharmaha' which means that religion is that through which the worldly and the otherworldly good are achieved. Second explanation: 'Na satyat paro dharmaha' which means truth is religion or truth is a part of religion. Yet another explanation: 'Aa nrushasya paro dharmaha' which means compassion is the root of religion. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "Dhru dharayati iti dharmaha, meaning that the word 'religion' has

come down from the stem 'dhru'." (2) As explained in the Mahabharata, religion is like a rule or a vow that controls, holds or maintains the whole society.

According to Arthur, "religion is a faith in a super human or divine and super-social power which is based on a belief in fear, faith, devotion and sacredness, and, which is expressed in a prayer or worshipping." (3)

According to Edward Taylor, "religion is faith in a spiritual power." (4)

As Sir James Frazer says, "man's realization of his best abilities or his worshipping about which it is believed that it guides nature and human life and controls them." (5)

According to Mahatma Gandhi, "religion is self-realization, self-knowledge." (6)

Respected Jagjeevan Bapu says that 'religion means truth, love and compassion'.

According to Dr. Virendranathsinh, "religion for Hindus is an experience or a mental tendency which means power, faith, consciousness and so on." (7) Besides these definitions, following are the general features of religion based on the conclusions drawn by scholars:

- (1) Religion keeps faith in a divine power;
- (2) Life and matters connected with religion are believed to be sacred;
- (3) Religion is beyond science;
- (4) Religion is never tested;
- (5) Religion is beyond observation;
- (6) Religion gives inspiration for human welfare;
- (7) The basis of religion is faith not logic;
- (8) Religion gives inspiration for help, good (holy) deeds and
- (9) It is believed that *Moksha* (salvation) is achieved through religion.

6.2.2 Importance of Religion:

In the Hindu social system, religion has been described as an important matter. Durkhim has defined religion as a symbol of social consciousness which manifest social representation. Anthropologists Redcliffe Brown and Melinovski identify religion in its power to prompt action. Different religious scholars and sociologists share the same opinion that religion is an important factor for unity of the entire humanity.

According to some scholars like Durkhim, religion is a social truth and it is a symbol of social consciousness. Durkhim's opinion is applicable to all human races. There is a specific worldly tradition in human life from birth to death in Hinduism. Moreover, religion has been proved as an important factor prompting action in matters a education, marriage, family, caste, economic activity from childhood to the old age in the Hindu social system. For example, religion affects concepts like caste system, superstitions, faith, various Samskara (rituals of culture) from birth to death, concepts about reincarnation and *Nirvana* or *Moksha*(salvation), various incarnations of gods and goddesses and myths regarding them, concepts like protection to cows and Brahmins, religious rituals, festivals and celebrations, eradication of the evil, rites, astrology, different ways of worship, meditation, rites for naming and so on. These same concepts have encouraged secular thoughts after the Independence of India. Thus, mutual inter-dependence of religions in social, cultural and political matters is important.

The Rajput community is known as the *Kshatriya*. They have a traditional concept of religion and its protection itself is their *Kshatradharma* (prime duty). *Kshatradharma* (duty of the *Kshatriya*) includes acts like “protection of people, giving donations, perform *yajna* (altar worship) abstaining from indulgence of any kind and so on.” ⁽⁸⁾

Table: 103

1.7 Table showing the details of the Religion of the respondents:

Sr. No.	Religion	Number	%
1.	Hindu	200	100
	Total	200	100

The present study is about the Hindu *Karadiya* Rajput caste. They belong to the Hinduism and, so, all the 200 (100.0%) respondents are Hindu.

Table: 104

5.8 Table showing details of the religious sect in which they believe and which they have joined:

Sr. No.	Religious sect in which they believe and which they have joined	Number	%
1.	<i>Shaiv</i>	91	45.5
2.	<i>Swaminarayan</i>	42	21.0
3.	<i>Swaddhyay Parivaar</i>	23	11.5
4.	<i>Gayatri Parivaar</i>	17	8.5
5.	Others	26	13.0
6.	No information	01	0.5
	Total	200	100

There are three major sects in Hinduism: *Shaiv*, *Shakta* (sect in which Goddess *Shakti* is worshipped) and *Vaishnava*. In the information obtained from the respondents, it is found that 91 (45.5%) respondents believe in *Shaiv* sect and worship Lord Shiva, 42 (21.0%) respondents believe in *Swaminarayan* sect and worship Lord *Swaminarayan*, 23 (11.5%) respondents believe in *Swaddhyay Parivar*, 17 (8.5%) respondents believe in *Gayatri Parivar* and 26 (13.0%) respondents believe in Lord Ram and worship family gods and goddesses and are associated with including a sect called *Sitarambapa*.

The *Kshatriyas* in Gujarat are associated in a large number with *Shakta* sect and worship *Mataji* (goddess *Shakti*). There is an unwritten law to greet a *Kshatriya* with the words '*Jay Mataji*' when they meet one another although it is not clear from the information that there is a worship of the goddess. It is found from table that the *Kshatriya* worship Lord Shiva along with *Shakti*. At the same time, some of them are also associated with *Vaishnav* sect and worship *Lalji-Krishna*, *Narnarayan*, *Swaminarayan* in addition with *Swadhyay Parivar*. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 105

5.10 Table showing details of the activities done by the respondents in the religious sects:

Sr. No.	Activities of Sects	Number	%
1.	Satsang (Religious Discussions)	22	11.0

2.	Worship	02	1.0
3.	Donation	29	14.5
4.	Prayers/ <i>Dev-Darshan</i>	19	9.5
5.	Visit temples	01	0.5
6.	<i>Prabhat feri/Bhakti feri</i> (Morning processions/Visits to families)	08	4.0
7.	Bhajan-Kirtan (Public Programs of Prayers)	38	19.0
8.	Service, participation in patosav (religious programs)	37	18.5
9.	Participate in <i>Swaddhyay</i> centres to listen to lectures	01	0.5
10.	To watch Video cassettes of Shri Pandurang Shashtri	03	1.5
11.	To run a youth centre	12	6.0
12.	To inspire people towards religion	06	3.0
13.	Reconstructive activities for Rural development,etc.	13	6.5
14.	To organize programs for Cleanliness	01	0.5
15.	No activities	07	3.5
16.	No information	01	0.5
	Total	200	100

As seen in the previous table, all respondents believe in Hinduism and belong to Hinduism. Respondents believe in various religious sects and are associated with them. They express their religiosity in different activities. 38 (19.0%) respondents get involved in *Bhajan-Kirtan* (public musical performances of mass prayers), 37 (18.5%) respondents get involved as volunteers in religious programs like *Patotsava*, 29 (14.5%) respondents get involved in donations, 22 (11.0%) respondents get involved in *Satsang* (religious discussions), 19 (9.5) respondents get involved in Prayers, visits to temples, 13 (6.5%) respondents get involved in activities of development of villages, educational activities and so on, 12 (6.0%) respondents get involved in running a youth centre, reading religious books, organize religious gatherings and so on, 08 (4.0%) respondents get involved in morning rallies, *bhakti feri* (religious rallies), 06 (3.0%) respondents get involved in activities for inspiring people in

devotion, 03 (1.5%) respondents get involved in screening video cassettes of lectures by Shri Pandurang Shashtri (a great religious leader), 02 (1.0%) respondents get involved in worshipping, 01 (0.5%) respondents regularly visit temples, 01 (0.5%) respondents visit centres of *Swaddhyay Parivar* and listen to lectures and 01 (0.5%) respondents get involved in public activities of cleaning streets while 07 (3.5%) respondents do not get involved in any of these activities. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

6.3 Tendency to worship gods and goddesses:

The Rajput people of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area have family names like *Parmar, Solanki, Chauhan, Rathod, Dod, Jadav, Chavda, Dodiya, Dabhi, Makwana, Rahevar, Vala, Dayma, Daya, Mori, Masani, Mandora, Padhiyar, Padheriya, Gohil (Gohel)* and many other. All of them show tendency to worship many gods and goddesses and they worship them with deep faith in them. Mostly, all Rajput people have their own separate gods and goddesses. Thus, they believe in many gods and goddesses.

The Rajput people have deep faith in many gods and goddesses and most of the Rajput families with their family branches having different family names have their personal gods and goddesses. They include gods like Lord *Shri Krishna*, Lord *Shri Ramchandra*, Lord *Shivs* or *Shankar (Mahadev)*, *Shri Suryanarayandev*, *Baliyadev*, *Bhathiji Maharaj*, *Ramdevpeer*, *Hanumanji*, *Mandavrayji*, *Ekaldev*, *Khetrupal Maharaj (Dada)* and goddesses like *Kalkamata*, *Chamundamata*, *Bootbhavanimata*, *Veraimata*, *Masanimata*, *Meladimata*, *Zampadimata*, *Ashapurimata*, *Ambamata*, *Joganimata*, *Hadikaimata* and *Sheetalamata* among many others. These gods and goddesses are different forms of God and they act according to His will. The Rajput people build big and small temples and install idols of these gods and goddesses with a ritual. There are separate worshippers called *Bhuva* (exorcists who act as intermediaries between gods and this world) for each god. In the past, people took help of these *Bhuva* worshippers in the events like illness but today people prefer to go to a doctor for medical advice. However, the earlier practice of going to the *Bhuva* worshippers when there is some illness in the family is still seen in some old-fashioned families. Even today, tendency to call a *Bhuva* for prediction with the help of a method called 'to count grains' is found. In this method, a few grains of wheat are flung randomly on a piece of cloth after reciting *mantra* (holy words) and if the number of the wheat grain is the same as demanded, the *Bhuva's* prediction is

believed to be true. In this way the *Bhuva* pleases a god and the illness of a person is cured or a work is completed successfully. For this a god or goddess is offered *naivedhya* (an offering in the form of food, a cock or a bottle of liquor, etc.). If a person forgets to offer this *naivedhya*, that particular god is angry with the person who has to face a calamity in the family. This tendency is still found even today. The purpose of worshipping gods and goddesses by offering *naivedhya* is to get help from the god or goddess who eradicates trouble or illness and saves the family from future troubles. A *Bhuvais* an intermediary between gods and human beings. The Rajput people believe that their gods and goddesses have unlimited powers.

Table: 106

5.4 Table showing the details of sacrifice offered to gods and goddesses:

Sr. No.	Type of Offering	Number	%
1.	Liquor	18	9.0
2.	<i>Prasad</i> (Sweets)	22	11.5
3.	<i>Naivedya</i> (Offering of sweets, coconut, etc.	42	21.0
4.	<i>Chavanu</i> (snacks) and Liquor	09	4.5
5.	Coconuts	12	6.0
6.	Coconut/ <i>Penda</i> (sweets)	19	9.5
7.	Coconut/ <i>Homhavan</i> (worship by an altar)	21	10.5
8.	Sacrifice of animals	07	3.5
9.	No offering	38	19.0
10.	No information	12	6.0
	Total	200	100

In response to the question about the sacrifices or *Prasad* in order to please gods and goddesses, 07 (3.5%) respondents have accepted offering sacrifice of an animal (a goat or a cock, etc.), 18 (9.0%) respondents have mentioned alcohol and 09 (4.5%) respondents have mentioned alcohol and *Chavanu* (a mixture of snacks), 38 (19.0%) respondents have said that do not offer any sacrifice or *Prasad*. Rest of the 116 (58.0%) respondents offer a coconut, *Penda* (sweets) *Naivedya*, *Hom-Havan* (altar worship) and other things. Tendency to offer simple *Prasad* instead of sacrifice of animals and alcohol has increased. 12 ((6.0%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 107

5.5 Table showing the respondents' opinion about taking an ill person to a Doctor or a *Bhuva* (an exorcist):

Sr. No.	Patient taken to a Doctor or an Exorcist	Number	%
1.	To a Hospital	122	61.0
2.	To an Exorcist	06	3.0
3.	To a doctor as well as to an exorcist	68	34.0
4.	No information	04	2.0
	Total	200	100

When a family member is ill, bitten by a snake or a scorpion, 122 (61.0%) respondents go to a doctor in case of illness or a snakebite while 06 (3.0%) respondents go to a *Bhuva* in case of illness or a snakebite. 68 (34.0%) respondents go to both a doctor or a *Bhuva*. This shows that superstition is also in practice along with the scientific tendency of going to a doctor. 04 (2.0%) respondents have given no information.

6.4 Different gods and goddesses:

In this region, the Rajput community with different family names and their branches are found worshipping different gods and goddesses by offering naivedhya and taking a vow (a religious pledge). Rajput families with different family names and their branches have their own separate family gods and goddesses. They worship goddesses like Kalkamata, Chamundamata, Bootbhavanimata, Verai (Veray) mata, Masanimata, Meladimata, Zampadimata, Ashapurimata, Ambamata, Joganimata, Hadikaimata, Sheetalamata, Bahucharmata, Khodiyarmata, Sindhurmata, Nagnechimata among many others on relevant occasions. In the house of every Rajput, there is a small temple of the family god or goddess where they keep their idols or pictures. The elderly men and women get up early every day, take bath, wash the idols of gods and goddesses, lit lamps and incense sticks in the temples and worship them.

During days of *Navratri* (festival of nine nights), *garbadances* are performed and a lamp is kept burning constantly. At the time of a wedding in the family, the newly-weds untie their knot in front of the idol of their family gods and goddesses and ask for their blessings. Moreover, the Rajput people offer naivedhya to worship by altar or

perform a worship called *Navchandi* in order to get children, happiness and peace in the family, for eradication of illness, to fulfill different aspirations, for protection of lives and property, to achieve a sacred desire, to eradicate diseases and an obstruction, to retrieve stolen property and so on. They try to please gods and goddesses by fasting, taking a religious vow or by taking meals only once a day.

Moreover, the Rajput community believes in different gods and goddesses connected with life and religion among whom Baliyadev is believed to control diseases like chicken pox, small pox, etc. Sacrifice of birds and beasts is never offered to this god, so, this god is believed to be pure. People take a vow of this god in order to get protection against these diseases. A twig of a *neem* tree (an herbal tree with bitter leaves) is kept near the bed of a patient in order to keep an evil shadow away. At the same time, some religious traditions like abstaining from non-vegetarian food, alcohol, attending a funeral or mourning are observed as symbol of faith.

Besides this, god Bhathiji is worshipped as he belonged to the *Kshatriya* community. Hanumanji, the god of wind, is also worshipped by offering oil and lead powder. It is believed that,

- (1) Hanumanji had got burn injuries while setting Lanka on fire; so, Sitaji (Lord Ram's wife) had applied lead powder and oil on his body;
- (2) Ramchandraji was also very unhappy at seeing Hanumanji's pain. He, too, had applied oil and lead on his body and put a garland of *Akado* (a wild milky herbal plant) and had said that people would always worship Hanumanji with these flowers. Thus, Hanumanji is a pure god. The Rajput have also been worshipping the Sun god from ancient times; they get up early, take bath and offer water to the rising Sun. Thus, the Sun is worshipped for its importance in human life. Lord *Shri* Ram was born in the *Kshatriya* family and his life is believed to be exemplary for morality and, therefore, there is a temple of Ramchandraji in every village even today. People of the village worship Ramchandraji in the morning and evening every day. As *Shri* Ramdevpeer, too, was born in the *Kshatriya* family, his temple is found in many villages. At several such places-temples, fairs are held on some occasions. The Rajput people also worship Lord *Shri* Krishna in their houses and celebrate the birth of *Shri* Krishna very elaborately. They also worship Lord Shiva as he is

believed to be the Lord of all gods. People keep fast during *Shravan* (tenth month of *Vikram* calendar which falls during July-August); there is constant singing of prayers on the night of *Shivratri* and *Bhang* (a special drink prepared from an intoxicating herb offered to Lord Shiva) is distributed to the devotees. The Rajput visit fairs held at places called Junagadh and Somnath on *Shivratri*.

Table: 108

5.1 Table showing the information given by respondents about their family gods/goddesses:

Sr. No.	Name of Family God	Number	%	Name of Family goddess	Number	%
1.	Shri Ram	47	23.5	Shri Sindhurma	10	5.0
2.	Shri Krishna	34	17.0	Shri Nageshwarima	09	4.5
3.	Shri Mandavrayji	39	19.5	Shri Ekaldevma	27	13.5
4.	Lord Shiva	46	23.0	Shri Bootbhavani	27	13.5
5.	Lord Ganeshji	01	0.5	Shri Harisiddhabhavani Shri Harisiddhamata	27	13.5
6.	Shri Khetrapal (Sadavdev)	01	0.5	Shri Veraima	01	0.5
7.	Shri Bharadwaj	03	1.5	Shri Motrima	30	15
8.	Shri Swaminarayan	19	9.5	Shri Karnima	01	0.5
9.	Shri Ghoghabapji	01	0.5	Shri Khodiyarma	34	17.0
10.	No information	09	4.5	Shri Mahakalima	05	2.5
11.				Shri Adyashakti	01	0.5
12.				Shri Chamundama	01	0.5
13.				Shri Bahucharma	04	2.0
14.				Shri Vahanvatima	05	2.5
15.				Shri Varahima	10	5.0
16.				Shri Randalma	04	2.0
17.				No information	04	2.0
	Total	200	100	Total	200	100

Regarding the details of their family gods/goddesses, 47 (23.5%) respondents give name of Shri Ram, 34 (17.0%) respondents give name of Shri Krishna, 39 (19.5%) respondents give name of Shri Mandavrayji, 46 (23.0%) respondents give name of Lord Shiva, 01 (0.5%) respondents give name of Lord Ganesh, 01 (0.5%) respondents give name of Shri Khetrapal (Sadavdev), 03 (1.5%) respondents give name of Shri Bharadwaj, 19 (9.5%) respondents give name of Shri Lord Swaminarayan, 01 (0.5%) respondents give name of Ghoghabapji as their family god. 09 (4.5%) respondents have given no information.

As a family goddess, 10 (5.0%) respondents worship *Shri Sindhurмата*; 09 (4.5%) respondents worship *Shri Nageshwarimата*, 27 (13.5%) respondents worship *Shri Ekaldevmata*, 27 (13.5%) respondents worship *Shri Bootbhavanimата*, 27 (13.5%) respondents worship *Shri Harsiddhimата*, 01 (0.5%) respondents worship *Shri Veraimата*, 30 (15.0%) respondents worship *Shri Motrimата*, 01 (0.5%) respondents worship *Shri Karnimата*, 34 (17.0%) respondents worship *Shri Khodiyarmата*, 05 (2.5%) respondents worship *Shri Mahakalimата*, 01 (0.5%) respondents worship *Shri Adyashaktimата*, 01 (0.5%) respondents worship *Shri Chamundamата*, 04 (2.0%) respondents worship *Shri Bahucharmата*, 05 (2.5%) respondents worship *Shri Vahanvatimата*, 10 (5.0%) respondents worship *Shri Varahimата*, 04 (2.0%) respondents worship *Shri Randalmata*.

6.5 Worship of Nature:

The *Karadiya* Rajput community of this area lives in a natural habitat and worship Nature like other Hindu communities. They worship elements of Nature like the Sun, the Moon, the Wind, the Fire, the Earth, Water, Rivers, Mounts, Trees, etc. The Sun is believed to be the greatest god among those found in the universe; the Sun has two wives called *Usha* (Morning) and *Sandhya* (Evening) and has sons called Dharmaraj, Ashwinikumar, Shani and a daughter called Yamuna. The Sun brings light to the Earth which helps all beings, birds and beasts in finding food. Some people take bath in the morning every day and offer water to the Sun by pouring it from a pot in front of the rising Sun and pray to him.

The Moon is called Chandradev or Chandamama; he is believed to give cooling effect. People worship him on a Full-Moon day called *Sharad Purnima*.

The Wind, known as *Pavandevi* also worshipped as a god; there is no specific time for its worship.

The Fire, too, is believed to be a god. After a cooking is over, a pinch of rice and some cooked food is offered in the fireplace. Moreover, at the time of a wedding or some other occasions, various items are offered to fire in an altar; other gods are also given offerings through fire.

The Earth, also believed to be a goddess, is worshipped as *Dharatimата* (Mother Earth). The Earth is worshipped at the time sowing, Harvesting, the beginning of

construction of a new house and so on. After the construction is over, the Earth is worshipped by a special ritual called *Vastupuja* (A ritual performed before entering a new house). Farmers worship the Earth on a day called *Akhatrij* before starting tilling the land.

Water, known as *Jaldevta* or *Varundev* is also worshipped as a god. Rivers, wells, ponds, etc. are worshipped by maidens and married women whose husbands are alive with flowers along and a lighted lamp.

Mountains are believed to be the abode of gods and therefore, they are also worshipped. The practical purpose of their worship is to thank them as they provide fodder, wood for buildings, herbs and so on. The mountains also help in producing food grains by bringing rains when they obstruct clouds.

Trees also are worshipped as gods are believed to reside inside them. Lord Brahma is believed to live in the Banyan tree. Lord Shiva is believed to reside in creepers and *Pipal* (Pippul) tree is believed to be the residence of Lord Vishnu. Different trees like the Bunyan tree, the *Pipal* (Pippul), *Arjun* tree, *Neem* tree, *Shriparni*, *Tulsi* and many other trees are worshipped on different days, on special days and occasions. Trees provide flowers, fruits, firewood, farm and other domestic tools, wood for construction, roots over and above the herbs for medicinal use. Therefore they are worshipped justifiably.

Table: 109

5.2 Table showing the religious symbol of the respondents:

Sr. No.	Religious Symbol	Number	%
1.	Shield	49	24.5
2.	Sword	48	24.0
3.	The Sun	44	22.0
4.	<i>Trishul</i> (Trident)	08	4.0
5.	Temple	09	4.5
6.	<i>Oum/Shri</i>	22	11.0
7.	Cow	02	1.0
8.	Snake	02	1.0

9.	No information	16	8.0
	Total	200	100

Regarding their religious symbols, 49 (24.5%) respondents have said it is a shield, 48 (24.0%) respondents have said it is a sword, 44 (22.0%) respondents have said it is the Sun, 08 (4.0%) respondents have said it is a *Trishul* (Trident), 09 (4.5%) respondents have said it is a temple, 22 (11.0%) respondents have said it is an *Oum/Shri*, 02 (1.0%) respondents have said it is a cow and 02 (1.0%) respondents have said it is a snake, 16 (8.0%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 110

5.3 Table showing the totems that the respondents worship:

Sr. No.	Totem	Number	%
1.	The Sun	37	18.5
2.	<i>Khijado</i> (a type of tree)	47	23.5
3.	Sword	38	19.0
4.	<i>Trishul</i> (Trident)	49	24.5
5.	No information	29	14.5
	Total	200	100

In response to the totem that the respondents worship, 37 (18.5%) respondents worship the Sun, 47 (23.5%) respondents worship a tree called *Khijado*, 38 (19.0%) respondents worship sword and 49 (24.5%) respondents worship *trishul* (Trident). 29 (14.5%) respondents have given no information.

6.6 Worship of ancestors:

The Rajput people practice worship of ancestors. Statues of anyone who had sacrificed his or her life in order to protect family, village, society or religion are installed. They are known as '*Shurapura*' and are worshipped without mistake on the day of their sacrifice with an offering of naivedhya of rice, *ghee*, etc. in a certain measure. On the days like *Kali Chaudash* (the day before Diwali) and on Diwali, they are worshipped by offering a coconut, rice, *Kanku* or *Gulal* (red powder considered to be auspicious) and so on. The newly-weds untie the knot of their wedding in front of

these statues of *Shurpura* or family gods and goddesses before beginning their married life. Dead forefathers are worshipped and offered certain food items called *Shraddhain* the second half of the month of *Bhadra Vad* (11th month in the *Vikram* calendar). A Brahmin is invited to offer certain items like *Kheer* (pudding) and after the worship gets over, all family members eat together.

6.7 Religious beliefs regarding birds and beasts:

Traditionally, the Rajput people are a farming community associated with animal husbandry. So, they worship their animals. The cow is like a goddess for them and it is worshipped as a goddess. On the fourth day of the month of *Shravan* called *Bolchoth* a cow is worshipped along with its calf. When a cow or a bullock or a buffalo is purchased, first of all women in the family worship the animal and put a *tilak* (a mark) of red powder and a pinch of rice on its forehead. A bullock is worshipped on a festival called *Rakshabandhan* or before starting tilling in the beginning of Monsoon. A maiden puts a *tilak* (a mark) of red powder and a pinch of rice on its forehead, worships with an *arati* (a lamp and flowers in a dish). The bullocks are covered with a decorative cloth with a frill and embroidered with *abhala* (glass-pieces) and beads. A belt with bells is tied around its neck. They believe the bullock to be a symbol of prosperity. People talk about decorations of different bullocks with a great interest. Religious importance of a buffalo is also no less but the day of its worship is not fixed.

People believe an elephant also as a symbol of Lord Ganesh and as a powerful animal. So, they crack a coconut and bow before an elephant respectfully.

The Rajput show faith in lions as a vehicle of goddess *Ambaji*; it is mentioned in ballads and garba songs. Religious sentiments are found about cats and dogs too; a cat is called a maternal aunt of a tiger and it is a sin to kill a cat.

As a vehicle of goddess *Saraswati*, a peacock is looked at with a great reverence as this is a beautiful heavenly creature. Killing of a peacock is considered highly sinful and people fight over such a heinous crime. In the same way, birds like pigeons, parrots, cuckoos, etc. are also loved by all and everyone shows sympathy towards them.

6.8 Worship of agricultural tools:

The Rajput is a community dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. Different agricultural tools like a ploughshare, a spade, an axe and so on are worshipped before starting sowing on sacred days like *Akhatrij* and *Diwali*.

6.9 Place of religion and worship in various aspects of life:

In various aspects of life of the Rajput, influence of religion is quite clearly found.

6.9.1 Agriculture:

Before starting the season of sowing, the farming Rajput worship their family goddess and pray to her for a better yield of crops. They prepare an offering of sweets like *laddu*, *lapasi* and so on and distribute it among the neighbours and relatives. At the time of harvesting farmers offer to gods and goddesses the new crops like corn, wheat, millet, *juar* (rough white grain) and so on or cooked food to these gods and goddesses.

6.9.2 Animal husbandry:

Importance of religion is seen also in animal keeping. When a calf is born, the mother cow is considered unholy for 3-4 days because of the delivery. After 5-6 days the clean milk is offered to Lord Krishna in his temples and then the families can take this milk in their meals. On festivals and days of worship, cow milk is offered to gods and goddesses. Thus, animals are an inseparable part of rural communities.

6.9.3 Pregnancy:

Women are considered unholy during their menstrual periods, and therefore, they cannot enter temples nor can they worship. They cannot even touch certain objects. Pregnant women are not allowed to go out of the house at the time of an eclipse because, it is believed, if they go out, the impact of the eclipse can affect the child and in can be deformed physically or mentally.

6.9.4 Simant (Ritual of baby shower):

When a woman gets pregnant for the first time, a ritual called *Simantvidhi* is performed. It is similar to what people in some of the western countries call baby-shower. In the rural areas it is also called *Kholo bharavo*. A Brahmin is called and an idol of a goddess called *Randalmata* (a goddess of progeny) is installed in the house; women light a lamp and go on adding ghee into it in order to keep it burning constantly. The pregnant woman worships *Randalmata* and gets her blessings for a healthy male child. Mostly, *Randalmata* is invited accompanied by two, four or six water pots. Its statue is made with eyes made from a cowrie (a kind of sea shell) decorated with silver or gold ornaments and garlands. Today, however, in place of a

statue a Brahmin sticks a picture of the goddess on the wall and puts garland on it and performs the ritual. On this day, the host gives a dinner called *Gorani*. Those who invite the goddess *Randal* keep a fast and keeps awake for the whole night.

6.9.5 Delivery:

If a pregnant woman is in labour pain or if she is suffering acute pain, people take a pledge before gods and goddesses and worship them lighting lamps with ghee and incense sticks. They fulfill the pledge after the delivery. They have deep faith that on the sixth day of the delivery *Vidhata* (the goddess of Fate) visits the house and writes Fate of the child. So, the parents make the child put on new clothes after a bath and making a red mark with a holy powder on its forehead and put it near the idol of Lord Ganesh. They light a lamp of *ghee* (butter oil) and keep a pen and a piece of paper near it. A small girl wraps the child in a coloured cloth and makes it kneel before the statue of Lord Ganesh by rolling it on the ground.

6.9.6 Babari or a child's first shaving off:

The Rajput go to temple of the family goddess where the child's parents and other family members worship the goddess and offer to her a naivedhya consisting of a coconut, *ghee* (butter oil) *laddu* or *lapasi*(sweets made of wheat flour). After the ceremony, all the family members take a meal together.

6.9.7 Marriage:

At the time of an engagement or a wedding different gods and goddesses like Lord Ganesh, goddess *Saraswati*, *Ambaji*, Lakshmiji, Lord Vishnu, Lord Krishna, the Moon, the Earth, the Fire, Lord Varun, Buddha, *Guru* (Jupiter), *Shukra* (Venus), *Shani* (Saturn), *Rahu*, *Ketu* and other gods are worshipped besides the family goddess. After the wedding, the bridegroom's family invites the goddess *Randal* and performs its worship. All these ceremonies are performed by a Brahmin. The family goddess is also offered a naivedhya consisting of a coconut, *lapasi* (a sweet made from wheat flour) in a measured proportion. They believe that the family goddess gets angry if she is not worshipped and given an offering. So, they worship the goddess out of fear and faith.

6.9.8 Death:

On the occasion of death, reciting of Bhagvadgeeta, the Ramayan and other scriptures is performed so that the person on the death-bed can listen to the recitation. Ram and Krishna's names are constantly recited so that the soul of the dying person can link itself with the Lord's prayers and sins of the dying person are washed out. Items like

water of the Ganges, leaves of a holy plant called *Tulsi* and curds are put in the mouth of the dying person in order that soul of the dying person gets acquitted from sins and bad deeds. After death, the rituals of death are performed and his *asthi* (remains) are thrown into a river with a belief that his sins are washed off. In the house of the dead, scriptures like Garudpuran and Bhagvadgeeta are read for twelve days so that the soul of the dead gets *Nirvana* (salvation). Then a ritual called *shraddha* is performed by a Brahmin who performs a worship of the family goddess, the nine planets, Lord Vishnu, goddess Lakshmi and others with a belief that soul of the dead person goes to *Swarg*(heaven).

6.10 Cultural traditions of Hinduism:

“In order to lead life towards perfection, Hindus have adopted methods and institutional arrangement. *Samskara* (rituals of culturing) is one of them. Everyone knows that religion is very important in the life of Hindus and that religion is its essential part.”⁽⁹⁾ On the basis of religion, *Samskara* (rituals of culturing) have been originated with the help of which efforts are made to bring purity and sacredness in an individual’s life so that she/he can attain *Nirvana* or *Moksha* (salvation). These matters also apply to the people of the Rajput community living in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area.

Following are the different rituals of *Samskara* in the *Karadiya* Rajput community:

- (1) By the ritual of *samskara* of pregnancy, the ceremony of purifying the child in the womb is performed on the fourth night after marriage this ritual.
- (2) By the *samskara* of childbirth performed in the fourth month of pregnancy, aspirations for a male child are raised. On this day, the pregnant woman puts on new clothes and observes a fast.
- (3) On the occasion of *Simant/Shrimant* (Baby shower) *Samskara*, women gather together to perform a ceremony called *Matruka* (motherhood) worship. Generally, this takes place during seventh month of pregnancy.
- (4) At the time of childbirth, *Jat Karma Samskara* (culturing of deciding self and actions) is performed just before cutting the umbilical cord and the child is given a mixture of honey and ghee or butter. This is called *Galthuthi* (first licking of *ghee* and honey) by which this *Samskara* is given. A loud noise is made by striking a metal dish with a stick. The belief behind this tradition is to make the child fearless.

- (5) On the sixth day of the child's birth, *Vidhata* (Goddess of Fate) visits the house to write the fate of the new born. The child is bathed and made to wear new clothes. A red mark is made with holy powder on its forehead and it is laid near the idol of Lord Ganesh. A lamp of *ghee* is lighted and a pen and a piece of paper are placed near the child.
- (6) Naming *Samskara* is another ceremony when the child is named on the basis of *Nakshatra*(constellation of stars, gods, clan and so on. A Brahmin is invited to decide the zodiac position at the time of the child's birth. According to the tradition, a name suggesting bravery is selected. A suffix like '*sinh*', '*bha*', and '*Kunvar*' is attached to the name. A girl child's name is attached with a suffix like '*ba*', '*Kunvarba*' and so on.
- (7) As per the ceremony called *Nishkraman* (Taking the child out of the house), the child is brought out of the house by the father after the twelfth day of the fourth month to look at the sun.
- (8) The ritual of shaving off the child's hair for the first time is ceremoniously performed. Matters like taking an oath, distribution of *Prasad* (sharing of the offering) and so on are attached to this ritual. The barber is not allowed to let the hair fall on the ground at the time of shaving off the child's hair. The paternal aunt collects the falling hair in her *Pallu*(the front part of her sari). Then, the hair is thrown into a river or the sea. As per the ceremony called *Nishkraman* (Taking the child out of the house), the child is brought out of the house by the father after the twelfth day of the fourth month to look at the sun.
- (9) The ritual of piercing the ears takes place during third to fifth year of the child. The child is made to wear gold rings in his ears.
- (10) The ritual called *Paati-puja* (worshipping a slate) takes place when a child is admitted to school after its fifth year. A Brahmin writes a sign of *Oum* (an auspicious sign) on the child's slate.
- (11) The ritual called *Upanayan* (putting on a sacred thread across the chest) is important, too. After the eleventh year, by this ritual of putting on a *Janoi* (a sacred thread) is performed.
- (12) *Vivah* (wedding) is also a religious ritual for a couple's sacred bond at the witness of God and the *Panchmahabhoot* (five basic elements) which includes ritual of *Panigrahan* (accepting of the holy water by the bride from the bridegroom's hands), *Saptapadi* (Taking seven steps together) and so on

take place. Then only the bride and the bridegroom are bound together for the life.

- (13) *Antyesthi* (a ritual performed on death) is the last ritual. It is believed that by this ritual the soul of the dead gets eternal peace and wins the heaven when it goes there. Cremation of the dead body is performed in this ritual. It is believed that the soul goes from one life into another. After death, religious recitation from the scriptures, giving donations to the poor and so on take place. Relatives consider this a bad occasion. As part of the ritual of *Uttarkriya* (post-death ritual), men and women visit the bereaved family night to console the family members by talking about religious, political matters and also about matters of general interest. Depending on the age of the dead, on the eleventh or twelfth day, the ritual of *Uttarkriya* or *Saramanu* or *Dahado* takes place. A Brahmin is invited for the last ritual of Tarpan followed by a meal given to the visitors and relatives. This is known as *Pretbhojan* or *Dahado*. Visitors and relatives pay a contribution called *Vyavahar* (mutual help given on good or bad occasions). After a month or at a convenient time, *Varasi* (ceremony of ending the mourning is performed. After this ritual only, it is believed the family can attend auspicious occasions.
- (14) If the dead person were a bachelor, the ritual of *Leel Paranavavo* (performing a marriage like ceremony) is performed after death so that the soul of the dead unmarried person gets salvation. An exorcist (a *bhuvo*) is called for who shivers as if in the state of being possessed replies questions like the reason of death, the evil influence on the family and the like. Thus, the ritual is an example of a superstition which is disappearing slowly in the modern time.
- (15) In a ritual called *Uttarkriya* (*Saramanu*), men and women come to pay a visit at night everyday. They talk about social, cultural, practical and religious matters here. Thus, the family members of the dead get consolation and emotional release. Depending on the age of the dead, *Saramanu*, *Dahado* or *Uttarkriya* on eleventh or twelfth day. A Brahmin performs the ceremony of *Turpan* and *Saramani* is arranged followed by *Pretbhojan*, *Dahado* (a kind of community meal) is given. Family, relatives give a token amount called *Vyavahar* (practice of giving a small amount) to the family. After a month or so or on a convenient day the family performs a ritual called *Varsi valavi* which is followed by another ritual called ‘*Sog* or *Saug bhangavo*’ (doing

away with mourning) because a person can participate in an auspicious occasion. This belief is seen in the community even today.

- (16) *Leel Paranavavo* is a ritual performed when a bachelor young man dies. This ritual is just like the marriage ceremony with a belief that the soul of the dead gets to heaven. In this ritual, a *bhuvo* (tantric) is invited who shivers in a trance and gives answers to questions like the cause of death, problems faced by the family and so on. Thus, this ritual of '*Leel Paranavavo*' is an example of superstition although ritual like this is disappearing in the modern age.

Moreover, as the community is traditionally popular for having qualities of being brave and being true to their word, *Paliya*, *Khambhi* or *Thapa* and willingness to be a martyr are popular in the community. When women give away their lives for bravery, their *Thapa* (an imprint of her paws on a stone) are worshipped and such women are worshipped as *Satima*.

The *Kshatriya* Rajput have been given a title of being a '*Ranbanka*' which means they are incomparable in a battlefield. Stories of his adventures, bravery and valour are popular in history and literature of such events is available in history. They worship *Paliya*, *Khambhi* and *Thapa* in memory of such a rich heritage.

In The Bombay Gazetteer and Hutton's The Journal of the Royal Anthropology Institute and others state that this tradition of the ruling castes is universally popular.

Moreover, as the community is known for keeping one's promise, bravery and fulfilling pledges, the tendency to become a martyr and installing a statue of these martyrs is very strong in the community. If women die fighting bravely, they are worshipped as *Satima* and imprints of her paws are also worshipped.

The Rajput people have earned a title called '*Ranbanka*' (brave fighters) meaning those who are unbeatable in the battlefield. The stories of their valour, bravery and adventures are popular in history. Its literature is also available. They worship the statues of the martyrs and imprints of paws of women who died for a good cause in order to indicate their respect.

In The Bombay Gazetteer as well as in Hutton's Journal of the Royal Anthropology it

is mentioned that this tradition of the *Rajvanshi* (family of Rulers) is popular everywhere.

(1) Monuments of Martyrs:

In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, *Paliya* (statues) and *Khambhi* of the martyrs as well as *Satima* who laid their lives for a good cause are found at different places. The Rajput community worships them regularly on the days of their sacrifice. Such monuments are called '*Veer Sthanak*'.

(2) *Paliya* (Statues):

In valorous stories of the martyrs in wars, battlefields or other events, the places of statues of martyrs are important. Statues are made for those who die fighting for a good cause. Statues stand in memory of the martyrs. These statues of a rider on a horseback or on a camel are made from three-four feet high stone. They have different weapons in their hands. Introduction of a martyr is inscribed at the bottom of the Statue. In the upper corners, the Sun and the Moon are carved which indicates that the story of the martyr will last forever.

(3) *Khambhi* (Stone carving of a martyr):

Shurpura (a martyr) or a *Khambhi* is installed when a brave man or a head of a family has died for a good cause. It is of a triangular or a square stone. It is worshipped during the festival of *Navratri* and other such occasions. The family members distribute the money collected at the place of the *Paliya* or *Khambhi*. A *Khambhi* is made of only one man for the family while a *Paliya* (a statue) belongs to the whole village. It is worshipped by the entire village.

(4) *Thapa* (Marks of Paws):

It is believed by the community that when a woman immolates herself on her husband's death or when women die fighting bravely for good cause, they ask for a place where women give imprints of their paws. Such places are called *Thapa* and people worship them. This tradition is found only in the brave community. In the villages where this community is found the monuments of women are found in castles. The statues installed in every village are the places of worship for this community. At these places the *bhuva* (exorcists) perform worship shaking in the state of being possessed and give solutions to problems of life. Moreover, people go there for worship on certain occasions. Brides and bridegrooms untie their wedding knots; the ceremony of

chaulkriya(shaving off a child's hair for the first time) and such other ceremonies are also performed here.

Moreover, life of this community is closely linked with religion as it follows the *Kshatra dharma* (following the duties and ideals of a *Kshatriya*) just as the 16 *Samskara* (rituals of culturing). The importance of religion in daily life and that of principles of religion in social and cultural matters and the essence of religion in actually entire life itself are the values they live for. Believing in the Sun, the Moon, the rivers, the Earth, Mounts, Birds and animals and so on as sacred, they worship.

Table: 111

5.14 Table showing the respondents' activities before beginning their day:

Sr. No.	Priority to activities in time of difficulties	Number	%
1.	Prayers/Worship	88	44.0
2.	Visit to temples	58	29.0
3.	Reciting main god/goddess	43	21.5
4.	Blessings from elders	11	5.5
	Total	200	100

88 (44.0%) respondents begin their day with prayers and worship, 58 (29.0%) respondents begin their day with a visit to a temple, 43 (21.5%) respondents begin their day reciting the name of their *Ishtadev* (main god) and 11 (5.5%) respondents begin their day with the blessings of elders by touching their feet.

Table: 112

5.15 Table showing the respondents' priority to activities in time of difficulties:

Sr. No.	priority to activities in time of difficulties	Number	%
1.	Religious rituals	53	26.5
2.	Astrology	27	13.5
3.	Guidance from elders	113	56.5
4.	Other	07	3.5
	Total	200	100

It is clear from the study that in difficult times, 53 (26.5%) respondents give importance to religious activities, 27 (13.5%) respondents give importance to astrology, 113 (56.5%) respondents give importance to blessings and guidance of parents and elders and 07 (3.5%) respondents give importance to some other activities.

6.11 Superstitions (Blind Belife):

In the *Karadiya* Rajput of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, as compared to other upper castes, the level of literacy is very low. So, ignorance and superstitions are widespread in the community. The level of superstition is very high among the older generation while the new generation has changed in this matter due to reasons like spreading of education and westernization. Beliefs about ghosts, witches, using charms and sacrificing animals to gods and goddesses are still found in this community.

In the present study, the Rajput families believe in the world of ghosts and that of ancestors. People believe that a person who has too much attachment to his property and his children becomes a ghost or a witch after death. In the same way, when a person whose sexual desires are unfulfilled before death or a pregnant woman dies or when a person dies in an accident or by committing suicide or is murdered, such persons become ghosts and witches after death. People consider ghosts and witches responsible for all problems in and difficulties in life. A belief prevails that the ancestors are appeased by a ceremony called *Turpan* (offering a variety of food and objects that the dead ancestors may not have enjoyed). Such appeased ancestors are protective and helpful to the family; the unappeased ancestors harass the family.

Due to factors like education, urbanization, modernization and so on, the level of superstitions has decreased but superstitions of different kinds are still found in the economic, social and religious fields.

6.12 Role of an exorcist, beliefs about soul, ghosts and witches and black magic:

Hinduism believes in another life after death. According to the doctrines of good and bad deeds, a soul has to take a circle of 184000 births in different lives before being born in human life. The Rajput people accept this doctrine.

About ghosts and witches, people believe that when a person dies before her or his desires are fulfilled or when an untimely death occurs, the soul of the dead does not

go to heaven but roams in the world of the ghosts and witches and brings problems in the lives of the living people. The Rajput people also believe in this. They also believe in ghosts and witches called *Dakan* or *Chudel*. When a cattle gets sick, first of all people take a vow of the ancestors. They light a lamp and incense sticks near the idol of the ancestor and bind a charmed string on the horn of the sick animal. This ritual is performed by an exorcist. Even today, the Rajput people believe in ghosts and the other worldly.

About the soul, they hold a belief that the soul is immortal. It takes birth as an animal, a creature or birds and lives a predestined life. This is controlled by God. Every human being takes birth as an animal like an elephant, a horse, a cat a snake, a peacock, an ant, a dog or a human being. If a human being does not complete her/his full life and dies an unnatural death, soul of such a person roams as a ghost or a witch, a pishach, a *brahmraakshas* (types of ghosts) and so on for ten times more years than his predestined life. Moreover, when a greedy, a sinner, lecherous, a murderer a usurper, of somebody else's property or one whose desires are unfulfilled dies, his soul roams in the world of the ghosts. People believe that if the dead person is attached to his family, the soul of such a person takes birth in his own family but that is possible only if the soul's deeds are appropriate for a birth as a human being. If a person dies before paying his debt, he is born as a son to his lender or as a bullock and pays off his debt by working for the lender. The account of good deeds and the sins is kept by Lord Brahma and God sends the soul of the dead to heaven or hell on the basis of his account. There are two categories of souls who do not get moksha or salvation and roam in the world of the ghosts: (1) *Punyatma* (a good soul) and (2) *Papatma* (a bad soul).

6.12.1 *Punyatma* (a good soul):

The unsatisfied *Punyatma* which is in the form of a ghost, a witch or a *Brahmarakshas* works as a benevolent soul. Such a soul is the soul of a good, kind and benevolent person.

6.12.2 *Papatma* (a bad soul):

The soul of a greedy, an angry, a lecherous, miserly or a wicked person also roams as a ghost, a witch, a *Pisahch* and so on and it harms human beings. Such unsatisfied souls roam in various forms.

6.12.2.1 *Brahmarakshas* (Ghost of a Brahmin):

A Brahmin's unsatisfied soul is supposed to be stronger than other souls. Some of these souls are benevolent but some of them wicked which harass the living beings. The *Brahmarakshas* are believed to live in the ruins, old temples, Pippul trees or on the banks of the rivers and ponds.

6.12.2.2 The Pret (A type of ghost):

This unsatisfied soul roams in a transparent form of any animal of its desire. Mostly, it is believed to be found in the form of an old man or a woman. The soul of a male is in the form of a male which is called a *Pret* and that of a woman is called a *Pretani*. In this category, too, there are benevolent and wicked souls. They are believed to live in the ruins, a deserted house, old wells, on river banks, in *Pippul* trees, a tamarind tree and such places. Compared to the *Brahmarakshas*, it is less strong but stronger than souls of other categories.

6.12.2.3 Bhoot (a ghost):

Bhoot or (a ghost) is also an unsatisfied soul and it is less strong than a *Brahmarakshas* or a *pret*. It is a soul which has not got his desires fulfilled before death. Ghosts are believed to live in old ruins, old castles, deserted houses, dry wells, trees like the *Pippul*, tamarind, *babul* trees of berries and so on. It is angry by temperament; it is found in a black form and in the shape of birds, beasts and animals.

The Rajput people of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* region believe in ghosts. If a man commits suicide by drowning in ponds or wells, he becomes a ghost. Rajput people believe that a person whose are not fulfilled and meets an untimely death, he becomes a ghost. A ghost frightens a meek person more than a courageous whom he helps sometimes.

A ghost is supposed to live mostly in Bunyan trees, *Pippul*, wells, a pond and in a cemetery. The Rajput believes that a ghost takes round at night in any form and frightens a timid person who starts shivering. People say that he is possessed by a ghost. A ghost is believed to have a *Choti* (a lock of hair at the top of head). Anyone who is able to get hold of the ghost's *Choti*, cuts and keeps with him, the ghost becomes a slave to him. It is also believed that the back of the ghost is hollow.

6.12.2.4 The Pisach (A type of ghost):

A *Pisach* is an extremely wicked type of a soul which usually harms human beings. It has also the same places to live in as the ghosts.

6.12.2.5 Chudel (A female ghost):

A *Chudel* is the soul of a woman who dies with her desires unfulfilled. When a pregnant woman dies or a woman dies in a child birth, her soul turns into a *Chudel* (a female ghost). If a woman dies while delivering a child, she takes the child away after some time. This means that the child also dies. This is because the woman is deeply attached to the child. It is believed that a *Chudel* does not have a fixed habitat but she keeps roaming. It is also believed that it takes the form of a beautiful woman and sits down in a bullock cart.

This unsatisfied soul does not harass anybody without any reason but she harasses a person if she/he consciously or by mistake enters her living area, urinates there, cuts off a tree or calls dirty words, if a *Chudel* has animosity with a person in the earlier life. She not only harasses all such persons but she also kills them sometimes.

Moreover, a *Dakanor* a *Chudel* (a witch) and the souls controlled by a *Bhuva* (an exorcist) also harass people as per the *Chudel*'s wish. Souls controlled by an exorcist drive a bad soul in the body of a possessed person and punishes him.

6.12.2.6 A *Dakan* (A Witch or a sorceress):

A *Dakan* is a living woman who has learnt and knows black magic. She is believed to be a *Dakan* (a sorceress). Such women who have learnt mantra or magical words go to the cemetery and secures magical powers by reciting those mantra. A *Dakan* takes away life of any being including human beings. If we visit a *Dakan*'s house to get a few burning charcoal, she brings them in her hands. If we accept the live charcoal in any other utensil, she refuses to give them and insists that we accept the charcoal in a piece of cloth which does not catch fire at all. The Rajput people of this area believe in the existence of the *Dakan* but they have not found any for many years.

Thus, traditions about good souls, sinful souls, *Brahmarakshasa*, *Prets*, ghosts, a *Pishach*, *Chudels*, a *Dakan* and so on are found in this area. Such beliefs, however, are decreasing day by day.

6.12.3 Magic:

If we worship divine powers (gods and goddesses) in order to get desired objects, it is religion but if some people control the other-worldly powers in order to get their works done, it is called magic. In religion, the worshipper is a lower soul than the divine powers which are more powerful. So, he worships them in order to desired objects. If the worshipper is more powerful than the divine elements, he takes controls

over them and gets his works done with their help. This called magic. A worshipper takes help of *Mantra* or magical words in religion and magic. The Rajput people of this area believe in both religion and the black magic. According to them, there are two types of magic prevalent in society: (1) Benevolent (White) and (2) Evil or Black magic.

6.12.3.1 Benevolent (White) Magic:

Benevolent (white) magic is used for the help of society. Rajput people take help of benevolent magic in order to prevent diseases of animals, children, to free a person from anger of a ghost, a *Pretor* a *Chudel* and so on. They also take recourse to white magic in order to solve family problems. Its practitioner is called a *Bhuva* (an exorcist) who gets training for many years from his *Guru* (teacher), learns many *mantras* (magical hymns), follows certain restraints and finally achieves powers. Only then he is able to cure a disease or remove an evil charm performed on a person. He does not a definite charge for his services; he charges on for the expenses of the worship. This means a *Bhuva* is benevolent to the society and, therefore he holds a high position in the society. Moreover, the exorcist is a worshipper of ghosts and the *Pret*, *Brhmarakshas* and so on besides the gods and goddesses. A *Dakan* is terribly afraid of the exorcist. The exorcist's style of working is somewhat surprising and arousing curiosity. He makes a possessed person sit before him and throws on him charmed grains of black sesame, *udad* (black pulses), mustard seeds, rice, dust, ashes and water. This brings the ghost or a *Pret* in the body of the possessed whose eyes get enlarged and look full of fear. He makes strange sounds. When the exorcist charmed sesame, *udad* or mustard seeds, the possessed cries and screams and says that he is burning and asks for help. The exorcist gets angry and asks the possessed repeatedly questions like, who are you? Where have you come from? Who has sent you? What is your intention? And so on. The ghost inside the body of the possessed answers these questions. The exorcist then asks the ghost to leave the body of the possessed. If the powers of the exorcist are strong, the ghost-pret runs away but if the exorcist's powers are weak, the ghosts-pret harasses him. Moreover, if a person is in trouble because of the anger of gods and goddesses, he finds it out with the help of a tactic called 'seeing grains' and then worships gods and goddesses, offers *naivedhya* and then the trouble is removed.

6.12.3.2 Evil (black) magic:

This type of magic harms people and is used to harm people. It is used to bring illness to a person even kill a person, to spread an epidemic in animals to burnt the ready crop in farms and the like. The practitioner of black magic is called a *Dakan* (a sorceress). An old person with a frightfully ugly face is believed to know this magic. People do not look at such practitioners respectfully; they are frightening instead. The sorceress, too, has a *guru* (a mentor) who teaches her/him this evil magic and helps to get powers. A *Dakan* worships a ghost and a *Pishach*, gets control over them and harms other people with the help of these ghosts and *Pishach*. A sorceress trains her daughter or a daughter-in-law in this black magic on a day called *Kalichaudash* (a day before Diwali) believed to be special for such practice. After the training is over, the teacher gives a test to the disciple who makes an experiment on a bird, a tree or an animal. If the desired result is achieved, the disciple follows the instructions of the guru. *Dakan* women are afraid of an exorcist. Their status in the society is very low and people do not look at them respectfully.

6.12.3.3 Magic in Real Life:

The woman believed to be a *Dakan* or a sorceress is not allowed to come near a woman who is in labour pains so the child does not become victim of her evil eye. Family members tie a black thread on the arm and put a talisman in the neck of the new-born as well as the mother in order to save them from evil eye of a *Dakan* and ghosts or the pret. When the new-born cries without an apparent reason, the family members call an exorcist for treatment. The family members do not allow the child to be taken out of the house if there is a sorceress around.

People believe even today that bride and bridegroom should keep a lemon and penknife or a small dagger with them for a week around their wedding in order to keep away an evil eye or a shadow of a ghost or a *Pret*.

Moreover, they believe that when a young person dies or when someone dies accidentally, the soul of the dead does not get peace but it roams as a ghost or an apparition. So, the family members make her/his statues in order to establish the soul at a specific place and worship it. The exorcist worships while installing the statues; Brahmins perform a special worship called *Chandipath* and offer *naivadhya* (an offering) of a coconut and food grain.

6.12.3.4 Magic in Animal Husbandry:

In different illnesses of the cattle, an exorcist is called for the treatment of the ill cattle. He prepares threads and binds them to the cattle. In the same way, when a cow or a buffalo does not give milk, the exorcist finds out the cause by a tactic called ‘seeing grains’ whether it is due to the anger of the ghosts, other elements or gods and goddesses. He then binds to the animal a charmed thread or an amulet. He performs worship if the cause is the anger of the gods and goddesses. People believe that a cow or buffalo plenty of milk earlier but it has stopped giving milk because of the black magic or jealousy of a witch. If a witch praises a cow or buffalo or looks at it with an evil eye, it becomes a victim of the witch’s evil eye.

Today, however, due to the influence of education, westernization, modernization and so on such beliefs, traditions are changing. People have started to adopt a new life style.

6.12.4 Role of an exorcist:

An exorcist knows black magic and charm and has already learnt magic from his forefathers or a *guru* (a mentor). Different gods and goddesses have their separate worshippers. The exorcists (the worshippers) create faith in the hearts of people by songs or by pronouncing *mantra* (holy words). Rajput people, too, keep faith in the exorcists. When a god is angry with a person he falls sick, an exorcist is called who tries to find out by ‘seeing grains’ (a tactic used by the exorcist) the cause of his illness. He tells the patient about his treatment. As per the advice of the exorcist, *naivedhya* (an offering) is given to gods and goddesses. If a person is a victim of black magic called ‘*Mooth*’ (black magic used to kill a person), he saves him by reversing it. After this an offering as decided by the exorcist is given. When the exorcist is in the state of being possessed, his body shivers and he shouts loudly. When he is in such a state, he replies all the questions asked by people standing around. People believe that the answers given by the exorcist are actually given by the god or goddess inside his body and that whatever says is generally true. The exorcist has to observe certain code of conduct like never tell a lie, not to make a mockery of other gods and goddesses, never commit adultery and so on.

6.12.4.1 Acts of an Exorcist:

Following are the acts that an exorcist is supposed to perform:

6.12.4.1.1 Worship Gods and Goddesses:

Rajput people believe in many gods and goddesses. The exorcist worships gods and goddesses everyday cleans and decorates their idols, offers garlands and keeps a lamp burning constantly. On special occasions and festivals, he performs rituals and worships, gives to people message of the mother goddess and invokes gods and goddesses by reciting *mantra* (holy words).

6.12.4.1.2 To Cure a Sick Person:

Whenever a person gets fever or falls sick and does not get well in spite of going to a hospital, an exorcist is called. He examines the patient and finds out the cause of illness with the help of the tactic called 'seeing grains.' When he performs this tactic, he recites different charmed words repeatedly. He sings some songs, too, softly and suggests solutions to the illness.

Many times, the exorcist binds a charmed thread on the arm of the patient. This thread has five knots. When the patient is completely well, the concerned god is given an offering and then the thread is untied. Sometimes, it happens that a patient is cured by the exorcist even when the doctor is not able to cure him. Such beliefs are found among the Rajput people but they are decreasing day by day.

6.12.4.1.3 To strike a person by Black Magic called '*Mooth Maravi*' as well as to reverse it:

To strike somebody with a '*Mooth*' in order to kill her/him or make her/him ill, the exorcist places his gods and goddesses after that opponent who harass her/him or take her/his life. This is called '*Mooth Maravi*' (strike somebody by black magic). If somebody wants to kill his enemy, he goes to an exorcist who, if he is powerful and knows black magic, he can kill the enemy by this black magic. It is believed even today that this black magic can be used on a tree, an animal and human beings.

If a person is struck by this black magic called '*Mooth*' and if it comes to be known, an exorcist is called to find it out. The exorcist comes and recites charmed words or and finds it out if it is true by 'seeing grains.' If the victim is struck by black magic, the exorcist reverses it with the help of his gods and goddesses. If the victim is cured by this magic in time the victim's life is saved. For this, gods and goddesses have to be worshipped and offering which the exorcist suggests is given to those gods and goddesses. In the same way, if a tree is struck by this black magic and, if it is found out when the tree is half dry, it becomes green again when the black magic is reversed by an exorcist.

6.12.4.1.4 To Cure a Possessed:

If a woman is possessed by a witch or a ghost, she starts shivering involuntarily and mumbles non-sense. It is believed that she is possessed, and an exorcist is called who makes the woman sit on the ground. He lets her hair loose and then, he moves around the woman and makes a circle on the ground with a knife. He asks the woman questions like “who she is, where she has come from”, etc. When the woman replies, it is believed that actually it is the spirit inside the body of the woman who replies these questions. Initially, the woman does not give correct answers. The exorcist cuts a fresh lemon on the head of the woman and circulates it over her head. He invokes his god and the ghost runs away. Sometimes, when the ghost does not go, the woman is beaten by iron chains. It is believed that it the spirit inside the body of the possessed that is hurt by the chain-beating and the woman is not hurt at all. Finally, the spirit inside the body of the woman asks for some food. When the exorcist gives it some food, the ghost runs away leaving the body of the possessed.

6.12.4.1.5 To Cure Poison:

When a person is bitten by a poisonous creature, a devotee of a god called Bhathiji or snake-god is called. He removes poison of a snake or a scorpion with the help of a feather of a peacock, twigs of a neem tree, ashes and incense sticks. As the exorcist recite the charmed words, slowly the effect of poison decreases from the body. The exorcist, then, binds a silk thread on the hand or leg bitten by the snake or scorpion. It is untied when the *naivedya* (offering of food, coconut, etc.) is given to Bhathiji or the snake-god. In the same way, sometimes the exorcist bites at the spot of the snake-bite and sucks the poison repeatedly and spits out the blood.

6.12.4.1.6 To Give a Pledge for a Son:

If a woman does not give birth to a baby boy and gives birth to girls only or when a woman is barren, the couple goes to an exorcist. The exorcist ‘sees grains’ (the usual practice of an exorcist to find out cause for a problem) and gives the couple a pledge. If his god permits, the exorcist tells the couple that their problem will be solved. When a son is born to the woman, the exorcist is informed about it. After a quarter and a month or after five years, the pledge is fulfilled and the gods and goddesses are worshipped.

6.12.4.1.7 To Cure an Evil Eye:

When a child or an adult falls sick, starts vomiting or gets fever, it is believed that the person is a victim of an evil eye. The exorcist comes and examines the patient and

then, recites some charmed words and goes on removing the effect of the evil eye with twigs of a neemtree or a broom.

Table: 113

5.12 Table showing the respondents' opinion about practice of 'using grains' to know cause of illness:

Sr. No.	Practice of 'using grains'	Number	%
1.	Yes	41	20.5
2.	No	158	79.0
3.	No information	01	0.5
	Total	200	100

Respondents go to a *Bhuva* (an exorcist) in order to find the cause of illness by 'using grains.' 41 (20.5%) respondents use this practice while 158 (79.0%) respondents do not use this practice. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 114

5.12.1 Table showing the reasons of using the tactic of 'seeing grains' to know cause of illness:

Sr. No.	Reasons of using the tactic of 'seeing grains' to know cause of illness	Number	%
1.	At the time of <i>Mandavo</i>	16	39.0 (8.0)
2.	Pressure from family	03	7.3 (1.5)
3.	For freedom from a possession	01	2.4 (0.5)
4.	To curb black magic	02	4.9 (1.0)
5.	On religious occasions	03	7.3 (1.5)
6.	At the time of problems in Family	04	9.8 (2.0)
7.	On weddings	01	2.4 (0.5)
8.	Due to having faith in it	02	4.9 (1.0)
9.	When an ill person doesn't get well	03	7.3 (1.5)
10.	On certain occasions	04	9.8 (2.0)
11.	Due to bad/weak economic Condition	02	4.9 (1.0)

12.	No information	01	(0.5)
13.	Not applicable (Not using this tactic)	158	(79.0)
	Total	200	100

As many as 158 (79.0%) respondents do not use this practice of ‘counting grains’ on any occasions while 41 (20.5%) respondents go to a *Bhuva* (an exorcist) who use this practice. On examining reasons of using this practice, it was found that 16 (39.0%/8.0%) respondents use this practice on occasions like *Mandavo* (installing the idol of goddess-*Mataji*), 03 (7.3%/1.5%) respondents use this practice due to family’s insistence, 01 (2.4%/0.5%) respondents use this practice in order to drive away a ghost or witch, 02 (4.9%/1.0%) respondents use this practice to curb black magic, 03 (7.3%/1.5%) respondents use this practice on religious occasions, 04 (9.8%/2.0%) respondents use this practice when there is a difficulty or a problem, 01 (2.4%/0.5%) respondents use this practice at the time of a marriage, 02 (4.9%/1.0%) respondents use this practice due to faith in it, 03 (7.3%/1.5%) respondents use this practice when an ill person does not get well, 04 (9.8%/2.0%) respondents use this practice on certain occasions, 02 (4.9%/1.0%) respondents use this practice when economic condition is bad. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information. This question is not applicable to 158 (79.0%) respondents who do not use this practice. It was found in the study, however, that tendency to use this practice of counting grains is decreasing day by day due to effect of modernism.

Table: 115

5.13 Table showing the occasions on which a *Bhuva* is invited:

Sr. No.	Practice of Inviting a <i>Bhuva</i>	Number		%
1.	Yes	114		57.0
2.	No	85		42.5
3.	No information	01		0.5
	Total	200		100

114 (57.0%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* (an exorcist) on a social or religious occasion while 85 (42.5%) respondents do not call a *Bhuva* on any of such occasions. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 116**5.13.1 Table showing the reasons of going to a Bhuva to know cause of illness:**

Sr. No.	Reasons for inviting the <i>Bhuva</i>	Number	%
1.	At the time of <i>Mandava</i> of <i>Mataji</i>	74	64.9(37.0)
2.	On auspicious occasions	10	8.8 (5.0)
3.	On religious occasions	14	12.3 (7.0)
4.	During the ceremony of driving the ghost-pret away or in the ritual of black magic	03	2.6 (1.5)
5.	During the <i>Navratri</i>	09	7.9 (4.5)
6.	On frequent difficulties like economic problems	01	0.9 (0.5)
7.	If a person has taken a religious vow	03	2.6 (1.5)
8.	No information	01	(0.5)
9.	Not applicable (The <i>Bhuva</i> is not invited for rituals)	85	(42.5)
	Total	200	100

Examining the reasons for inviting a *Bhuva*, 74 (64.9%/37.0%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* on occasions like *Mandava* (installing the idol of goddess-*Mataji*), 10 (8.8%/5.0%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* on good or auspicious occasions, 14 (12.3%/7.0%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* on religious occasions, 03 (2.6%/1.5%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* on occasions like performing ceremony to drive away a ghost or a witch or any ritual of black magic, 09 (7.9%/4.5%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* during the festival of *Navratri*, 01 (0.9%/0.5%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* in time of economic or other difficulties and 03 (2.6%/1.5%) respondents invite a *Bhuva* when someone has taken any religious vow. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information while this is not applicable to the 85 (42.5%) respondents who do not call a *Bhuva* on any occasions.

6.13 Beliefs regarding Dreams:

People believe that when a person is asleep, his/her soul gets out of the body and roams around. Whatever the soul sees it is a dream. Some people believe that the one gets dreams of the matters which the man thinks about before going to bed. Sometimes when one is thirsty or when his hand is on his chest, he sees dreams. The dream that is seen in the early morning is believed to be true. When one sees gods, goddesses, a cow, milk, curds, rice, trees, etc. it is believed to be auspicious. Dreams about a dog, a buffalo or any other animal, a cat or other beasts and birds are believed

to be inauspicious. Such beliefs are prevalent in the community, especially in the rural society.

6.14 Beliefs about Auspicious and Inauspicious Days:

Even today in this community, there are traditional beliefs about auspicious and inauspicious days. They do good works on auspicious days and avoid doing good works on inauspicious days. Mondays and Thursdays are believed to be auspicious while Wednesdays and Saturdays are believed to be bad. They believe the Full-Moon days auspicious and the New-Moon days to be bad. For any celebration or a festival, they call a Brahmin to decide a good time and date and celebrate the occasion accordingly. Sometimes, for small occasions they decide on their own the auspicious time and date from an almanac.

6.15 Beliefs regarding Good or Bad Omens:

In this region, people strongly believe in good or bad omens. They believe a good or bad omen to be the cause for a good or bad event. In this community, a good or bad omen is given special consideration while taking up any work. On occasions such as sowing, young maidens mark the bullocks and the ploughshares with red powder believed to be auspicious. This may bring them good yield. Signs like confronting a cow milking its calf, a woman returning with a full water-pot or a maiden are believed to be auspicious before starting a good work. The sight of an empty pot, a crying dog, a handicapped person, a cat crossing the road, a tree called *Arjun* (the sight of an *Arjun* tree is terrifying), a widow, etc. are believed to be bad omen. Sight of a Brahmin, a newly-wedded woman or a woman carrying a water-pot and so on is believed to be auspicious. They also consider it bad if they forget to give an offering on the day of martyrdom of a family member.

In the constant activities of their social life, the Rajput believes firmly in pledges and astrology in the same way as the beliefs about good and bad omens. On the basis of examinations, it is found that the Rajput firmly believes in good or bad omens on the following occasions:

Table showing beliefs about good or bad omens:

Sr. No.	Auspicious	Sr. No.	Inauspicious
1.	Encountering a woman carrying a water pot	1.	Sneeze once
2.	To encounter a maiden	2.	Spilling of ghee or milk

3.	To encounter a Brahmin	3.	A snake crossing road
4.	To encounter a cow	4.	A cat crossing road
5.	To encounter an armed man	5.	To encounter a woman carrying dry wood
6.	To encounter a gardener	6.	hooting of an owl
7.	To eat jiggery before going to another village	7.	Spatting of ears
8.	To fry oil	8.	To encounter a woman with untied hair
9.	To eat curds in a meal	9.	A Brahmin without a mark on his forehead
10.	Somebody sneezing at the back	10.	Fire without smoke
11.	To encounter a dead body	11.	To encounter a widow
12.	A mongoose crossing road	12.	To encounter a childless man/woman
		13.	Screaming of a bird called chibari
		14.	A quarrel in the family
		15.	To encounter a woman going to a toilet

Besides, the above beliefs, there are other beliefs about good or bad omen connected with different days.

Table showing auspicious or inauspicious days:

Sr. No.	Day	Whether good or bad for any work
1.	Monday	Good for an adventure; fixing a wedding; inflow of money
2.	Tuesday	Money doesn't come; No purchase of a buffalo; religious pledges and those about ghosts
3.	Wednesday	A daughter is not sent to her husband's house; No purchasing or selling of a cow
4.	Thursday	Begin going to school; purchasing of a cattle; Trade could be done; building of house can be done
5.	Friday	Engagement, going abroad, purchasing of gold can be done
6.	Saturday	No risky work can be done
7.	Sunday	No purchasing/selling of a horse; pledges could be fulfilled

Moreover, Wednesdays are not good for sowing or giving a dinner to the community after a death in the family or visiting another village. Pledges given by an exorcist or a goddess can be fulfilled on Wednesdays. In the same way, there are beliefs about months being auspicious or inauspicious in the Rajput community of this area. This community depends on the beliefs about something being good or bad.

Table showing auspicious or inauspicious months:

Sr. No.	Month	Whether good or bad for any work
1.	<i>Kartak</i>	Inauspicious month; No weddings can be done; rituals of worshipping of an ancestor or that of curing an evil can be done
2.	<i>Magshar</i>	Auspicious month; weddings or business can be done
3.	<i>Posh</i>	Auspicious month; weddings or worshipping of goddesses can be done
4.	<i>Maha</i>	Auspicious month; weddings can be done in the first 15 days; good for agriculture
5.	<i>Fagun</i>	Auspicious month; worshipping of goddesses Shakti can be done
6.	<i>Chaitra</i>	Weddings or new business can be done
7.	<i>Vaishakh</i>	Going abroad, remarriage, division of property, hiring a partner in farming can be done
8.	<i>Jeth</i>	Good for sacrificing for natural calamities
9.	<i>Ashadh</i>	Auspicious for farming and worshipping goddesses
10.	<i>Shravan</i>	Good for religious festivals especially for worshipping Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna
11.	<i>Bhadaravo</i>	Goddesses get angry; fulfilling of pledges and worshipping of ancestors can be done
12.	<i>Aso</i>	Good for the worshippers of black magic

6.16 Tendency towards Going to Temple:

This community has a deep faith in religion but tendency to get up early, take a bath and go to temple in the morning or evening is decreasing day by day because people are busy in farming, jobs or business. People, however, can visit temples whenever they are free, especially during the days of religious festivals. Moreover, people, both men and women worship God by washing the idol, lighting lamps and incense sticks every day in the morning and evening. They believe that a house where there is no worship or lighting of lamps and incense sticks is a graveyard and not a house.

Moreover, there is a tendency to go to famous place of pilgrimage in the state or the nation on festivals, fairs and celebrations.

6.17 Tendency to have a *Guru* (a religious mentor):

It is not compulsory for the people including the *Karadiya Rajputto* have a *Guru* (a religious mentor) but one who does not have a *Guru* is looked down upon. There is a tendency to have a *Guru* in the community. The *Guru* visits the family of his disciple for worship and holds sessions for preaching. Traditionally, *Gurus* donated grain, clothes, etc. in the present time education, urbanization, a new tendency of donating cash along with grain, clothes, etc. has developed. The *Guru* binds a rosary in the neck of his disciple, recites holy words and strikes his back. The Rajput people keep a fast on Thursdays and a *Guru* is invited in the family that is going to have a *Guru*. The *Guru* whispers a secret word as well as a message of religion, loyalty, unity, service and sacrifice in the ears of the members of a family. He binds rosaries in the neck of the women and children in the family. Members of family take pledge of service, abstaining from meat, wine and quarrels. They are advised to worship God twice a day. This tradition however is decreasing day by day and people's religious tendencies are also changing.

Table: 117

5.9 Table showing details of the respondents' opinion about a *Guru* (religious mentor):

Sr. No.	Whether Believing in Accepting a <i>Guru</i>	Number	%
1.	Yes	96	48.0
2.	No	101	50.5
3.	No information	03	1.5
	Total	200	100

There is a tradition of accepting a *Guru* (a religious mentor) in Hinduism. In this regard, 96 (48.0%) respondents have accepted their personal *Guru* while 101 (50.5%) respondents have not made any *Guru* so far. 03 (1.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 118

5.9.1 Table showing details of the religious sect in which they believe):

Sr. No.	Name of the <i>Guru</i>	Number	%
1.	<i>Lalji Maharaj</i>	32	33.33(16.0)
2.	<i>Swami Atmaprakashdasji</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
3.	<i>Shri 1008 Vishwambhar Bharatibapu</i>	03	3.12 (1.5)
4.	<i>Param Pujya Bajarangdasbapu</i>	01	1.04 (0.5)
5.	<i>Purushottamlalji Maharaj</i>	03	3.12 (1.5)
6.	<i>Ramdasbapu (Kani)</i>	03	3.12 (1.5)
7.	<i>Hariprasadji</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
8.	<i>Anandbhashya Maharajshri</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
9.	<i>Jagadguru Rameshwaranandacharya</i>	01	1.04 (0.5)
10.	<i>Sachchidanandji</i>	01	1.04 (0.5)
11.	<i>Swami Shingadawalabapu</i>	03	3.12 (1.5)
12.	<i>Paliyadbapu</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
13.	<i>Ramprasannacharyaji</i>	01	1.04 (0.5)
14.	<i>Sant Munidasbapu (Sanand)</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
15.	<i>Ramlaxmandasji Maharaj</i>	04	4.16 (2.0)
16.	<i>Mahant Shri Tulasidasji Maharaj</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
17.	<i>Maniramdasji Maharaj</i>	19	19.79 (9.5)
18.	<i>Ranchhoddasji (Sayla)</i>	08	8.33 (4.0)
19.	<i>Shri Ajendraprasadji</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
20.	<i>Rakeshprasadji</i>	01	1.04 (0.5)
21.	<i>Shri Amarabapu</i>	02	2.08 (1.0)
22.	No information	03	(1.5)
23.	Not applicable (Don't accept a <i>Guru</i>)	101	(50.5)
	Total	200	100

Out of the 96 (48.0%) respondents have accepted their personal *Guru*, 32 (33.33%/16.0%) of them accepted *Lalji Maharaj*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Atma Prakashdasji Swami* as their personal *Guru*, 03 (3.12%/1.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri 1008 Vishwambhar Bharti* as their personal *Guru*, 01 (1.04%/0.5%) respondents have accepted *Param Pujya Bajarangdas Bapu* as their personal *Guru*, 03 (3.12%/1.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Purushottamlalji Maharaj* as their personal *Guru*, 03 (3.12%/1.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri*

Ramdasbapu (Kani) as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted Shri Hariprasadji as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Anandbhashya Maharaj* as their personal *Guru*, 01 (1.04%/0.5%) respondents have accepted Shri Jagadguru Rameshwaeranandacharya as their personal *Guru*, 01 (0.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Sachchidanandji* as their personal *Guru*, 03 (3.12%/1.5%/0.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Swami Shingadawalabapu* as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Paliyadbapu* as their personal *Guru*, 01 (1.04%/0.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Ram Prasannacharyaji* as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Sant Munidas Bapu* (Sanand) as their personal *Guru*, 04 (4.16%/2.0%) respondents have accepted Shri Ram Lakshamandasji Maharaj as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted Mahant *Shri Tulasidasji Maharaj* as their personal *Guru*, 19 (19.79%/9.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Maniradasji Maharaj* as their personal *Guru*, 08 (8.33%/4.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Ranchhoddasji* (Sayla) as their personal *Guru*, 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Ajendraprasadji* as their personal *Guru*, 01 (1.04%/0.5%) respondents have accepted *Shri Rakeshprasadji* as their personal *Guru* and 02 (2.08%/1.0%) respondents have accepted *Shri Abharaprasadji* as their personal *Guru*. 03 (1.5%) respondents have given no information. This is not applicable to 101 (50.5%) respondents as they have not accepted any *Guru* as yet.

6.18 Tendency towards Fasting and Religious Vows:

In this region, religious faith is found more strongly in the women than the Rajput males. Women worship their main goddess and god. They keep fasts and take vows to fulfill their wishes like getting a son, long and healthy life of their husbands, happiness in the family and other desires. The Rajput women of this area keep fast on the eleventh day of the months, Full-Moon days, different other days, especially Mondays. On the day of fast, they get up early, take bath, clean the idols of the family god or goddess, light a lamp-incense sticks and bow before them. They eat only once and take food permissible on the day of fast like potato, seeds called *Moraiyo* and *Rajagaro* and fruits. Women keep fast on the days like *Gaurivrat*, *Kevdatrij*, Sixteen Mondays, *Bhakhariyo* Monday, *Sakariyo* Monday, *vrata* of Santoshimata, Dashama, *Evrat-Jevrat*, *DharoAtham* and so on. Rajput maidens keep the *vrata* of *Gaurivrat*. Most people keep *vrata* of Janmashtami, *Deouthi Agiyaras* and *Shivaratri*. In this area, very few males keep fasts as compared to women. Moreover, Rajput people

keep *vrata* of *Adhikmas* (additional month in Hindu calendar) and *Chaturmas* by eating only once. Programs of mass singing of prayers are arranged.

6.19 Tendency towards Non-Vegetarian Food:

The general public believes that Rajput people take non-vegetarian food but this is a matter of study. All Rajput people are not non-vegetarian but it could be presumed that they may have accepted non-vegetarian food as a warrior community. Rajput people taking Non-vegetarian eat chicken, Cock and goat meat. The picture of the Rajput people in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area in Gujarat is different in this respect as compared to the Rajput communities of Rajasthan, North India, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The level of taking non-vegetarian food is low due to geographical conditions, enough production of food grain and the impact of religion. Most Rajput families negate non-vegetarian food and consider it a sin and believe in kindness to animals.

Table: 119

7.13 Table showing use of non-vegetarian food of the respondents:

Sr. No.	Whether taking Non-vegetarian Food	Number	%
1.	Yes	07	3.5
2.	No	187	93.5
3.	No information	06	3.0
	Total	200	100

187 (93.5%) respondents out of 200 of them say that they do not take non-vegetarian food and are vegetarian only while 07 (3.5%) respondents eat non-vegetarian food. Although the Rajput have been associated with non-vegetarian food since the time of Princely states, when they came into contact with religious *gurus* and different religious sects, they kept away from non-vegetarian food as it is considered connected with violence. They tried to show that they were vegetarian in public even if they used non-vegetarian food in private. The family members and courtiers also said in public that they used vegetarian food following their ruling families. According to a famous saying about the social life of Gujarat, '*Garasiyo Koi di Gozaro Nahi*' (*Garasiyo* is never unholy, *Garasiyo* here is to be taken as the Rajput). Thus, there was practice of

non-vegetarian food in the Rajput community but 187 (93.5%) of the respondents give an unusual kind of answer that they are vegetarian.

It is possible that, as per the information received earlier that 40.0% respondent are associated with Swaminarayan sect, with the *Swaddhyay Parivaar* and *Gayatri Parivaar* which are branches of the *Vaishnav Marg* (core Hinduism) which may have affected their food habit.

Average Gujarati is generally identified a '*Dal-Bhatiya*' (soup and rice) eater but if we look at the composition of the population of Gujarat this is not true. Almost 40 to 45% population of the state comprises of *Baxi Panch* (SCBC-Social and Economical Backward Class) which include castes like *Anjana Chaudhary*, *Ahir*, *Bharwad* (Shepherds), *Rabari* (Cow Breeders) and many others. Excluding some of these castes, many castes in this section are taking non-vegetarian food. Major population in the *Baxi Panch* castes is that of the *Koli* community. The *Koli* of South Gujarat is involved with occupation of fishing that live on the sea coast; some of the communities live in the forest area. Whatever is available around you forms your staple food. For example, a coarse food grain called *Nangali* is main food item for the people of Dangs district but it cannot come in the dish of the people of Mehsana district because it does not grow there.

If we take this fact into consideration, it is surprising that in the *Karadiya* Rajput caste which is covered in the study and which belongs to the *Baxi-Panch* group, there is no use of non-vegetarian food. 06 (3.0%) respondents have given no information.

6.20 Beliefs Regarding Tattoos:

In the *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, there was a traditional tendency to get tattoos on the body just as other castes like the *Ahir*, *Mer*, *Rabari* (cow breeders), Shepherds and *Koli Patel*. Today, however, this tradition of decorating body is decreasing day by day. Tattoos on the cheeks, face, arms on the bodies of men and women are found in the older generation but in the new generation this tradition of getting tattoos is not found because tattoos once made remain on the body permanently. Today, among young people the craze of having tattoos by new methods has increased due to education, media, urbanization and westernization because they could be removed and redone.

Earlier beliefs regarding tattoos were found in the Rajput community of this region but, today, the tendency to have tattoos done is found in a limited number of people only. Some of the beliefs regarding tattoos are as under:

- (1) A tattoo on the wrist of the right hand makes it possible to see mothers;
- (2) A tattoo in the shape of a cone begets wealth;
- (3) A tattoo on the wrist of the left hand helps one meet mother-in-law;
- (4) A tattoo in the shape of a *Trishul* (a three headed spear) protects one from fear of any kind.

Tattoos of a friend's name, a flower, a goddess, name of Lord Ram, a picture of Hanumanji and religious marks are also found. Thus, traditional tattoos are found for beautification, as marks of identity of a caste and religiosity.

6.21 Ritual of death:

In the community of this area covered under study, when a person died, certain expenses for social and religious purposes are made by the family. When a man died, the family is criticized if it does not perform rituals like giving a feast to the community on the twelfth or thirteenth day, a public reading of a scripture called *Garudpuran*, a public celebration by singing prayer songs, a ritual called *Pat* (a special worship) at night and so on. A feast on the twelfth day of the death is not compulsory but it is still found, especially when an elderly person died. Rituals like writing a letter on a dirty paper, shaving off of one's head, public mourning, giving a feast on the twelfth or thirteenth day, reading of *Garudpuran* publicly at night, mass singing prayer songs publicly, performing a special worship called a *Pat* and so on are performed when an elderly person died. A public feast of a special sweet called *ladu* is given to relatives on the twelfth day.

These rituals of giving a feast on the twelfth day, mass singing of prayer songs and so on are performed with a belief that the soul of the dead gets a place in heaven and permanent peace. This tradition has changed to a certain extent but it is still continued in the community.

6.22 Ritual of *Babari*:

The *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area is a male-dominated community and therefore, a son is given more importance than a daughter. Certain religious rituals are performed for the safety and well-being of a male child which

include getting *babari* (*Chaulkriya*) of the first-born child done most importantly. *Babari* (*Chaulkriya* or shaving off of the hair) is done generally at the age of five and it is performed at the temple of the family goddess or god. On this occasion, all relatives and members of the community, a Brahmin and a barber participate in the ritual. A barber shaves off child's hair and the child's paternal aunt or sister holds the falling hair in the front part of her sari for which she is gifted a pair of clothes or a fresh sari and utensils. Jaggery and coriander seeds as well as *naivedhya* are distributed among the people present there. The barber is given a dhoti or a silver ornament and a good amount of money as gifts. Many times this ritual is combined with another socio-religious celebration. Some rich persons celebrate this ritual by giving a grand feast. Most people celebrate this occasion of *Babari* with simplicity. Some people prefer to celebrate this ritual in the mother's parental family.

6.23 Beliefs regarding the tradition of *Sati*:

The Rajput people consider the tradition of being a *sati* as a part of religion. Rajput women are faithful to their husbands and are considered as the second half of their husband's body. They dedicate everything-their body, soul and wealth to their husbands. They remain partners to the happiness or miseries of their husbands. They cannot tolerate criticism of or any blame on their husbands. In this region, the Rajput community religious sentiments are connected with the tradition of *Sati* even today.

The Rajput women in this region consider goddess *Parvati* as *Mahasati* (the greatest *Sati*) who had sacrificed her life when her husband was insulted at her parents' house. Goddess *Sita* (Lord *Ram*'s wife) had decided to go on an exile together with her husband for fourteen years and *Sati* *Damayanti* suffered miseries with her husband in the forest. At the place called *Devrana*, a woman called *Rupkunvarba* became *sati*, an event the Rajput people consider the best legacy of the great character for women. They get inspiration very proudly from such events and believe them to be their ideal. People call such a woman *Satima* who gets burnt alive on her husband's death in his pyre or later. Women of the Rajput community of this region believe that wives who sacrifice their lives after their husbands will get in heaven the same peace, prosperity and happiness as they enjoyed on the earth.

The Rajput people place women who become *Sati* at a high position in the society. A Rajput woman called *Devkunvarba* became *sati* after her husband's death, walked in

the streets of the village putting on a red sari like a newly-married woman along with all ornaments and garlands on her wrists and in the neck. Villagers walked with her beating drums and playing other instruments shouting loudly *Satimani Jai* (hail *Satima*). The purpose behind this loud noise was to suppress the screams of the burning woman. The Rajput people believe that the screams might prove to be true if they are heard, they might turn to be like a curse and bring miseries to them. There could be a calamity like diseases or famine, too.

The educated Rajput women of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area believe that Rupkunvarba burnt herself alive along with the dead body of her husband just because of the false pride of the family or the sati tradition or to leave the impression that she was loyal to her husband or for the pressure of her husband's family.

The Rajput people of this region combine the sati tradition with religious sentiments. They go to the temple of a satima to have her *darshan* (a holy look at her) in order to prevent a calamity like a deluge, to get children and to keep away diseases and pain and sufferings. People also take a holy vow at the satima's temple. The Rajput people of this region believe even today that *Satimata* (goddess *Sati*) protects them. Moreover, the reason behind this tradition is believed to be forbidding widow-remarriages.

Today, however, people believe this tradition is based on ignorance and is irreligious, inhuman and cruel due to factors like education, the British education, urbanization, equality, efforts made by social reformers and so on. Moreover, today no woman becomes a sati on her husband's death and the tendency to do so has completely changed. Women do not remarry and remain widows for the rest of their lives. The Government of India law called '*Satipratha Atkayat Dharo-1929*' (Prevention of the *Sati*-tradition) for the dignity, respect and freedom from exploitation of women has brought a great change in the tradition of Sati.

6.24 Beliefs regarding good deeds-sins and heaven-hell:

Man is associated with a number of social, economic, cultural, political, educational, community organizations or institutes like marriage as well as religious institutes. Therefore, concepts of good and bad deeds, heaven and hell have also developed. The *Karadiya* Rajput people of this region believe that God is displeased if a person commits a sin and gives that person punishment and she/he has to undergo many

miseries and has to go to hell after death. So, people keep good conduct and perform good deeds such as giving alms and donations. People believe that one goes away from the religious path if she/he commits a sin and such a person goes to hell after death and therefore they keep away from committing sins.

In order to earn *Punya* (reward for good deeds) people go on a pilgrimage, give alms to the poor, take bath at a confluence believed to be holy, feed grass to animals, give grain to birds, give food grain and cloth to the poor, give donations for water-huts, to schools, rest houses for travelers and so on. God is pleased by such good deeds and doing so is man's moral and religious duty. Man is rewarded with happiness for his good deeds and the very idea of a sin spreads fear among the Rajput people. They believe that sins result into death, miseries, illness, insanity, and diseases of the cattle and low yielding of crops. The Rajput youth, however, do not strongly believe in the ideas of sins and rewards for good deeds or hell and heaven. Education, scientific view of life and such other factors have brought a change in the ideas of sin and good deeds as well as hell and heaven.

6.25 Tendency towards Untouchability:

The level of education in the *Karadiya* Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area is very low as compared to other upper castes. Due to this low level of education, concepts of high and low castes are very strong in the community. A change in their tendency towards untouchability is found before and after the Independence of India.

Before the Independence, every caste-community lived according to its own traditions and culture. In the traditional system, there was a concept of untouchability-that is, your body gets contaminated if you touched a Harijan or a person belonging to the lowest of a low caste and food, water or utensils were believed to be contaminated if a Harijan touched them. In every village, residences of the low caste people like the *Harijan-Vankar* (weavers), *Chamar*(cobblers), *Bhangi* (scavengers) and *Vaghari* (a backward community serving the upper castes)-were on the outskirts of the village. The area where the *Harijans* lived was called *Harijanvas*. There was a time when the Harijans could not enter temples or public places like inns. If a *Harijan*man or woman came across the Rajput man or woman, the former stood aside and allowed the latter pass first. The *Harijan* community could not sit alongside the members of upper castes in the *Panchayat* meetings nor could they take part in the discussion at such

meetings. They could not mix with the upper caste people in the public celebrations, festivals or religious occasions. On the farm, they were given tea or water in separate utensils and were given water by pouring into their separate pots. On festivals, they were given left over food. The scavengers were asked to fetch dead animals and clean streets. Such exploitation was found there in the past.

After the Independence, all the same, a change is found in their traditional condition due to contacts, education, British or Western education, humanitarianism, liberalism, globalization, industrialization, role of media, government laws like the Untouchability 'Eradication Law-1955' (Atrocity Act-1955), Activities of the Christian Missionaries, Panchayatiraj and so on. In the past, if someone touched a *Harijan*, he/she was made clean by sprinkling water on her/his body. Today, however, there is a change in such traditions; Rajput people are also changing in this regard. Still, the *Harijan* community sits separately in temples, village meetings and public celebrations of festivals. It could be said, however, that the situation for the low caste people is much better and quite different from what it was in the past. A day will come when they will come out of this stigma.

Table: 120

7.3 Table showing the respondents' opinion about untouchability:

Sr. No.	Practice of Untouchability	Number	%
1.	Yes	12	6.0
2.	No	187	93.5
3.	No information	01	0.5
	Total	200	100

The level of untouchability is high in the rural area. Out of the 200 respondents, however, 187 (93.5%) of them oppose untouchability or show that they have given up the practice. This situation shows equality in society although 12 (6.0%) respondents say that they believe in the practice of untouchability with lower castes. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 121

7.3.1 Table showing the respondents' reasons for the practice of untouchability:

Sr. No.	Respondents' reasons for the practice of untouchability	Number	%
1.	For keeping respect for higher castes	07	58.33(3.5)
2.	Tradition and social customs	03	25.0 (1.5)
3.	To keep distance between Castes	01	8.33 (0.5)
4.	To preserve the samskara of the children and members	01	8.33 (0.5)
5.	No information	01	(0.5)
6.	Not applicable (Do not believe in untouchability)	187	(93.5)
	Total	200	100

The 12 (6.0%) respondents who accept the idea of untouchability and practice have given reasons for this practice. 07 (58.33%/3.5%) respondents say that they practice it in order to keep distance from the lower castes to maintain their higher status, 03 (25.0%/1.5%) respondents follow it as a tradition, 01 (8.33%/0.5%) respondents say that they practice it in order to keep distance from lower castes, 01 (8.33%/0.5%) respondents say that they practice it in order to give good bringing up to children while this question is not applicable to 187 (93.0%) respondents who do not practice untouchability. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

Table: 122

7.4 Table showing the respondents' opinion about their relations with other castes:

Sr. No.	Mixing with Lower Castes	Number	%
1.	Yes	171	85.5
2.	No	28	14.0
3.	No information	01	0.5
	Total	200	100

In the rural society, social relations among castes are broad-based. Social and religious festivals are celebrated as symbols of the community celebrations. There is a general belief that any relation social or personal relations are based on caste, so,

members of one caste keep relations with other castes keeping certain distance. As found from the information collected in the study, as many as 171 (85.5%) *Karadiya* Rajput respondents mix with members of lower castes freely. Thus, the features of Hindu caste system are not seen here today as noted by the sociologists, G. S. Ghurye. At the same time, 28 (14.0%) respondents do not mix freely with members of lower castes. 01 (0.5%) respondents have given no information.

6.26 Religious Festivals and Celebrations:

Festivals and celebrations, whether social or religious are the bases of the Indian culture. Glimpses of the development of culture and history of traditions are reflected in them. Every caste celebrates its own festivals with a great zeal and vigor. Mostly, all festivals are meant for protection of the self and society and agriculture besides religious traditions, entertainment and so on. Gods and goddesses are worshipped and offered a *naivedhya* (offering) of fruit, flowers, milk, sweets, sacrifice of birds and beasts and so on in order to please them.

In the Rajput community of this region, various holy days and festivals and celebrations hold important place as social, religious and historical traditions of culture.

The following table shows days of various festivals when they are celebrated:

Sr. No.	Month	Day	Name of Festival
1.	<i>Kartak</i>	First, Second and Eleventh in the first fortnight	New Year, Bhaibij, Devuthi Agiyaras
2.	<i>Magshar</i>	--	--
3.	<i>Posh</i>	<i>Poonam</i> (Full-Moon day)	<i>Poshi Poonam</i>
4.	<i>Maha</i>	14 th January, Fourteenth day in the second half	<i>Makarsnkrant</i> (Kite Flying), <i>Mahashivratri</i>
5.	<i>Fagan</i>	<i>Poonam</i> , First day in the second half	<i>Holi, Dhuleti</i>
6.	<i>Chaitra</i>	Ninth day in the first half	<i>Ramnavmi</i> (Birthday of Lord Ram)
7.	<i>Vaishakh</i>	Third and fourth day in the	<i>Akhatrij, Ganeshchaturthi</i>

		first half	
8.	<i>Jeth</i>	Eleventh and <i>Poonam</i>	<i>Bheem Agryaras, Vat (Vad) Savitri</i>
9.	<i>Ashadh</i>	Second, <i>Poonam</i> in the first half, (<i>Amas</i>) New Moon day	<i>Ashadhi bij, Guru Purnima, Divaso</i>
10.	<i>Shravan</i>	Fifth in the first half, fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth and Ninth	<i>Nag Panchami, Rakhi, Bolchoth, Randhanchhath, Janmashthami, Nom</i>
11.	<i>Bhadarvo</i>	Fifth in the first half, from first to the New Moon day in the second half	<i>Rishi Panchami, Shraddha (Worship of Ancestors)</i>
12.	<i>Aso</i>	First to Ninth in the first half, Tenth, thirteenth, fourteenth, New Moon day in the second half	<i>Navratri, Dussehra, Dhan Teras, Kali Chaudas, Diwali</i>

6.26.1 New Year:

Arrival of the New Year is celebrated as the festival of joy. People get up early and welcome the New Year by lighting a lamp and decorating the front of their houses with Rangoli. On this day, people visit their relatives and friends to convey good wishes for the New Year. They convey their good wishes by words like *Sal Mubarak, Nootan Varshbhinandan*, Happy New Year, *Jai Shri Krishna, Jai Mataji* and so on. Young people touch feet of the elders who give them blessings. People share sweets with one another.

The next day after *Diwali* is called the New Year or *Besatu Varas* by the Rajput community. A white long cloth is spread at house of the Chief or the *Sarpanch* (Heard of the Village *Panchayat*) or in the centre place of the village. Villagers assemble, sit there and convey good wishes to one another. Tea-snacks and sweets are distributed and there is a public celebration called *Dayro*. The purpose behind this gathering is to forget personal quarrels and animosity. The forecast for the coming year is announced by a Brahmin who reads from the almanac possibilities of the rains, business, diseases and epidemic and so on. Children, youngsters and women visit every house, get blessings of the elders and share sweets.

6.26.2 Bhaibij:

This is a festival of love between brothers and sisters. On this day, brothers visit their sisters for a lunch or dinner at their houses. Brothers are believed to live long and enjoy good health by eating food at their sisters' house with their blessings. Brothers give gifts like cash, clothes and so on. This festival is also known as *Veerpasali* in this area. This festival is celebrated with great zeal and faith as a symbol of pure love between brothers and sisters.

6.26.3 Devdiwali and Tulsivivah:

A religious festival called *Tulasivivah* is celebrated with a great pomp on the day of Devdiwali in the whole of Gujarat state. It is celebrated with great zeal in Saurashtra especially in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area. On the eleventh day of the first half of Hindu month called *Kartak*, the traditional marriage of Lord *Shri Krishna* and *Tulsi* is celebrated. The idol of *Shri Krishna* is taken in a procession in a chariot in the streets of the village. Villagers offer sugarcane grown in the farms of the village to the idol first and then it is distributed in the village. At night, people gather in the centre of the village and participate in garba dance and singing of prayer songs with music.

It is believed that gods had celebrated this festival of *Devdiwali*. Lord Vishnu (Krishna) had got married to Tulsi on this day and Lord Shiva had killed a tyrant giant called Jalandhar. Some people keep a fast on this day.

6.26.4 Poshipoonam (Full Moon Day of the month of Posh):

On this day, small girls observe a *vrata* (special worship) for their brothers. They do not take any food until their brothers allow them but their brothers do allow them to take food. Sisters make a hole in a loaf, look at the Moon through the hole and perform worship for the welfare of their brothers.

6.26.5 Makarsankranti (Festival of Kite Flying):

On this day, the Sun enters the zodiac constellation called *Makarrashi* the period prior to this day is believed not to be good for any auspicious occasion. This day indicates the end of inauspicious time. On this day, people take a formal bath and give donations to Brahmins; give fodder to animals especially cows; people prepare a sweet called *talsankali* from jiggery and sesame and eat it during the day. This festival is also known as *Uttarayan* and all people fly kites and enjoy fruits like berries and sugarcane. Thus, this festival is believed to be the festival of giving-showing charity.

6.26.6 Mahashivratri (Festival of Lord Shiva):

On this day, Lord Shiva is worshipped by offering to *Shivling* (A black stone round at the top considered as a symbol of Lord Shiva) in the Shiva temple various items like a mixture of milk and water, white powder called *Abil*, *Gulal* (red powder), rice, leaves of a tree called *Bili*, flower and so on. People lit lamps and incense sticks and bow before the statue of Lord Shiva.

People in this area celebrate this festival with great zeal. They visit the temple of Lord Shiva. There is a constant singing of prayers with music for the whole night a drink called Bhang is distributed among the devotees. People keep a fast on this day and eat only fruits, boiled or baked potatoes and sweet potatoes. Fairs are held at the temples of Lord Shiva at Bhavnath near Junagadh in Saurashtra and at a place called Shamalaji. Moreover, Rajput women inspire their husbands to perform acts of valour, courage and adventure. People pray to Lord Shiva for good life.

6.26.7 Holi:

Holi is a very important festival for the Rajput community. The main event of this festival is to set fire to a heap of firewood. People, especially the young people and small children make preparations for the fire with great zeal. Children have already prepared cakes of cow-dung called *Horaiya*. They also visit homes to collect cow-dung and firewood. They make a small pit in the outskirts of the village and put a pot with gram seeds, wheat, water and so on and make a heap of firewood with cow-dung cakes on it on this pit. At an auspicious time declared by the Brahmin, they lit fire. People gather around this fire, perform worship of the fire by offering *Abil-Gulal* (white and red powder), popcorn of Juar, dates, gram, coconuts and so on into the fire. This worship is done to commemorate the devotion of a devotee called Prahlad. Young persons take circles with water pots pouring water around the fire. People believe that the heat of the fire cures diseases. Some people also take circles around the fire with a bunch of grass lighting it in the fire. Children and young people show to their cattle a burning wood with a belief that it will keep them healthy. Performances with sticks and swords are organized; some youngsters perform wrestling, too. Horse racing is also organized. These traditions are, however, disappearing day by day.

6.26.8 Dhuleti (Festival of Colours):

The festival of *Dhuleti* is celebrated on the second day of *Holi*. The burning of *Holika*

and saving of Prahlad from the fire is celebrated with great joy and vigour. On this day, people-men and women, friends and relatives throw *Abil-Gulal* (white and red powder), colours and water on one another. Children throw colourful water on one another with sprinklers. There is a lot of joy and shouting around. Younger brothers-in-law play with their sisters-in-law with colours and there is a lot of fun. Everybody's face is smeared with colours showing friendliness and good relations.

6.26.9 *Ramnavami:*

Ninth day in the first half of the month of *Chaitra* is celebrated as *Ramnavami* (Lord Ram's birthday). People visit the temple of Lord Ram in order to have his *darshan* (formal look at his face). Some people observe a fast on this day. At night, programs of singing prayer songs and music are arranged in different parts of the village. This festival conveys the virtuous message of Lord Ram's life.

6.26.10 *Akhatrij:*

This festival falls on the third day in the first half of the month of *Vaishakh*. In villages this day is considered auspicious for the farmers to begin their farming. On this day, people divide their property among brothers and families are broken. That is why it is also called a day of quarrels. The Rajput people consider this day good for beginning a new business, building a new house, beginning the tilling of the land and hiring a new partner in farming and so on.

6.26.11 *Ganeshchaturthi:*

This festival falls on the fourth day in the first half of the month of *Bhadarvo*. It is also known as Ganeshchoth. This festival is celebrated in villages and towns for a week. On this day, people establish the idol of Lord Ganesh on a wooden platform. They worship by singing songs and offer sweets called *ladu* to Lord Ganesh. People enjoy the offering of *ladu* during the festival.

6.26.12 *Bhim Agiyaras:*

The festival of *Bhim Agiyaras* is very important in this area. On this day, some people keep a fast without water; some people take only fruits. It is believed that during the time of the Mahabharat Bhim had kept this *vrata* (worship). People also believe that anyone who keeps this *vrata* gets rewarded for all the *agiyaras* (eleventh day of every month) festivals of the year. The elderly men and women celebrate two *agiyaras* festivals by keeping fasts and worshipping on those two days. Some celebrate these *agiyaras* festivals for four and a half month. They begin this chain from the eleventh day in the first half of the month of *Ashadh*.

6.26.13 Vat (Vad) Savitri Vrata:

This festival is celebrated mostly by married women. It is also known as *Pati Vrata*. Women observe this vrata for the long and healthy life of their husbands. They observe fast and worship the Banyan tree. This vrata was first observed by *Sati Savitri* in order to get her dead husband from *Yamraj* (god of Death).

6.26.14 Ashadhi Bij:

The second day in the first half of the month of *Ashadh* is celebrated as *Ashadhi Bij*. People consider this day as sacred and auspicious. They organize occasions like engagements in the family. Many people, especially women observe fast by taking only fruits. Many people take food only once during the day after seeing the Moon in the evening.

6.26.15 Gurupurnima:

This festival is celebrated on the Full Moon day in the month of *Ashadh*. People visit the temple of gods or a *Guru* (teacher) on this day and bow before the idol of a god or before the *Guru*. They offer a gift or cash at his feet according to her/his economic condition. This gift is called *Gurudakshina* (a reward). People make a determination to walk on the path of righteousness and perform good deeds.

6.26.16 Divaso:

This festival is celebrated on *Amavasya* (the New Moon day) of the month of *Ashadh*. Married women keep a *vrata* (worship with a fast) for getting children and for the long life of their children. Some women eat only once in the day; some women keep awake for the whole night. Moreover, women also keep a vrata called *Jivantikavrata*. Some women keep a vrata called *Jayaparvati* and observe fasts on all Mondays of the month of *Shravan* like other religious festivals. On all these days, people keep a fast and visit the temple of Lord Shiva and perform worship there.

6.26.17 Nagpanchami:

On this day a snake or snake-god is worshipped. A picture of a snake is painted on a wall of the house and it is worshipped according to the tradition. People offer to the snake a *naivedhya* of milk or *kheer* (pudding) at the place where a snake is supposed to live. Women eat only once during the day. This day is also called *Nagpancham*.

6.26.18 Rakhsabandhan or Rakhi:

This festival is the holy festival of relationship between brothers and sisters. It takes place on the Full Moon day in the month of *Shravan*. It is also known as *Balev* in the rural area. On this day, Rajput women tie a *rakhi* (a holy decorative thread) on the

wrist of their brothers and feed them sweets. *Rakhi* or a red string called *nadachhadi* is considered to be a symbol of faith, help and protection. Sisters give blessings to their brothers for victory over enemies and all troubles in life. Brothers also promise to their sisters to protect them. Brothers give a gift or cash to their sisters some Rajput people change their *Janoi* (a sacred thread worn across the chest) and pray to their family goddess.

6.26.19 *Bol Choth:*

On this day, women worship a cow and its calf with *Abil-Gulal* (white and red powders), rice, flower and so on. They eat food only after this worship is over. Some women eat uncooked food grains and eat only once on this day.

6.26.20 *Randhanchhath:*

As the name suggests, people cook a variety of food-*puri* (fried pan-cakes), *potaya* (shallow fried cakes) and prepare sweets like *Mohanthal*, *Magas*, *ladu* (sweets made from chickpea or wheat flour, jiggery and *ghee*), hotchpotch (a food prepared from a mixture of rice and pulses) and a soup of butter milk, vegetables and so on. After the cooking is over, they smear the fire place with slurry of cow dung and worship it. Poor people visit houses to beg food and are given a few items including a sweet called *lapasi*.

6.26.21 *Sheetalasataim:*

This day falls just on the previous day to *Janmashthami*. On this day, goddess Sheetalamata is worshipped for the health of children. Women keep cotton, leaves of holy grass called *durva* and so on in the fireplace which is freshly smeared with cow-dung slurry and worship it with *Abil-Gulal* and rice. This ritual is called ‘cooling the fireplace.’ On this day, women keep a fast and eat only once a day and worship Sheetalamata (goddess Sheetala) in the temple or at home. Women do not cook on this day and eat food cooked on the previous day because it is Sheetalamata’s day when she roams from house to house and lie down in the fireplace. People do not lit because they believe that Sheetalamata cannot tolerate heat and fire.

6.26.22 *Janmashthami:*

This festival is celebrated as Lord Krishna’s birthday. It is also known as *Gokulatham* in this region. The month of *Shravan* in the *Vikram* calendar is considered the holiest month. This festival is very important for the Rajput community because they consider themselves companions and descendants of Lord *Shri Krishna* and they celebrate it with great zeal. People keep a fast and organize singing of prayer songs

with music in temples till midnight on the previous night. They go to temples at midnight, sing prayers loudly and throw *Abil-Gulal* on one another and distribute Prasad to share joy of the birth of Lord Krishna. On the day of *Janmashthami*, they keep away from jobs and farming. A program of breaking a pot full of curds and butter hanging at a height is also organized. Some youngsters also engage themselves in the ritual of gambling privately. Moreover, fairs are also held on this day at temples of Lord Krishna and people participate with great joy.

6.26.23 Naum (The day next to Janmashthami):

The day next to *Janmashthami* is also celebrated as a day of *Parana* (breaking the fast). On this day, people visit temples to have a look at the newly born Krishna and cradle him at their convenient time especially in the morning. They swing the cradle joyfully and enjoy the *Prasad* (offering) called *Panjari*.

6.26.24 Rishipanchami and Samapancham:

People celebrate these festivals, too. They fall on the fifth day in the month of *Bhadarvo*. They invite Brahmins and give them a meal. Many people organize a week-long program of reading of a scripture called *Bhagvatpuran*. Close relatives of a deceased person in the family keep a fast on this day and dedicate the supposed reward for it to the dead soul. Thus, there is a collective worship on this day.

This day called *Rishipanchami* or *Samapancham* is celebrated by the whole Rajput community. There is a tradition of eating grain called *Samo* which grows on its own. People follow this tradition with faith and respect. Fairs are held in many villages in which people participate and enjoy.

6.26.25 Pitrupaksha or Shraddhapaksha:

The second half of the month of *Bhadarvo* or *Bhadra Vad* is known as *Pitrupaksha* or the *Shraddhapaksha*. People give a meal of *Kheer* (milk pudding), *puri* and so on to the members of the family-brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces so that the souls of the dead ancestors get appeased. This period is considered to be the mourning period and no auspicious events like weddings or engagements are organized.

6.26.26 Navratri:

This festival known as *Norta* in the rural area is called *Navratri*. It lasts for nine nights. People in this region perform *Yajna* (worship through an altar) in front of the temple of family goddess and also perform *garba* dances for nine nights with great joy. An earthen pot with holes and a lamp constantly burning in it is kept near the

statue of family goddess in every house. Men and women observe a fast during these nine days. Some people break their fast on the ninth day after they have completed their worship on the eighth day. A pot with holes and a lamp inside it called *Garbo* is kept at the centre of the dancing men and women in a circle. They dance till late in the night for nine nights. *Garba* dance gets over with an *arati* (last ritual of worship with five or seven lamps lit together) every night.

6.26.27 Dussehra:

This festival is also known as *Vijayadashami*. On this day, Lord *Shri* Ram had killed Ravan. So, the victory of Ram is celebrated with joy and happiness. There is a tradition of eating items called *Fafda* (deep-fried flat item made from chickpea flour) and *Julebi* (deep-fried sugary item). On this day, competitions like playing swords, horse racing, sports with sticks and racing of bullock carts and so on are organized. The Rajput males worship their weapons or call a Brahmin to perform worship of weapons like swords, spears, shields and so on. These traditions are however, disappearing day by day. Altar worship is organized publicly for the welfare of people and sweets like *sukhadi* are distributed as Prasad.

This festival is celebrated with great joy and zeal. In the time of the Princely states, a victory procession was taken out in the streets of every town and village. This tradition is still continued even today. People take out a procession of horses and an elephant sometimes. The *Kshatriya* males decorate trees called *Khijado* or *Samado* and worship their weapons.

6.26.28 Dhanteras:

On this day, *Dhanvantari*, the *Vaidya* (a Doctor) of gods had appeared on the earth. People light a lamp at night for the health and happiness of the family. They visit the temples of Lord *Shri* Krishna and goddess Lakshmiji (goddess of wealth) and they worship goddess Lakshmiji and cash coins, gold and silver ornaments. Business men worship their books. Some people buy new property and organize its inauguration programs.

6.26.29 Kalichudas:

People consider this day as the day of *Yamraj* (god of death) and also that of goddess Mahakali. They offer a *naivedhya* (food and other items like liquor, a cock and so on) to family goddess and the statues of their ancestral martyrs called *Shurpura*. Some

worshippers of black magic go to graveyards to perform rites to control ghost and witches.

6.26.30 Diwali (Festival of Lamps):

This festival, celebrated on the last day of the year, brings the message of joy and hopes for people through lights brightening the atmosphere around. People clean their houses and decorate the floor by smearing it with cow dung slurry. They decorate front of their doors with *Rangoli* (designs made with coloured powders); decorate their door-frames and walls with embroidered wall-pieces full of beads, pearls and pieces of glass. They hang photos of gods and goddesses on the walls. They light lamps near their thresholds and on the pillars of their compound walls. This is celebrated to commemorate the return of Lord Ram and Sitaji from an exile of fourteen years after Ram's victory over Ravan, the king of Lanka. People eat sweets like *ladu*, *lapasi* and various other food items with joy. People, especially children enjoy fireworks and crackers. The Rajput people worship their weapons like swords and spears on this day. Everybody is very excited and enthusiastic on this day as compared to other festivals.

Thus, the Rajput community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area various festivals taking place during the whole year are traditionally celebrated socially as well as religiously. The value or importance of every festival is different which shows people's religious and cultural sentiments. Faith sometimes blind faith, pomp and unnecessary expenses are also seen in these celebrations. These festivals also display customs, traditions, culture, entertainment, joy and religious sentiments. Today, however, due to several factors like British education, modernization, Westernization, novelty, science and technology, media and so on, there a change in religious practice, its form, celebration, values and its importance and so on. A quite different picture of the traditional form of religion is seen in this area due to high price-rise and lust for novelty in the present 21st century.

Thus, religious and cultural thoughts do prevail in the older generation, men, women and children of the *Karadiya* Rajput community in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area. They believe that the religious practice is the basis of community life. From a sociological point of view, the impact of religion in different forms keeps the hopes of human society alive. It also keeps the humanitarian aspect attached to life permanently.

6.27 Types of Lokvrata (forms of Religious Vows):

In the folk culture of Gujarat, fasts and religious vows (*vrata*) are as important as festivals. There is a belief among the people that by fasting one can please one's *Ishtadev* (main or first god) and by taking religious vows one get her/his desires fulfilled. There are two types of religious vows: (1) ancient and scriptural vows and (2) vows taken by maidens or those called *vasta-vastala*. The latter are kept in order to get an ideal husband and for the protection of one's husband and children. Many myths about gods and goddesses are combined with these religious vows. Such vows are famous in folk literature which includes the mother's vow, *gorma's* vow, vows of *dhanako-dhanaki*, Mondays of *Shravan* (a holy month in the Hindu calendar), *tulsivrata*, *poshipoonam*, *molakta* vow, *everat-jevarat*, vow of *Purushottam* (additional) month, vow of *dharo atham* and so on.

The former vows are based on scriptures or *Purana* and are performed as per religious traditions by the experts in rituals. These vows are kept with deep religious faith which strengthens the devotees' religious faith. These vows inspire the devotees to keep away from sinful acts, to give alms to the needy and donate, be kind to every living being and follow religious precepts. As a result, the people of Gujarat are prompted to do acts like feeding the pigeons, fill the ant-hills with flour, give food to street dogs, give fodder to cows, give alms to the *Sadhu* and beggars, give shelters to the homeless, give food to the hungry, help the helpless and so on.

6.28 Vrata, festivals and religious beliefs:

On all these occasions, strings with green leaves are hung in houses, houses are decorated with colourful designs on the ground, a water pot is ceremoniously installed, a series of lamps is lighted or a festival of lamps is celebrated. In short, behind all these *vrata*, festivals, and big and small rituals, the elements of entertainment, welfare and the uplifting of life or the idea of the most desirable form of the ideal life is implicit.

As a child is protector of the family, it is given the highest position but when there is an epidemic, the child becomes an easy victim of those diseases because of its weak resistance. So, the frightened mothers take an oath of many gods and goddesses and that is how right from the days of the Mahabharat mothers of children are mentioned which include aunts, *patala*, *mitra* and so on. Diseases like small pox first of all

victimize the children only. So, in order to eradicate them and wish the child's welfare, sheetalamata is worshipped. Sheetalamata has been worshipped since the middle ages. As mentioned in the scriptures she is seated on a donkey with a broom in one hand, a pot in the other hand and a *supadu* (a utensil made from bamboo sticks to clean grain) on her head. In certain communities, she is specially worshipped. Seventh day in the second half of the month of *Shravan* is celebrated by women as Sheetalasaptami. They eat cold food cooked on the previous day called *Randhanchhath* (the sixth day of the month of *Shravan* known as the cooking day) and soaked in water with dripping hair they worship Sheetalamata. A Brahmin of the village makes the idol of Sheetalamata out of the wet clay with eyes of cowrie and decorates it with juar and pulses of gram. He puts a *chundadi* (head covering) on the idol and sits with it under the tree of berries. Women go there to have a *darshan* (formal seeing at the face) of the goddess in a dish *prasad* (offering) of a mixture of the flour of millet and wheat called *kuler* and a coconut. A Brahmin helps her in the worship and the women return home singing songs in praise of the goddess and take pancakes. The story of *Sheetalamata* is narrated when women smear their hair with hair oil. Just as gods stay in other trees, *Sheetalamata* stays in the tree of berries so, women never eat its fruit. *Sheetalamata* is the goddess of the disease of smallpox; her place is located in the outskirts away from village.

In the same way, if someone is bitten by a rabid dog, people take an oath of the *Hadkai-mata* (goddess of rabies). They build a small temple of the goddess and go there after a few weeks to distribute an offering of *lapasi*. They leave a coconut there and have a formal *darhan* of the goddess. People in this region believe that the person doesn't get rabies by doing so.

Thus, the power of mother is worshipped with different hopes. Some worship for wealth and prosperity, some others with a desire to get progeny or in order to save themselves from diseases or to achieve control over evil elements or to worship a goddess for occult powers.

6.29 Temples:

As this community is Hindu, they believe in many gods and goddesses and build their temples. The relics of such temples are available as proof of this. In every village, there are temples of Lord Ram, Lord Shiva, Hanumanji as well as small temples of

different gods and goddesses and their holy places. People pray also to gods like Shri Swaminaraya, goddess Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), Lord Shiva, *Shri Ram*, Hanumanji, Lakshminarayan, Saibaba and so on and take oaths in their names and keep deep faith in them. They call an exorcist in events like illness of a trouble and try to find the cause and solution with the help of a method called ‘to see grains’ and take an oath of a particular god or goddess. They also take recourse to sacred threads, talisman made by the exorcist and offer naivedhya of coconut, incense-sticks, a lamp of *ghee* to these gods and goddesses and get their blessings. All these rituals are performed at temples or in houses where the holy place of gods and goddesses is fixed. Thus, there are temples or holy places of the gods and goddesses in and around the village in order to satisfy their love for religion where they perform their rituals and live a religious life. Today, however, different changes are seen in their religious tendencies.

6.30 *Madh* (Monasteries):

In every house in this area, there is a *Madh* (a special corner), a separate holy place of family goddess in a separate house in every village where people inhabit. The idol of goddess is ceremoniously installed there. A wooden erection of the temple with an idol of the goddess and arrangement of lamps, incense sticks, etc. and people as well as the exorcist can go there for *darshan* (a formal visit to have a look at the idol). This place is considered the holy place for worship. Once in a year especially during the *Navratri* festival, a special ceremony called ‘*mandvo nakhavo*’ (establish an idol for worship). The exorcist gets possessed; the playing of a special drum takes place inside the *Madh* only. An exorcist is expert in white and black magic and an intermediary between gods and goddesses and this world. A male exorcist is called *Bhuvo* and a woman exorcist is known as *Bhuima*. Their work is to perform black magic, drive away ghosts and witches from the possessed, to perform tricks like ‘to see grains’, to eradicate troubles and miseries and so on. The exorcist trembles like a possessed when the vibrating small drum is played and gives solutions to problems when he is asked questions. After the ritual is over, the work is believed to be complete with words ‘*fulvadiyo vas karo mataji*’ and he is given water. Moreover, people in this community are found absorbed in superstitions, blind faith, faith, religious oaths, astrology, tricks of the exorcists like ‘to see grains’ and making a charmed talisman, get ashes or water charmed and so on. Today, however, the tendency to all of these is changing and it is decreasing due to different factors day by day.

6.31 Katha-Bhajan (Prayers):

In this region, the people under study are deeply interested in storytelling, reciting of the scriptures and singing prayers together with music. These include the recital of the story of Lord Satyanarayan for peace in the house, *Gayatri yajna*, *Bhagvat Katha*, *Ramayan Saptah*, *Ramkatha*, *Garudpuran* on deaths and other such celebrations and so on. Occasionally, in the month of *Shravan* or during the *Navratri* they invite a group from the village or from the nearby villages and organize a programme of singing prayers at their houses.

6.32 Yatra or Jatra (Pilgrimage):

It is believed in all the religious sects that any good work done at a holy place gives good reward. In India, the banks of rivers, confluences, origins of rivers and meeting together of seas are all considered sacred. Besides this, the mountains, large lakes, holy *Kund* (a bathing spot built around with bricks) at places of pilgrimage and so on are believed to be places of pilgrimage. The tradition of visiting or taking a circle around the mounts Girnar or Shetrunjay, Ambaji, Pavagadh on the full-moon day in the month of *Kartik* is still alive. Devotees make a *pradikshana* (take a circle) of the river Narmada also. Every religious person has a desire to go on a pilgrimage, especially at the later stage in life men-women go on a pilgrimage in order to earn good reward (*punya*) and for peace of mind. For example, many people go on a pilgrimage in a group in the month of *Chaitra* which the month of the forefathers. Relatives are informed after deciding the day of the pilgrimage and there is an atmosphere of devotion and religiosity.

This community covered under study lives in rural area and has a tendency to go on a pilgrimage to places like Dwaraka, Harsiddhimata, Somnath, Junagadh, Girnar, Tulsi-Shyam, Satadhar, Virpur in Saurashtra or to Dakor, Ambaji besides places of pilgrimage in other parts of India or the *Chardham yatra* (four holiest places of pilgrimage in the country). The tendency to go to a pilgrimage is seen in the old or middle-aged persons whereas the young generation tend to go to places like those known for natural beauty, water park and so on for entertainment.

6.33 Various Sects:

This community of the region worship Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Ram, Lord Krishna,

Ramdevpeer, Bhathiji *Maharaj* as well as different gods and goddesses. At the same time, due to contacts with other communities, it has turned to religious sects like Swaminarayan sect, Vaishnav sect, *Kabirpanth* and so on.

6.34 Folk literature of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area:

Every region or every community has its own unique culture which includes language, clothing, food, traditions, customs, folk literature and so on. In this community of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, too, we find something like those features.

6.34.1 Folk Songs:

The folk songs of Gujarat have given vent to impulses of feelings and emotions in order to lighten the complexities of life. As Jaymall Parmar says these songs are like the flow of river Bhagirathi sprung out of happiness and unhappiness, hopes and failures, joy and celebrations. Folk songs have expressed the emotions of joy and happiness in the same way as they have not avoided the reality of deep gloom of life.

In the community of this area, in their economic, social, religious life, holidays and festivals, fairs, *vrata* and on various occasions they have been heard through different traditions singing songs expressing their joys, happiness, miseries, separation, pain and so on. Their pain and sensitivity are reflected in them. It is worth mentioning that this heritage of folk songs has remained limited to the older generation only and it is forgotten by the new generation replacing it with new modern Hindi, Gujarati and English songs.

6.34.2 Wedding songs:

There might be rarely found in the whole of India the variety, abundance, melodiousness and emotional expressions of the wedding songs of Gujarat. The main tune of the wedding songs is to arouse the emotions of conjugal life. These songs include songs beginning with wooing, invitation to relatives, familial affection, pain of being away from parents, make up, entertainment and so on in accordance with a particular occasion. Their poetic imagination, emotional expression and composition is quite heart touching.

In this community covered under study, the wedding songs are very important. Sisters, daughters, sisters-in-law and women in the family or relatives sing these songs. These songs are the throbbing sounds of the joy, happiness and culture. Wedding songs are also called *Fatana* which include the songs about the man or

woman who is getting married and other close relatives mentioning their names. There are different songs for different occasions and ceremonies. There are songs also concerning the importance of gods and goddesses and different occasions as also they mention various elements of nature. Today, however, the tradition of wedding songs is getting forgotten. There a noticeable decrease in the singers and songs is found today. They are replaced with filmy songs, filmy dances, DJ system and so on.

6.34.3 Songs about Vrata:

Man has created the world of those gods and goddesses who listen to his requests about his happiness and complaints about his miseries and might give him solace, tolerance and inspiration. Out of this desires vrata and worship on a particular occasion for a special purpose were born and out of these special worship emerged songs about them. Folk songs, *Everat-Jivrat*, *Veerpasli*, *Sheetalasatam*, *Nagpancham*, *Dharoatham*, *Tulsivrat*, *Poshipunam*, *Molakta* and so on might have been formed in due course out of these special worship and then, they continued. The emotions wishing good of the husband, sons, parents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brothers and sisters and other family members and other relatives are expressed in these songs. In this community of this region, small girls, slightly big girls, married women (keep a *vrata* take a vow or religious worship for a special purpose) on different days and festivals and show their religiosity by singing songs while celebrating it. These days, however, the tendency among the educated women to keep such vrata is decreasing.

6.34.4 Sakhi, Duha, Chhand:

These are different compositions which are very important in folk songs. They are equally important in real life, too. They are in the form of A *subhashit* or a *muktak* (type of short stanzas) or in the form of complete song. Compositions like *Duha* are immediately remembered because they are short, compact, suitable to sing and accurate rhymed compositions. They contain meaning, description of seasons, lessons about detachment or tragic emotions, in this region, males especially farmers sing duha songs loudly in programmes like *dayaro* (a programme of singing) and while working on the farms. There are different types of *duha*. *Sakhi* is also a type of folk song like *duha*. They contain expression of love, chivalry and pain of the highest order in several lines but they are not sung loudly. These *duha*, *chhand* (compositions in metres) and *sakhi* songs are short, poetic and message-giving and are used to describe valour and adventures of brave persons. Mostly, singers begin a prayer song

with a *duha*, *chhand* or a *sakhi*. They usually contain love, power, culture, traditions, nature and so on.

6.34.5 Bhajanvani (Collection of Bhajan or Prayer Songs):

Bhajan (prayer songs) are sung in many religious sects in Gujarat. Compositions by many saints are very popular but most of them are either called songs of *Shaktipanth* or *Margpanth* (names of sects). It may be the tradition of either *Nathpanth* or *Kabirpanth*. When the prayer song of the *Mahapanth*, *Nathpanth* or *Kabirpanth* were sung in Gujarat due to the impact of sects, the devotional songs (known as *Premalakshanabhakti*) by Mirabai and Narsinh Mehta added new colour to them. Their devotional songs filled the songs by saints and poets with deep devotional interest sung in all the three sets. *Bhajan* (a prayer song is the expression of the inner experiences of the soul; prayers are not created for poetic compositions but prayers provide the poems of the highest quality. Prayer songs by Narsinh Mehta, the first poet of Gujarat, Tulasidas, Meerabai, Dayaram, Surdas, Akho, Bhojo, Dhiro as well as those by women devotees like Amarbai, Loyan, Tolalde, Rupade are very popular even today. The types of *Bhajanvani* include Sandhya arati, songs about Lord Ganesh, songs about Lord Shiva songs about different gods and goddesses besides *sakhi*, *aradh*, *agam*, *khayal*, *katari*, *ambo*, *barmasi*, *saraju*, *aranyu*, *Chabakha*, *kirtan*, *pad*, *kafi* and so on. The loud utterances of bhajan songs by the simple-minded villagers still falls on our ears at night even today sung in order to please God at the rhythm of music accompanied by instruments like *tabla* (a pair of drums), *manjeera* (a pair of small metal discs) and a *tambura* (a single-stringed instrument). Mostly, there is a group of bhajan singers in every village besides a very popular group of such singer in nearby villages which organize programs of singing on festivals and celebrations. Today, however, the number of participants and singers is decreasing day by day. Instead, Hindi, Gujarati film songs or modern songs are played through tape recorders, CD, DVD or a pen-drive.

6.34.6 Bhadali Vakyos (Words of Wisdom):

Like the *sakhi* and *Duha*, the *bhadali vakyos* (words of wisdom) in prose and poetry are a contribution of folk literature giving the villagers knowledge with humour. For example, 'Never take an enemy for granted', 'Old people are not useless', Forbearance is the ornament of the brave and so on are spoken usually by old people. The maxim-like sentences reflect the reality, truth, a message, traditions and culture. The elders are taking leave of the world and the speakers of the *bhadali* sentences and

the bhadali sentences themselves are disappearing with them; the new generation doesn't know anything about these sentences at all.

6.35 Lokmanoranjana Karyakramo (Entertainment programmes for people):

In the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, various local, rural and simple programmes for entertainment are traditionally organized. They include street plays, *bhavai* (drollery), *Ramleela*, programmes by *Nat* or *malla* (acrobats), shows by rural performers called *bajaniya* and *bahurupi* (role players), snake charmers or *Garudi*, Jugglers, tricksters, *akhyan* (story telling from myths and scriptures) and so on.

6.35.1 Loknatya (Street plays or Folk drama):

The history of *loknatya* or folk drama is very old. The groups of drollery performers called *bhavaya* roamed from village to village to perform *bhavai* (drollery). In the past, many of their performances were very powerful but in due course they turned into obscene and obnoxious. *Bhavai* has come down from the *Sanskrit* stem '*bhav*' which is meant for presenting common events from social life farcically and satirically arousing laughter. They performed shows one by one in a series and went on for the whole night. The shows began with worship of a god or goddess or Lord Ganesh followed by various anecdotes giving entertainment and religious preaching to the villagers. Generally, these groups of performers who inherited this art from their forefathers came from North Gujarat. The tradition of these performances is believed to be 500-600 years old in which the role of women was played by men only. Towards the end of the nineteenth century this *Bhavai* performances declined but before that it had secured an important place in the folk life of Gujarat. These *Bhavai* groups earned their livelihood by their art of performing religious and social programs in villages when there were no modern means of entertainment. People also waited for them every year at a certain time and provided them shelter and arrangement. Today, these traditions have almost disappeared and are seen only in the modern form to a certain extent.

6.35.2 Bhavai (Drollery):

Bhavai is a type of dance drama in Gujarat. Like a program in Maharashtra called *Tamasho*, in Uttar Pradesh *Nautanki*, in Bengal *Jatra*, In Punjab-Haryana *Swang*, *Yakshgan* in Andhra Pradesh, *Terkutu* in Tamilnadu and *Chakyar* in Kerala, *Bhavai* is a peculiar type of folk drama in Gujarat. It has a unique combination of dance, music and acting.

Asait is believed to be the pioneer of the tradition *Bhavai*. A Shrimali Brahmin had to give up his caste in order to save a *Patidar* (*Patel* community) girl who had come to his house as a guest from the army of Allaudin when it invaded Siddhapur. So, the Patel community gave him an annuity for his livelihood. Asait who was expert in folk teaching and entertainment began experiments of the Bhavai shows with the help of his three sons. The descendants of the three sons became known as *Tragala* community that continued the tradition of *Bhavai* and also gave excellent artists. In *Bhavai*, shows were presented which people easily understood and enjoyed. These shows included religious shows like Kalika, mythical shows like *Bhiladi*, *Tadka*, *Ram-Lakshaman*, *Vaman-Bali*, *Kahn-Gopi*, historical-legendary shows like *Jasma Odan*, *Shuro Rathor*, *Ramdevpeer* and so on and social shows like *Juthan*, *Chhelbatau*, *Kajodo*, *Bhagtani*, *Bajaniyo*, *Darji*, *Saraniyo* and so on.

As per the tradition, all the roles whether those of males or females were played by men only. These actors come on the stage with makeup and dresses which helped the audience to recognize the characters. There was no effort for a precise and perfect appearance of a character. Certain traits like a cap, umbrella and so on of certain characters are famous so the audience immediately recognized them. The shows were performed without any special arrangement of lights-earlier by the torch light, and then by a *lantern* (called *patromax*) and today by electric lamps. They were performed without any elaborate musical instruments. There was no special stage setting except a *bhungal* (a trumpet-like instrument with a loud noise), a pair of drums called *Tabla* and a pair of tin discs called *kanshijoda* were the only musical instruments. Only acting was the main source of entertainment.

The *bhavai* shows begin with the playing of *bhungal* which is a peculiar folk instrument. Its different sounds announced which show and which event was being played. The bhavai shows began with the worship of Lord Ganesh or mother goddess and the actor kept a dish in front of his face. When characters entered, they danced in a circle with certain steps called *avanu*. This is followed by different shows by actors acting, speaking dialogues, dancing and singing all at the same time. Their songs are repeated by a group of singers. These shows might have been originated for the worship of goddess *Adhyashakti*. In Indian culture, any auspicious occasion is begun with the worship of Lord Ganesh who is believed to remove any hurdle in life. After

the worship of mother goddess, the bhavai show is performed with the dialogues of *Rangalo* and *Rangali*. *Bhavai* shows cater all elements of aesthetic pleasure but they cater *Shringarras* (the pleasure of decoration) and laughter more than any other pleasure. The spectators are mostly villagers and therefore, their language and topics as well as their presentation are straight and not complex.

Credit to maintain the tradition of *Bhavai* goes to the *Bhavaiya* (*Bhojak*) or the performers. The population of the *Bhojak* is found in North Gujarat. There is known as *Nayak*. The ancient name of North Gujarat is Anart which is related to the term 'nrut' which in Sanskrit means 'dance.' Thus, the area *Anart* is the area of dancers. North Gujarat is the land of many dancers, musicians, singers and players of Gujarati stage.

Today, however, this is a tradition of the past for the people of this region. Very few Bhavai groups go to perform *Bhavai* shows in different areas and that too on invitation only. This tradition is getting extinct. The *Bhojak* and the *Nayak* have given up their traditional profession and have adopted other professions because in the present time under the influence of modern means of entertainment and media people's minds and choice have changed. As a result, the existence of folk art like *Bhavai* has remained on paper only.

6.35.3 Ramleela (Performances of Ram's Life):

Ramleela is a peculiar type of folk drama folk dance just like *Bhavai*. The main aim of *Ramleela* is generally to present before the audience the characters from the Ramayan through folk education and entertainment as well as to lead people towards religion. In *Bhavai*, usually, simple subjects which people can enjoy and understand are presented whereas in *Ramleela* anecdotes from the Ramayana only are presented. The shows of *Ramleela* are age-old and they are traditional programs for the entertainment of the rural society. With the changes in the modern stage craft, their importance has decreased and *Ramleela* is organized in some villages during *Navratri* and *Sharadpurnima*. As compared to *Bhavai*, the importance of music and dialogue is more in *Ramleela*. In the same way, importance of acting, dresses and stage craft is also given weightage. As *Ramleela* presents the subject matter of the Ramayana only, its shows last constantly for many nights. Generally, *Ramleela* is performed in the centre of the village. Pandit Omkarnath Thakur who became known as one of the best

musicians in India had begun his career as an ordinary actor and singer in a *Ramleela* program. Acting in *Ramleela* is a traditional profession of certain communities in North Gujarat and Rajasthan which went from village to village to perform show for days together in the past. After collecting food grain and cash, they returned to their own native places after a long time. This tradition of folk entertainment has remained only as a token in the present time as people are more in Hindi, Gujarati and English film and film songs and their stories.

6.35.4 *Bahurupi* (Player of multiple roles):

One of the folk arts of entertainment of the rural society that developed in Gujarat and Rajasthan is the art of *Bahurupi* (Actors who plays multiple roles by dressing themselves according to the role). In the past when the mediums of entertainment were very few, these *Bahurupi* actors contributed the rural life with laughter, entertainment and education. Art loving Princely states encouraged that tradition which continued from generation to generation and therefore they prospered. When the heyday of the Princely states got over and the new modern mediums of entertainment became popular, this art ceased to exist. Only rarely these role players are seen today.

Bahurupi means an actor who dressed himself as a particular character and plays its role in public. There is no exact information about the origin of this tradition. It is believed that there are some *mantras* (epigram like hymns) in the Samaveda about singing in tune and rhythm. In due course the art of *Bhootleela* (story of ghosts) originated out of them. A part of this *Bhootleela* is the art of *Bahurupi*. Originally, Lord Shiva wore the dress of a bangle seller and cheated Parvati (Lord Shiva's wife) by making her put on red *Chudala* (big bangles) and also ate a meal at her house in the dress of a cobbler tempting her to bag red shoes. Many such stories are available in folk songs about role playing. There are examples in the scriptures, too of gods having played many roles in order to help their devotees. It is said that Lord Vishnu had played fifty two different roles at the door of King Bali. Since then the tradition of *Bahurupi* came into existence and they began to play those fifty two roles. It is also said when Lord Krishna went to the ashram of a rishi called Sandipani for study, he learnt sixty four arts which included the art of playing *Bahurupi*. Thus, the art of *Bahurupi* is considered a gift given by gods; if its originator is Lord Shiva, its developer is Lord Krishna.

Generally, the role players of *Bahurupi* in Gujarat come from castes like Brahmin, Muslim, Vaghari, Bhand, Bhavaya and so on. The Shrigod Brahmin of Rajasthan are said to have given an important contribution to develop the art of *Bahurupi*. Their family goddess is Brhmanimata. As per the order of their goddess, at least one person from each family has to take up the profession of *Bahurupi*. Just like the *Gurugadi* (holy throne of a *Guru*) of the *Saints*, *Mahant* and the *Guru* the *Bahurupi* also have their *Gurugadi* at different places which are located in Bagdad, Makanpur, Jaipur, Ajmer and Karnal. At the fair in a place called Talaghola near Ajmer, the *Bahurupi* from the whole of India assemble. The *Guru* gives a test to all the *Bahurupi* assembled there, punishes the participant who fails in the test. This person is not a real *Bahurupi* because such a person brings a blemish to the profession. Here, new recruits are given blessings. The Mond of Manava Bhand, in Karnal is considered a source of inspiration for the *Bahurupi*. A *Bahurupi* has to go to a holy (*Gurugadi*) place in Karnal and go ahead in the profession only after serving the *Guru* there and seeking his blessings.

Generally, there are fifty two roles played by a *Bahurupi*. In the past, expert *Bahurupi* played all the fifty two roles but today there is no such expert *Bahurupi* who can play all those roles. They hardly play five to seven roles and get their livelihood. Traditional fifty two roles include gods and goddesses like *Ardhanarishwar* (Shiv-Parvati), Hanumanji, Vishnu riding an eagle, goddess Saraswati, Naradmuni and Pundarik and so on. Other roles played by *Bahurupi* include those of mythical characters and Saints like *Khakhibava*, *Fakir* (Muslim worshipper), *Siddi Fakir*, *Jalali Fakir*, *Punjabi Fakir*, *Arabeen Fakir*, *Old Fakir*, *Tapaswi Bava*, *Alakhiya Bava*, *Guru-chelo*, *Mukhiya* of Nathadwara as well as those of professionals like Kansakiwali (a comb seller), Shepherd-Shepherdess, *Rabari-Rabaran*, *Malan* of Bikaner, a Blacksmith, a Snake Charmer, *Kansaro* (Utensil maker), a Singer from Jaipur, a Doctor, a Scent Seller, a *Marwadi* Businessman, *Kabuli Pathan* and so on. These shows also include historical characters like Maharana of Mewad, King of Delhi, Chand Barot and Mewadi Rajput in addition to famous characters like *Laila-Majnu*, a Jogan of Nepal, a Tribesman, a Brother-in-law and Sister-in-law, Surdas, a Beggar, a Mad man, a Postman, a Police Inspector, a Railway TTE, an Officer among others. Generally, they come out at night in different dresses-mostly the roles are religious in villages and variegated roles in the urban areas. They perform roles for a week in a

village or an area of a City and collect cash contribution from people for providing entertainment.

The art of *Bahurupi* is performed by one or two persons in which identification with a particular character and perfection in makeup are very important. A *Bahurupi* uses tools like clothes appropriate for a particular character, soot, lipstick, wigs, artificial hair, artificial mustache and beards, bangles, beads, turbans, fake teeth and so on. They take quite a long time in dressing and makeup for preparing for a particular character. An expert *Bahurupi* can play two characters in one role like Shiva-Parvati, a Brother-in-law and Sister-in law, *Guru-Disciple* and the like. They are played by one person with the help of masks. There is no need of any musician these roles but, if the *Bahurupi* is a good singer, he can sing *Duha*, *Chhand* (types of metrical couplets), *Bhajans* (Prayer Songs), *Shairies* and *gazals* whichever is appropriate for the role he is performing.

Thus, the professional *Bahurupi* are mostly migrants from Rajasthan and settled in Gujarat. These traditional shows have nearly disappeared in this region due to the absence of encouragement from the older generation of the *Bahurupi*, wide popularity of films and TV, radio and other mediums of entertainment and change in the tendency of the young generation among others. The *Bahurupi* have now adopted other vocations and have settled down in the urban areas.

6.35.5 Kathputaliwala (Puppeteers):

Puppet show is a type of medium of entertainment. It is considered to be one of the oldest types of folk shows. It is believed that the form of drama has developed from the puppet shows. A community of nomads called *Bhat* who spread the cultural folk art provided entertainment to the former Princely states by performing these puppet shows. Village called Kucha man, Lunicha and Khakholi are the main locations on the borders of the desert in Marwad, Rajasthan. Their main occupation was to entertain by singing songs of praise of the well-to-do local persons. Like the *Vahivancha* (Record keeping) community of Gujarat, they, too, kept records of family history of the well-to-do farmers and got grain and cash as a reward. As time passed, their ancestors adopted the profession of puppeteering. Since then their children inherited the art of puppeteering, singing and story-telling. There is a saying that when a *Bhat* child cries, it cries in tunes. This child learns how to play puppets, dance

and sing at the age of seven or eight. *Bhat* women, though illiterate can sing very sweetly and expert at playing drums as well as jingle bells. Many members of this community have left the barren area of Marwad and settled down in Gujarat have been earning their livelihood by performing puppet shows.

A puppet is a doll made of a piece wood of eight inches with an upper part engraved by hand. Its hands are made of pieces of cloth and cotton and are connected to shoulders; a cloth is sewn around its waist like a petticoat. These puppets are made to dance with the help of strings tied to fingers of the puppeteer. This show as a medium of universal entertainment was very popular in the ancient times. The term, '*kashthachitrakridanak*' is found for the puppets in the *Panchtantra* which means 'dance of a doll.' In a book called *Avdankalpalata* the name given to a puppet show is '*Yantraputrakleela*'. Known as the art of thirty two or fifty two dolls, this tradition has been popular in the rural areas of many states of India for thousands of years. Puppets of various types and shapes are known by different names in different states. Gujarat and Rajasthan are known as '*Kundhai*' in Orissa, *Kundhainatta* means 'dance of a doll. Similarly, in Mysore it is called '*Gomboyatta*' or '*Togalu Gomboyatta*', in Tamilnadu it is called '*Bomma-attam*' and in Bengal, it is known as '*Putulnach*.'

If we look into history, evidences are found showing that the art of puppets was in vogue even before the time of Valmiki Ramayana. In the Mahabharata, too, there are special descriptions of this art. On the day of a puppet show, a declaration is made in the whole village in the morning. The shows are performed after dinner at night in the centre or the outskirts of the village or in an inn. The puppeteers would collect food grain or cash the next day from every house and then would move to another village.

The art of puppet shows catering innocent entertainment enjoyed prosperity at one time but today in the midst of modern means of entertainment, it is breathing its last leaving the *Bhat* community in a miserable condition. In the past, these *Bhat* families catered entertainment to the villagers of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area at a certain time in the year with their traditional art of puppet shows but in the present time they are only rarely seen. This art has also changed its form and nature as required by time and is found occasionally only at exhibition or weddings. Some *Bhat* families have left this profession and adopted other vocations like playing a *Ravanhattha* (a violin like

musical instrument) and singing in order to earn livelihood. Some other families have turned to puppet making and yet some families have adopted the profession of embroidery, making and selling toys like elephants, horse and so on. A few families have found jobs in different fields. Today only the relics of the art are seen.

6.35.6 Village Magicians:

India which possesses a beautiful world of forests, greenery, mountains and rivers has also got an abundant store of art and crafts. Fourteen arts and sixty four skills were popular in the folk culture in ancient time. These are mentioned in many great books. Many entertaining arts developed in the country for enjoyment in spare time, in order to make children and elders laugh and enjoy. Many castes and communities came into existence who accepted entertainment as a vocation. One of these communities can be named as Village Magicians. They are not a particular caste but are known as *Vadi*, *Madari*, *Garudi* (all types of snake charmers) who provided entertainment by shows of magic without any complicated tricks of accomplished magicians.

Generally, magic means some tricks which are not understood by common people or even by persons with a sharp eye. Some people understand such magic as miracles, illusionism or a world of mystery. They believe that magicians have a divine power and that he had controlled *Kalbhairav* (a god of magic). Magic is an art of pure entertainment and magicians have a certain code of conduct of its own. It is not a miracle or mesmerism as such but it is an art of tricks of hand. It is performed with the help of some tools on the basis of scientific processes, tricks of hand and oratory. Rural magicians perform entertaining magic shows in the centre of the village or in streets or in affair in the middle of crowds. *Vadi* and *Garudi* (snake charmers) perform shows of the snakes and mongoose besides shows of magic and tricks of hand.

Magicians or the *Garudi* dance with bells tied at the ankles playing a special drum called *Damaru* in order to assemble a crowd and perform different shows of trickery one after another with their hands. These shows include tricks like making a coin out of a small piece of stone, double the coin or make four coins out of two, make the coins disappear in the air, produce currency note out of plain papers, produce red powder by rubbing two palms so, people consider him to be a true devotee of Mother Goddess. In addition to this, he brings out scorpions, rubbles and small snakes out of

his mouth, break a coconut and brings out of it a *Chundadi* (a holy head-covering of goddess) and red strings called *Nadachhadi*, insert a foot-long tongs into his throat, turn a brick in the hand of a spectator into a rabbit, take a small snake out of a spectator's turban or a cap and so on.

Performers like a *Nat* or a *Bajaniya* (acrobats) also perform shows in order to provide entertainment to villagers. These include shows like breaking a big stone on chest of his partner by throwing water on it, heat iron balls in the fire or burning charcoals and eat them, keep pieces of burning wood in their mouth, throw Kerosene from his mouth on a burning stick to throw flames, drink ashes of a thread in water and take out the thread out of his stomach cutting it with a knife after worshipping a *Peer* (a Saint), walk bare-footed on burning charcoal, dip hands into boiling oil, produce a living pigeon out of a fire, eat the glass of a lantern, produce a bottle of scent out of a small stone in the hand of a spectator, identify an object with a strap of cloth covering his eyes, make a girl sleep in the air, poke an iron rod in cheeks, take a knife through his throat and so on.

There are magicians in addition to the *Garudi*, *Nat* and *Bajaniya*. Some of them call themselves Agnikumar. Magic is an art of ancient India. Contemporary magicians like Late Shri K. Lal, Prof. Zingara, Hakubha among others have been famous magicians who performed magic on the stage very cleverly. The magicians do not have any divine powers but they perform amazing tricks of hand playing with different objects. This requires confidence, courage swiftness and constant practice. Professionals like Vadi, Garudi, Nat and Bajaniya get training from their fathers or other relatives. They attract more and more spectators creating faith in their hearts, by invoking gods and goddesses in the beginning of their shows and combining them with their magic.

Thus, the rural magicians are the product of the dust of the roads who have been providing entertainment to the villagers for years but today many magicians have slipped in the past. Magicians of the new generation keep away from risky tricks and the art of magic has still been alive as an old tradition. Mostly, these magicians migrated long back from Rajasthan to the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area and earned their livelihood by providing entertainment when the modern media like films, TV, newspapers did not exist. Today, these magic shows have almost disappeared from this

region because of the new mediums of entertainment and the magicians have adopted new jobs and professions.

6.35.7 *RavanhatthawalaNathbava* (Nomadic Violin Players):

In the folk music of Gujarat, traditional instruments like *Ektaro* (a single stringed instrument) and a *Ravanhattho* hold an important place. Communities like *Nathbava*, *Turi* and *Barot* roamed into streets of villages in order to earn livelihood by singing *Bhajans* (Prayer Songs), *Duha*, *Chhand* (both couplets) and folk tales accompanied with a *Ravanhattho* and a stringed bow of bamboo decorated with bells. *Ravanhattho* is seen in Gujarat, Rajasthan and other states in one form or the other. According to a myth, when Ravan came to abduct Sitaji in the disguise of a Sadhu, he carried the instrument which came to be called ‘*Ravanhasta Vina*’ in Sanskrit books.

Communities like *Bava*, *Turi* and *Barot* earned their livelihood in the past by begging and singing *Bhajans* (Prayer Songs), *Duha* and *Chhand*. *Nathbava* wore a saffron turban, a string of *Rudraksha* beads in the neck, a short dhoti, a shirt and coat on it and a *Ravanhattho* in the hand and begging by providing entertainment. *Sadhubava* is also known as *Nathbava* in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area and Saurashtra. There is no authentic information about the origin of the community. There is a belief that the originator of this community is Dhanvantari. He had two disciples called *Lalvadi* and *Fulvadi*. The descendants of these two disciples are known as *Nathbava*. Among the entertaining *Nathbava*, there are two categories: those who play *Ravanhattho* and those who perform shows with snakes. The number of snake-charming *Nathbava* is very small. The *Nathbava* with a *Ravanhattho* were also expert at removing curing poison of snakes and scorpions by reciting *Mantra* (holy words). They release snakes free after catching them because they worship them. In addition to the *Nathbava* communities like *Bharathari*, *Turi* and *Barot* also recited *Duha*, *Chhand*, Folk tales, Prayer Songs accompanied by a *Ravanhattho* and provided entertainment. *Turi* community besides playing *Ravanhattho* also performed shows of *Bhavai*, *Ramleela*, Story-telling and singing prayer songs in order to earn their livelihood. They were expert at playing small and large drums and trumpets. *Ravanhattho* played by *Nathbava*, *Turi* and *Barot* is a very simple instrument. It is prepared from a two-foot long piece of bamboo or teak wood and a string bound to it with an inner crust of a coconut with a cover on it of a skin of a cattle; a bow like two-feet long stick of bamboo with hair of a horse tail bound at both ends. The bow is decorated with brass

bells at the bottom end. Some artists also decorate *Ravanhattho* with colorful pieces of silk.

The *Nathbava* with a *Ravanhattho* are the nomadic tribe. They roam from village to village to earn their livelihood by begging and singing. They move with their families carrying with them a couple of chicken, a cage of parrot or a *Tetar* (a Partridge), a pet dog and a skinny horse. Some of them also keep camels and donkeys. Change in time and changes in the mediums of entertainment, high prices and shortage of time-all of these have made an impact on the lives of the *Bharathari*, *Nathbava*, *Turi* and such other communities. Today, they try to earn their livelihood by selling and buying bullocks, calves, donkeys, horses and so on when they cannot earn enough by singing with a *Ravanhattho*. Some *Nathbava* have adopted professions like making pounding tools of marble, a hand-grinding tool and making its surface rough for grinding. *Nathbava* women make *Indhoni* (a support to carry water-pot on head), brooms of palm leaves and sell them. New generation, however, have turned to education and have taken up small jobs after getting necessary education. These *Ravanhatthawala Nathbava* who provided entertainment by their traditional vocation are not seen the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area today because they cannot earn enough to support their families. They have adopted new vocations and have settled in large towns and in *Taluka*-level cities.

6.35.8 Enticing Performers-Kangasiya (Makers and Sellers of Combs):

There was a time when *Kangasiya* community performed enticing shows moving from village to village. One of their tools of Makeup is a comb. The community which makes and sells combs is called the *Kangasiya*. Like the *Vanjara* (gypsies), *Gadaliya* and *Lavariya* (the nomadic Blacksmith), they, too, have come from Rajasthan and have settled in Gujarat and Saurashtra. Their main vocation is to make and sell combs of different types, needles and earn their livelihood visiting villages. They have with them a dog, a donkey and a couple of goats besides their own families when they move from a village to another. They are expert at making a variety of artistic combs of beautiful shapes and sizes from teakwood and horns of dead animals and their women go into villages to sell them. When they do not get enough from their sale, the males perform acrobatic shows at night. The *Kangasiya* people are also known as *Malada* (the Acrobat) or *Gadaliya* who provided entertainment to villagers by different types of performances.

The *Kangasiya* males are well-built and hard-working and wear simple traditional clothes while their women wear more colorful clothes and look more attractive. They put on pointed Marwadi shoes, a petticoat with a large circumference, a backless blouse called *Kapadu* and a head covering cloth called *Odhanu*. They comb their hair very artistically and put small silver balls and pearls in their hair. They go from village to village carrying a lot of combs and other things in a large basket on their head to sell them to the villagers. They usually carry a stick in their hand in order to drive away street dogs.

This community is gradually disappearing because of their nomadic life and the arrival of colorful plastic combs and other toiletries produced in plastic factories and available in the market. They also have lost the supplementary income they used to get from acrobatic shows due to many modern tools and mediums of entertainment. As a result, they are in 'spend whatever they earn' kind of situation. There was a time when this *Kangasiya* community came in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area at a certain time of the year to sell combs and perform acrobatic shows but with the passing of time this tradition has broken. The level of education in this community is very low as they live a nomadic life. The young men of this community are leaving their profession and are adopting other occupation and small jobs in towns and cities. They have lost their traditional dress, their language, occupations and even culture.

6.35.9 The *Madari* (Jugglers) Performing with Monkeys:

In the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area and in Saurashtra every year during the time of harvest many nomadic communities come with a hope to get food grain as a reward for their traditional performances. One of these communities is the *Madari* who wear a striped shirt with wide sleeves and a colorful turban. They visit villages with a red-faced monkey dressed in a trouser, a bush-shirt, a red cap and bells in its feet. The *Madari* play a small drum in order to assemble people in the centre of a village and perform shows with a monkey.

These *Madari* who provided entertainment to villages of Gujarat are not a single community; many castes have adopted this profession of the *Madari*. Most communities who have adopted this occupation have migrated from Rajasthan and other states and have settled in Gujarat moving from a village to another for livelihood. The *Madari* playing a *dudugi* (a small two-sided drum) perform shows

with red-faced monkeys and a goat to entertain people. The *Madari* are Hindu as well as Muslim. This community is also slowly disappearing.

The *Madari* is a nomadic tribe. They stay at home in their native places and complete engagements, weddings of their children and other responsibilities besides religious events like worshipping their goddess and offering *naivedya*. After the monsoon, they go to different areas for their traditional occupations. They camp in villages where women go to farms to collect cow-dung and firewood while the males go in the village to perform shows with their monkeys and a goat.

When these *Madari* could not get enough earnings from their profession, they turned to trading donkeys. They sell donkeys to communities like potters and the *Raval* who require them for their own professions. Some of these *Madari* have settled building huts in the outskirts of villages and towns while some other have adopted jobs like selling herbal medicines carrying them in a large bag on their shoulders. They sell herbal medicines for diseases like exima, itching, rheumatism and other skin diseases. Sometimes, they use leeches which sucked diseased blood. They claim to treat chronic skin diseases by taking out the dirty blood with a horn of a deer or an antelope. Today, however, people have not faith in such treatment. The level of literacy in the *Madari* community is very low but they have never turned to stealing in spite of their poverty.

This community playing with monkeys for entertainment is now seen only rarely in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area where they regularly visited in the past. Like other traditional communities, they, too have left their profession and have turned to other occupations. They are seen living a new kind of life quite different from their traditional life.

6.35.10 The *Vadi* (The *Garudi*, *Madari*, *Sapera*):

Communities like the *Bhand*, *Bhavaiya*, *Nat-Bajaniya*, *Turi*, *Bahurupi*, *Vadi-Madari* who lived in remote areas of other states and earned their livelihood by performing entertaining shows of different kinds come to villages in Gujarat. The *Vadi* entertain people by playing with a snake shaking its head at the sweet sound of a *Mahuvar* (a flute-like instrument used for charming snakes). The *Vadi* are Hindu while the *Madari* are Muslim as well as Hindu. In addition to the *Vadi*, *Madari*, the *Nathbava* and *Garudi* also performed shows with snakes. The *Vadi* include sub-branches *Lalvadi*,

Fulvadi, Dhanvadi, Manvadi, Garudi and *Bharyo* but *Lalvadi* and *Fulvadi* are the main branches. The *Vadi* have originally migrated from Marwad, Sindh and Kutch and they are a nomadic tribe as such. According to a legend, Dhanvantari had two disciples whose descendants are known as the *Lalvadi* and the *Fulvadi*. Men of both the branches put on a saffron *lungi* or *dhoti*, a shirt and a turban. The *Lalvadi* wear a saffron turban while the *Fulvadi* put on a turban with a feather of a peacock. They also wear a rosary of *Rudraksha*, colorful stones like *Akik* and crystal along with a silver talisman. They carry bags on their shoulders on a stick and a *Mahuvar* (a Flute) in hand. The *Vadi* women wear colorful petticoats with a large circumference, a backless blouse called *Kapadu* and a cloth covering their heads.

God has given them talent to catch snakes and play with them. They go to farms or forests and catch snakes, take out their sacks of poison from their mouth; some *Madari* put roots of some herbs like cactus in the snakes' mouth, flowers of a creeper called *Chameli* or *ankhfutamani* (a creeper that blinds) in order to destroy the poison. Some of the snakes are non-poisonous. The *Vadi* usually go out to perform for about eight months in a year. In the season of harvesting, they go out in groups of about twenty in different villages, put their bags on the ground, take out the basket with a snake and play a flute in order to gather people. He dances around the snake with bells tied to his ankles and playing the *Mahuvar* (a Flute) and a *dugdugi* (a small drum). He entertains people by taking a snake-black, grey or golden or a snake with two mouths or a python out of the basket.

As per the tradition, when the *Vadi* caught a snake, they promise to keep it for a certain period only and then leave it free into the forests. Even today, the *Vadi* follow this rule strictly. According to the tradition, the art of the *Vadi* or *Garudi* is the eighth of the fourteenth skills and sixty four arts. The *Vadi* are expert at catching snakes and scorpions as well as in curing the poison of a snake-bite. In order to check whether a snake is poisonous they make the victim of a snake-bite eat the leaves of a *Neem* tree which are very bitter in actual taste. If the victim does not find the leaves bitter, it, the *Vadi*, then puts a small cut at the spot of the snake-bite and lets the cut bleed. Very slowly the poison drains out in the blood. Sometimes, the *Vadi* suck the poison from the spot of the snake-bite and pits out the poisonous blood. If the effect of the poison is acute, they make the victim drink the red flower of a cactus mixed with water

which makes her/him vomit. Snakes like a *Dendu* (a kind of small snake), a *Paradiyo* or *Dhaman* (types of big snakes). When these snakes bite, there is no poisonous effect except some swelling. If a victim of a snake-bite die, the Vadi say that she/he died of a shock and not poison.

The *Vadi* who roam into villages, towns and cities to perform their shows to entertain people gather in a crowd of about 300 to 500 at a place called Fulpura in North Gujarat in the month of *Maha* or *Fagan* according to *Vikram* calendar. They arrange the engagements of their children in this meeting. The *Vadi* or *Madari* are Hindu by religion and have deep faith in goddesses like *Chamunda*, *Meladi* and *Vihot*.

Today, these nomadic tribes called the *Vadi* or *Madari* are seen settling down in cities with the help of the Government schemes available to them. Many settlements of these tribes are seen in Gujarat. Their children have started going to school these days. The educated young men of the community have left the profession and have turned to jobs or other vocations. After the implementation of the Wild Life Conservation Act, the *Vadi* cannot catch snakes or a mongoose. As a result, they have gradually left their traditional vocation; their culture is also disappearing. The *Vadi* get old before their age because of addictions like smoking and lack of good food as well as a nomadic life. Today, they have forgotten playing a flute; they do not know how to perform shows with a snake. Some of them go from house to house with a snake in a basket and beg because people still believe in snake as a god.

Thus, the Vadi is a community dedicated to the traditional profession of catching snakes and entertaining people with shows of snakes. Their art is also a type of folk art.

6.35.11 TheNat-Bajaniya (Acrobats):

Besides living in Gujarat, the *Nat* also live in Maharashtra, Malva, Sindh, Lahore, Amritsar, Indore, Ratlam, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. The *Nat* in Saurashtara are known as the *Nat*, *Godiya*, *Gaud*, *Bajaniya* or the *Nat-Bajaniya*. In the past, when the mediums of entertainment were very few, many entertaining communities like the *Bhand*, *Bhavaya*, *Madari*, *Turi*, performers of *Ramleela* came into existence. It is said that the *Nat* were created by Lord Krishna. According to a song prevalent in this region called *Radhajinu Rusanu*, Lord Krishna performed a show in the disguise of a *Nat* in order to please Radha. Radhaji could not recognize Krishna. The *Nat* believe

that the tradition of the acrobats has been in existence since that time. The art of acrobats is the second art in the fourteen skills and sixty four arts. The *Nat* believe that Hanumanji as their originator.

The *Nat* go from village to village in a group in order to perform acrobatic shows. There are about eight to ten persons in every group who perform skills like rope-walking, play drums and trumpets and playing a joker called *Rangalo* who arouse laughter by playful tricks in the audience. The leader of the group is called *Nayak*. There are many such groups and each group visits a number of villages as decided by them. Except the *Nat* community living in Sindh, all other groups of *Nat* are Hindu who have deep faith in goddesses like Ambaji, Bahucharaji and so on. Goddess Visot is their family goddess. They stay at home during the monsoon to arrange engagements, weddings of their children and go to villages after *Navaratri* in order to perform their shows but before they go out, they go to temple of their goddess and take an oath to protect them when they walk on ropes. Thus, they go out to perform taking an oath before the goddess and her permission.

The *Nat* perform extremely risky tricks on land and on ropes. In the past, the *Nat* performed acrobatic performances like rope-walking while the *Gaud-Bajaniya* entertained people by mesmerizing tricks of hand. During the time of kingship, the kings of the Princely states saw their performances and awarded them with a giras of villages or gold and silver ornaments in appreciation of their art. Here are some of the examples of such awards. Jahaji Zala of Dhangadhra gave away village *Bajana* to the *Nat* as a prize; Jamsaheb gave Keba village to a *Nat*; Maharaja of Kutch gave village Somati; Ayar of Chowkadi of Dhandhuka *Taluka* gave away his fast-running camel to a *Nat* as a prize; a landlord of village Akaree of Dhamdhuka *Taluka* gave a *Nat* a silver anklet weighing 2.5 Kg. and Jethaji of the same village gave the same *Nat* a gold ring as a prize. Many stories are associated with such awards.

There are twelve *Nayak* (leaders) like Savji *Nayak*, Hathi *Nayak*, Sheetal *Nayak* and many others. Their surnames are the same as the Rajput surnames like *Parmar*, *Chauhan*, *Gohil*, *Vaghela* in addition to *Chankodariya*, *Gangoliya*, *Sapariya* and so on. Males use suffix like ‘*sung*’ and women ‘*bai*.’ Males put on breeches, a shirt and a turban while women wear a sari, a petticoat with a large circumference and a blouse called ‘*polaku*.’

This traditionally entertaining *Nat-Bajaniya* community came down to the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area every year and returned to their native places in Rajasthan and Marwad with a lot of food grain collected from the area. Today, however, their traditional profession has broken down due to the arrival of new mediums and means of entertainment like films, TV, radio and so on. They have adopted other occupations as the new generation has lost interest in this profession. Thus, the acrobatic art of the *Nat-Bajaniya* is a vulnerable heritage which is getting forgotten today.

6.35.12 The Drummer:

Dhol (a drum) played with an open hand in an open area is considered an instrument being played on weddings, festivals and worshipping as well as at wartime. There are mentions available of the drum being used at wars and battles in the past. It is known as *dhol* in Gujarat, as *mariya* in Madhya Pradesh and as *khal* in Asam. Their length and appearance are different ranging from a small drum called *dholak* or *dholaki* to very large drums. It holds an important place in songs, group dances, folk dances or tribal dances. Played on festivals and religious celebrations this *dhol* is important as an auspicious instrument on occasions like weddings, *Shrimant* (baby shower), births or *Janoi* celebrations (changing of the sacred thread) as well as an entertaining instrument played on socio-religious occasions and festivals for joy and amusement. There is a tradition in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, in Saurashtra, North Gujarat and South Gujarat that a drum is invariably played on all such occasions. In Saurashtra, usually a community called the *Bhangi* (the scavenger) plays drums but the Langha of village Bajana and Zinzuwada, the *Barot* of Lakhtar and *Bajaniya* of village Devati are considered expert at playing the drum. In the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, in Kaner and in *Kathiyawad* (a part of Saurashtra) the *Bhangi* community usually plays drums. These drummers are also known as the *Rakhesar*, *Rukhi*, *Zampada* and the *Organa*. In the past, when villages were invaded by enemies or when villages were looted, the *Bhangi* drummer took leadership by playing drums very loudly and forcefully. That is how they came to be known as the *Rakhewal* (the protector) of villages. They are believed to be the descendants of a rishi called ‘*Sarbhanga*’ so, they came to be known as *Rukhi* and as they lived at *zampa* (outskirt or gate) of a village, they came to be called *Zampada*. Their surnames include those like *Parmar*, *Solanki*, *Rathod*, *Zala*, *Vaghela*, *Makwana*, *Padhiyar*, *Gohil*, *Ghavari*, *Ghori*, *Palariya*, *Khedara*, *Khavaliya*, *Niyavala*, *Jethawa*, *Malang*, *Singala* and so on.

The *Bhangi* drummers wear a dhoti, a shirt, a coat or a jacket and a turban while their women wear a petticoat with a large circumference with a frill. Although the concept of untouchability has nearly been forgotten, the *Bhangi* were an untouchable community. Even other lower castes like the *Chamar* (the cobbler), *Vankar* (the weaver) did not keep any relations of exchanging food or marriage with them. In villages, the *Bhangi*'s duties included playing drums, making baskets, brooms and other items like *indhoni* (a ring to support burden on head), work as a keeper of the crops go as a messenger to convey news of a death, announce an information by shouting aloud in the streets, fetch away dead cats and dogs and so on. They got food grain from the villagers once in a year for their services. Expert drummers play drums in various rhythms on auspicious occasions like wedding, hailing Lord Ganesh while installing the idol of Ganesh on holy occasions, on installing the *Mandap* (a *shamiyana*), during wedding processions and their return, at the time of wedding ceremony and when the wedding songs are going on and at the departure of the bridegroom's party. Moreover, the drummers also play drums during the festival of *Navaratri* (*Garba* festival) and on *Janmasthami* (Lord Krishna's birthday). They play drum standing in the middle of the dancing participants in the *Garba* dance when women take different steps like 'hinch' or '*chalti*,' and playing '*titodo*,' at the dance with a copper water-pot and at *dandiya-ras*. They play drums at performances of bravery with sticks and swords and also for giving a message to the villagers when the village is attacked by robbers to take the cattle away. They also played drums at the breaking of a pond or on natural calamities as well as when a woman fell into a well to commit suicide. When the robbers attack the village, the drummers play an alarming drum called *Bungiyo* (a type of a large drum) giving a message to people to assemble in the centre of the village. Such a drummer community performing their traditional roles in villages has been vanishing today.

There are many stories available in folklore, folksongs and sayings about different drums. Drums have a special and an important place in the rural society with which it has traditionally been interwoven. As a result, as compared to other instruments which have disappeared, the drum and the drummers have maintained their place even today.

Thus, in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, the drummer community has tried to give justice to their traditional profession on socio-religious festivals and celebrations. At the same

time, due to many factors some of the *Bhangi* families have migrated to town and cities and have adopted jobs as cleaners in organizations like municipalities, hospitals and so on. The new generation has got jobs after getting necessary education and with the benefit of reservation in jobs and other trades. With the arrival of apparatus like music like DJ and also due to change in the tendency of the youth, the tradition of drums and the drummers is breaking down these days.

6.35.13 The *Malla* (The Wrestlers):

Wrestling is a peculiarly ancient Indian art. In the past, wrestlers and wrestling had a special place in the society. The wrestlers who had achieved expertise in wrestling were mediums of entertainment in the Indian society. Wrestling throbbed as a lively medium of entertainment till the time of the Princely states. The beginning of wrestling is believed to be from the time of the Vedic period. During that period, the tradition of wrestling with hand fists was popular. It was not used as a medium of entertainment but was used against the enemies during wars. During the time of the Indus valley civilization, fighting with animals was popular for entertainment. In wrestling two tactics called '*Chitrahasti*' and '*Kaksha*' were used to defeat the competitors. Examples of killing of wrestlers called *Mustik* and *Chanur* sent by King Kans who was killed by Krishna are there in the Purana. Duryodhan had sent his favourite wrestlers to find out the Pandav who lived in disguise during their exile. Jimut, one of the wrestlers had died in a fight with Bhimsen. There are detailed descriptions of wrestling in the *Jatak* stories in which details about the setting of the stage, the wrestling ring, sitting arrangement for the spectators and wrestling fights are available. Examples and deaths of wrestlers called *Chanur* and *Mustik* by wrestling tactics by Lord Krishna and Balram are found in the Purana. In books like '*Milindpaah*', '*Dhammapad*', '*Satyakatha*' and '*Sumangalvilasini*' also wrestling is mentioned. In Brahmajalsutra of Divnikay, types of fights like those with sticks, fists, Nivyuyuddha and Upayodhik in addition to wrestling are mentioned. Dandayuddha was fought with long or short sticks; Mustiyuddha was like today's boxing. During the time of the Mahabharata, the festival of Brahma Mahotsav was celebrated with a great pomp and show which belonged to the wrestlers. Descriptions of wrestling are found in the Vishnupurana and the Bhagvadpurana. In those days, in order to encourage wrestlers instruments called '*Tur*' and '*Bheri*' were played. It is noted in Padmapurana and Skandpurana that on the next day to *Diwali* fights of animals in addition to wrestling competitions were organized and kings gave away prizes to the

victorious wrestlers. Celibacy was invariable for the wrestlers. Expert wrestlers used to give training of all kinds of tricks to young wrestlers. Moreover, the wrestlers had to practice laborious exercises like weight lifting, walk long distances, swimming and exercises on a big pole and so on.

The story of the origin of wrestling is found in the chapters 40-43 of the second half of the Brahmandapurana according to which the originator of the wrestlers was Devmalla. Brahma had created him in order to kill a tyrant giant called *Vjradant* who had got such powers from Lord Shiva by worshipping him that no one could kill him. The arrogant tyrant giant tortured people in the world. In order to kill *Vajradant*, Devmalla made many efforts but in vain. Finally, on the advice of Naradji, Devmalla worshipped goddess *Nimbaja* who lived in *Neem* forests. Pleased by his worship, goddess Nimbajamata became his family goddess and gave blessing to Devmalla to be able to kill *Vajradanta*. Then, Devmalla killed Vajradanta and his companions by striking with fists with the help of Nimbajama. Brahmaji ordered Devmalla to propagate the skills of *Sallavidhya* (Tricks of wrestling), fights with fists and archery and teach all the skills to his descendants. Devmalla married daughter of a rishi and got ten sons. He sent his sons in different parts of India to propagate the skills of wrestling.

In the field of *Mallavidhya* (Wrestling), many wrestlers have become famous by their adventures and victories. *Maharaja* Bhavansinh of the Datiya state himself was an expert wrestler. Wrestlers like Gama, Gulam, Kallu, Kalid, Ramamurti, Vishwambharsinh, Randhavasinh, Udaychandra, Om Prakash, Sajjansinh, Mukhatyarsinh, Darasinh are very famous.

In the passage of time, the skill of wrestling underwent changes and many communities of wrestlers who migrated from Rajasthan performed acrobatic performances for entertainment of villagers in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area and in Saurashtra. Today, however, such wrestlers and spectator to appreciate their skills are not seen. The art of entertaining wrestling by the *Jyesthimalla* (Fighters) has completely disappeared. The *Nat* and the *Malla*, who were the part of this throbbing ancient tradition, turned to other occupations settling down in towns and cities. Like other traditional professionals, people connected with this tradition have been affected by the modern changes.

6.35.14 Akhyan (Story Telling by Performance):

There was a time when artists of different types from different communities visited the region of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area in order to earn their livelihood. There was tradition of telling *Akhyan* (Stories from the Scriptures and legends) like that of the *Bahurupi*. A group of seven to eight male members visited villages and performed with music and appropriate dresses anecdotes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, patriotic or historical events for seven-eight days at night every day for the entertainment of villagers. In such programs, too, the roles of women were performed by males in women's dresses. All these shows were performed by artists migrated from Rajasthan who earned their livelihood by performing *Akhyan* (Story-telling through performances). They went from village to village and camped in the outskirts of the village where they performed these shows. This program went on for six to eight months and then they returned to their native places with a good stock of food grain collected from villages and came back to this area next season.

6.36 Folk Dances:

When sentiments of joy or unhappiness are accumulated excessively, they come out rhythmically. At that time body movements are in rhythm which produces dances. In the ancient time, when man was in the barbarous state, he had only speech to express his emotions and sentiments but there was nothing like words. He expressed his emotions through signs and sounds like the beasts except which he had no other means. So, he expressed his emotions through body movements out of which dance came into existence.

No training is required to learn folk dances. People learn spontaneously through imitation and culturing. In folk dances, people assemble in a group and perform a similar activity collectively at the rhythm of music. Generally, folk dances are created from body movements and natural strength and force of the body. Effects of the area and atmosphere are reflected in folk dances. Although there are some similarities in folk dances in every region, folk dances are different in music and nature due to different effects of language, traditions as well as customs, clothes, atmosphere and so on.

Every region of India has its own unique dances. *Bharatnatyam* of Tamilnadu, *Kathakali* of Kerala, *Kuchipudi* of Andhra Pradesh, *Odissi* of Orissa and so on but

Gujarat has no classical dance of its own. No dance and music has developed in Gujarat in Gujarat because people of Gujarat from other regions and have also been comprised of invaders. In folk dances, *garaba-garabi*, *raas-raasada*, *tippani* and *matki* dance exist in Gujarat. In the background of such folk dances or classical dances, religion is invariably there. Folk dances began in Dwarika-Saurashtra since the time of Lord *Shri* Krishna and then it moved forward and spread around. During this time, dance was there in Punjab, Delhi and Mathura but it came into Gujarat later on. There were dancers called *Devdasi* in the temple of Somnath since 4th century A. D. who were gifted to the temple by the kings of South India. Siddharaj and his father Karnadev were devotees of Lord Shiva. So dancing was not harmed during their regime. During the time of Kumarpal, arts like drama, sculpture, painting and other arts were encouraged but dancing was not seem to have been encouraged. After the arrival of Allauddin Khilji in 1298 A.D. in Gujarat, dancing and music did not get proper encouragement. So folk dance in Gujarat maintained its existence due to its natural strength. Aniruddha, grandson of *Shri* Krishna had married to Usha, daughter of Banasur, the king of Shonitpur of Asam and the cultural relation of the West India got established with the East India. After her arrival in in Dwarika, Usha taught Lasya dance to the gop-girls of Dwarika which spread over in other areas. So, Saurashtra was famous for the *Lasya* dance from the time of the Mahabharata to the time of the poet Shrikant.

6.36.1 Raas (A Type of Garaba Dance):

Raas is a type of dance which gives pleasure to both the players as well as the onlookers. This dance form has been described in the Mahabharata as *Hallsak Raas*, *Krida dand* or *Dandiya Raas*. This dance is considered a unique feature of the Gop(Cow Herders) culture. Actually, Raas is a legacy of the *Gop*culture although only Dandiya Raas form is found. *Krishnaleela* (Games of Krishna) and *Gopi's Ras* are found in the Mahabharata and Krishna's *Balcharitra* (Stories of Krishna's Childhood). In the ancient time, the *Gop*and the *Gopi* played *Krishnaleela Ras* with one another to which many communities added their own peculiarities later on. The number of women participants decreased in this dance due to the fear of the Muslim rulers. The efforts of *Vaishnavdharma* (the sect worshipping Krishna) and devotee saints like Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai and others inspired people to enliven the Raas dance of Lord *Shri* Krishna. During the dance of *Raas* musical instruments like drum or *tabla* (a Pair of small drums), *Janz*, *manjira* (a pair of small tin discs) and *shaehnai*

(a trumpet) are usually played. *Raas* is performed on *Janmashthami* (Krishna's birthday), *Navratri* (Festival of nine nights), *Sharad Purnima* (Full-Moon day before *Diwali*) and such other festivals. Folk dance of *Raas* is performed in the centre of the village or in front of a temple. Today, however, people's temperament to enjoy folk dances has changed and the traditional folk dances have become stage performances. Moreover, the community which performed the folk dances exhibits the unique features of their life. For example, in the *Raas* dance of the *Padhar* community, the energy of a seafaring community is visible; the *Koli* community is a hunting community and so, their dance show agility of a hunter. Peculiarities of communities like the *Koli*, *Padhar*, Shepherds and the *Ahir* are visible in their particular dance performances. Today, however, *Raas* dances which the common man enjoyed have been replaced by dances of professional groups and as a result, many changes are seen in these performances, too.

6.36.2 *DandiyaRaas* (Dance with Sticks):

Just like the *Raas*, *Dandiya Raas* is equally popular in this region in which men and women play *Dandiya Raas* together. *Dandiya Raas* is played by men more than women. Men play *Dandiya Raas* for three to four hours constantly. During this dance, songs about Krishna and the *Gopi* girls are sung constantly accompanied by instruments like drums and trumpets. During the dance, *Gulal* (red powder) is thrown on the dancers. In this dance, force, strength, steps and jumps at definite moments are very important. Mostly, this dance is performed on days like *Janmashthami*, *Navratri* and fairs. Just like the *Raas*, *Dandiya Raas* is played in the centre of the village or in the compound of a temple in rhythm called *Kerva* and so on. However, the popularity of *Dandiya Raas* is decreasing these days. The new generation prefers to dance on the music of DJ and Hindi film songs on festivals and other occasions. At the same time, the art of *Dandiya Raas* is also developing in the professional form today.

6.36.3 *Garabo* (A Type of Traditional Dance):

The constant lamp kept burning on the oath of goddess for nine days is called '*Garabo*.' This lamp is put in an earthen pot with small holes on it. Women take this pot on head and dance in a group in circular form singing songs. As time passed, these pots came to be placed in the centre of the circle of the dancing women who sing and dance with claps in different rhythms. These *garaba* songs are composed addressing to different goddesses like *Bahucharmata*, *Boot Bhavanimata*, *Vera(h)imata*, *Kalika(Kalka) mata*, *Ambamata* and others. As time passed, topics of the songs

changed and they came to be written about social subjects, seasons, Lord Krishna and so on and dances came to be performed on these songs. In place of claps or snaps, instruments like *Khanjari* (a wooden frame with jingling small metal discs), *manjira* (a pair of small clash discs), a large metal dish called *thaal* and *bogharana* (a metal milk pot), came to be used in dances. This form of dance is a variation of the *Garaba* dance and it is also known as a *Garabo*.

In Gujarat, as part of folk dance *Garabo* is also performed with different elements of pure literature and music whereas, in rural areas, it is performed in rural speech. There was an addition of experiments in dance along with pure literature and a variety of rhythm. Thus the *Garabo* is a popular folk dance accepted by women and as well as by all strata of the society.

Garabo is a very ancient and popular type of dance form and it is associated especially with the worship of goddess *Shakti*. The origin of the *Garaba* dance is believed to be in the worship of goddess only. The term ‘*garabo*’ is derived from a word called *Garbhadeep* which means *Garabo* has been derived from the term, *Garbhadeep* (a lamp in the innermost part of the temple). ‘*Garbha*’ means a pot which is a symbol of the Universe. Thus, *Garabo* is a symbol of devotion to the primordial goddess, the mother of the Universe.

During the nine days of *Navratri*, in the centre of villages in the whole of Gujarat, garaba dances are performed. A lamp is lighted in the centre of the circle of dancing participants. Goddess’s statue is formally installed in houses with worship. At night, a stand for lamps called *Mandavi* or *Mandavadi* is placed in the central part of the village and women sing and dance around it in a circle. In these songs, there is praising, especially of the goddess *Shakti* among other things. Musical instruments like a drum, *Janz*, harmonium, *khanjari* and so on are played in the *Garaba* dances.

6.36.4 *Garabi*:

Garabo is a dance primarily for women whereas *Ggarabi* is a dance primarily for men. In this dance men dance in a circle singing songs with simple steps. Poet Dayaram composed songs for *Garabi* addressed to Lord Krishna while poet Vallabh composed songs for *Garabi* addressed to mother goddess.

Just like the *Garaba* dance, *Garabi* also associated with the festival of *Navratri* is a

group dance. *Garabi* means a wooden stand called *Mandavi* or *Mandavadi* for lamps. Men dance in a group in a circle singing *Garabi* songs clapping or playing sticks around this *Mandavi*. There is less variety in this dance form as compared to *Raas*. Instruments like a drum, a *Janz*, harmonium, *tabala*, *manjira* (a pair of metal discs) and so on are played in the *Garabi* dance. This tradition, although declining, is seen in rural areas.

6.36.5 *Padhar Nritya* (Dance):

The *Padhar* is not a sailor community but are closely connected with the culture of the lake. So, theirs is a culture of the *Nal* Lake and its surroundings. Their discipline is superior to all other communities in the area. Equal speed, similar body movements and similar agility are their peculiar features of their dance. They seem to be running while playing *Dandiya Raas* but it is a rhythmic feature of their dance. Another peculiarity of the *Padharnritya* is the playing of *Manjira Raas*. Playing with *manjira*, they bend down backward and touch the ground with their back and slowly come up and stand up in arhythm. In the same way, they sit down, move forward and bend down with their head touching the ground and their knees playing the *manjira* at the same time. Scenes like waves rising up and coming down are created by their movements; a scene of a ship rocking on the waves of the sea is created.

Actually, the *Padhar Nritya* only can be called the correct form of dance in Saurashtra. The *Padhar* is a sailor like tribe of the *Koli* community which lives in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area. One finds an exact reflection of life of the seafarers in their dance. Young *Padhar* men dance with a pair of *manjira*, sit and make movements similar to those of the sailors using oars in a boat. Sometimes, they sit on their knees playing *manjira*. Only men dance with such movements and sing also at the same time accompanied by instruments like an *Ektaro* (a single-stringed instrument), *tabala* (a pair of small drums), a *bagaliya* (an instrument like a pipe) and *Kansijoda* (a pair of clash cymbal or tin discs of a bigger size). This dance expresses the energy of young *Padhar* men.

6.36.6 *Tippani Nritya* (Tippan Dance):

Connected with the life of labourers, this dance is actually a dance of women in Gujarat, especially Saurashtra. *Tippani* or *Tippan* is long stick with a small square piece of log at the bottom end. During the construction of a house, women laborers use such sticks to level small pieces of bricks on the floor. Women sing dance by

striking rhythmically on the ground with these sticks. So, it is known as *Tippani* or *Tippan* dance.

It is difficult to describe the forceful and rhythmic *Tippan* dance in bare words. Folk dance is a visual art and therefore, just words cannot fully and vividly describe it. Words of songs, resonances of sounds, tonal singing by women and the tip tip sound accompanied by a trumpet, harmonious rhythm in melodious tunes-all of this make the dance just indescribable. In Saurashtra, the *Tippan* dance which was seen in this *Bhal-Nalkantha* area at one time has today become an ornamental spectacle of the stage.

6.36.7 The Koli Dance:

In the dance of the *Koli* who has the same energy as the *Padhar*, exhibit the culture of the *Nal-Kantha* (the *Nal* Lake and the life around it) area. At the time of festivals, the *Koli* dance in groups with their eyes smeared with soot, a round painted turban, a cloth bound around their waist and buttocks and embroidered umbrellas in each hand. This dance reflects their carefree nature and is seen even today, especially in the famous fair of Tarnetar at the temple of Trinetreshwar Mahadev. This fair is for the *Koli* community only. The *Koli* women, too, dance in the fair a dance called *Tran Taali* (three claps). There is a large population of the *Koli* people in this area and therefore, this folk dance is very famous here.

6.37 Fairs:

Popular fairs are very important for people of the whole of Gujarat. Fairs are the occasions for the simple, straightforward and hard-working people in the rural areas which provide them pleasure, zeal and joy to them. Such fairs provide them opportunities to entertain themselves and move in the free atmosphere, enjoy, meet friends and relatives as well as build new relations. Fairs in Gujarat are held generally on religious festivals and holy occasions at holy places. People participate with a religious fervor in fairs held on festivals related to Lord Shiva, Ram, Krishna Hanumanji and goddesses like Ambaji, Bahucharaji, Sheetalamata, Khodiyarmata and many others. Similarly, people of different sects participate in fairs in memory of saints like Swami Sahjanand, Kabirji, Bhathiji, Ramdevpeer, Jalaram *Bapa*, as well as Muslim *peers* (saints) like Miradatar, Nuruddin *Oliya* and many others. Such fairs actually show secular values and play an important role in arousing and maintaining sentiments of peace and harmony among communities. Fairs other than religious fairs

also play an important role in gathering people and making them forget differences besides giving entertainment.

Most fairs are held once a year but some fairs like *Hats/Haats*(Markets), especially in tribal areas, are held every week. Local fairs are held for a day only but some fairs like the Tarnetar in Surendranagar, that of Bhavnath at Junagadh and the fair at Vautha near Ahmedabad are held for three to five days.

The fair at Vautha is famous for its trading of donkeys. Fairs at Dharanidhar, Dhima and Jaliya are famous for markets of bullocks, calves and horses of high quality. People get opportunity to select and buy or sell cattle in these popular fairs. In the fair at Madhavpura, horse racing and camel racing competitions are major attractions. People from tribal areas select their life partners at fairs only. A young tribesman abducts a bride of his choice from a fair and marries her.

There are many attractions for people in fairs: sweets, eatables, readymade clothes and items related to apparels, utensils, items of metal, jewelry, cheap but attractive ornaments, toys and several other items available in shops there. Moreover, young men and women in colourful bright clothes and ornaments, programs of *Rass-Garaba* of *Bhajans-Duha* (Prayer songs and singing of couplets) make such fairs more attractive. Beautiful women and handsome young men, old men, children-all participate in these activities. They consider fairs a pilgrimage which is a unique feature of the popular fairs in Gujarat.

According to The Gujarat Gazetteer, the number of fairs in Gujarat is over 1500 in which religious fairs are more than other fairs. These fairs include: those held on Shiva festivals, 350; 300 on the birthday of Lord *Shri* Krishna; those related to *Mataji* (goddesses), about 190; 175 Muslim fairs; fairs on *Holi-Dhuleti*, 85; those related to Hanumanji, 51 and almost the same number of fairs on occasions of Sheetalamata. Most fairs are held on the banks of rivers or at the bottom of mountains. Fairs are held throughout the year in Gujarat.

These grand and variegated fairs are an important part of social life and they are a special activity which makes life with energy and joy. The joy of fairs is unique. In Gujarat, too, there is a tradition of fairs held on different occasions at various places. These fairs are connected with different reasons, places and time. Moreover, every fair

has its own peculiarities. Each fair with its peculiar features is different from the other. Now, fairs gradually appear similar in many respects instead of being individually different reflecting the temperament of the life of a community. At the same time, the uniqueness of a fair as compared to other fairs has been still there. They must be enjoyed before the cultural life is destroyed by the steamroller of commercialization and industrialization.

Major fairs are mostly held on religious occasions at places of pilgrimage like a temple, at a confluence of rivers, on the sea shore or on the bank of a lake and at the bottom of a mountain or a mound. The main purpose of fairs is entertainment besides religion; they are in fact connected to life of communities. Several fairs are held on Full-Moon days while one at Shulpaneshwar is held on a New-Moon day.

Fairs in Gujarat are held at more than 150 places. Fairs of the cowherders, farmers as well as that of tribesmen are especially very entertaining. Today, however, the originality of popular fairs is getting lost because of factors like business and pleasure-giving means. The fairs are getting urbanized. The throbbing community life, colourful artistic elements of folk life and natural joy are, all the same preserved to a great extent. It is necessary to see the cultural tradition is not destroyed by the artificiality of industrial fairs.

Fairs and festivals are as old as human civilization. Man may have felt it necessary to enjoy fairs and celebrate festivals for a break from the monotonous routine life. Kalidas, the great Sanskrit poet has described the perennial nature of human life in these words: '*utsavpriyaha khalu manushyaha*' meaning 'Man is indeed fond of festivals temperamentally.' In the middle of days completely stuffed with activities man wants rest, entertainment which he gets from events like fairs and, having enjoyed the freshness of a fair, he again turns back to routine life. Fairs and festivals add oxygen to the monotonous routine life on the basis of which social, cultural and religious life are bound together. In the celebrations of such fairs man shares his joy. The social structure is built and maintained indirectly by such festivities. Most of these festivals are religious out of which he gets strength to face the adversities of life; his faith towards truth in life is maintained. Fairs must be kept alive for the spreading of elixir of life and its realization.

Thus, popular fairs are a noble medium of getting entertainment. People enjoy the fairs keeping aside all differences. In addition to entertainment, it is important as an arrangement for trade and business. It is the topmost centre for the expression of folk life. It is these rural people who have maintained the vanishing folk culture. There is little scope for entertainment for people in the middle of miseries, difficulties and adversities. So, these popular fairs add pleasure to the life of rural communities. Hindu and Muslim have enjoyed with mutual affection, the religious festivals of the Hindu or those of the Muslim till today. Fairs are not mere assembling of people but they are a unique experience of entertainment of all types of occasions and festivals together. During the time of fairs, the rising mutual friendly affection, love and unity are actually seen. Thus, arrangement of fairs is welcome from every angle.

- **Folk Fairs of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* Area:**

Sr. No.	Place	Name of a Fair	Day/s	Estimated Attendance
1.	Vautha <i>Ta.Dholka</i>	Vautha fair	11 th day to 16 th day of <i>Kartak</i>	2,00,000
2.	Chandisar <i>Ta.Dholka</i>	<i>Jaljilani Ekadashi</i>	11 the day of <i>Bhadarva</i>	10,000
3.	Metal <i>Ta.Bavla</i>	Fair of <i>Mahakali</i>	5 th day of <i>Vaishakh</i>	10,000
4.	Bhimnath <i>Ta.Dhandhuka</i>	Fair of <i>Bhimnath Mahadev</i>	From 29 th day of <i>Shravan</i> to 1 st day of <i>Bhadarva</i>	30,000

- **Source:** Fairs and Festivals of Census of India 1961 which included details of fairs attended by more than 10,000 people. There has been several times increase in the attendance today.

Here are some of the very popular fairs:

(1) Fair at Vautha:

The fair held at Vautha (*taluka-Dholka*) is a unique and important one. The location of this fair is unique. It is a holy place of pilgrimage at the confluence of seven rivers which include *Sabarmati*, *Hathmati*, *Vatrak*, *Khari*, *Meshwo*, *Mazam* and the *Shedhi*. At Vautha these seven rivers meet.

Village Vautha is located on the borders of Dholka *Taluka* and that of Matar *Taluka* of Kheda District. This is the biggest fair of all the fairs in Gujarat held in Ahmedabad District. People from the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area near Vautha, from *Charotar* area of Kheda District as well as from other areas of Gujarat attend this fair. It is held on the Full-Moon day of the month of *Kartak* but people start coming to this place from fifteen days before to fifteen days after the day of the fair. This means that this fair lasts for almost a month. People come and go back in large groups mostly by bullock carts.

It is of great importance to take a bath at the confluence of seven rivers on the Full Moon day of the month of *Kartak*. People feel a great sense of fulfillment after taking a bath in the waters of seven rivers. Like other fairs in this fair at Vautha, too, there are many small and big temporary shops, many activities of entertainment like circus, merry-go-round and so on in addition to jugglers, the *Madari* (snake charmers), the *Nat* (acrobats), *Bhavaya* (Folk artists) and other entertainers. At night, *Dayaro* (a program of folk songs) besides many cultural programs are organized by Dholka *Taluka Panchayat*. Thus, people interested in social, religious, cultural and business activities throng here and enjoy the fair.

This fair is especially important as a market place of donkeys and camels. Businessmen from Gujarat and outside Gujarat come here to buy and sell donkeys and camels. Donkeys and camels are decorated before bringing to the market. So, this market looks very colorful and it is a great joy to see this market where donkeys and camels are sold and bought at a very high price.

This fair at village Vautha in Ahmedabad District is very popular and it is attended by innumerable people-men, women and people of all ages in colourful dresses from nearby and far off places which make this fair a colourful festival. Many small shops and mediums of entertainment are erected there. People stay in tents as if a town lives in the river bed. People enjoy the fair, buy things and enjoy bathing with a satisfaction of having earned *Punya* (a reward of good deeds) in the confluence of seven rivers. Every fair has such a temperament.

Of all fairs in Gujarat, the fair at Vautha is the most important. It is well-organized.

The location of the fair is unique-the confluence of seven rivers which is considered a sacred place of pilgrimage. Actually speaking, only two rivers-the *Vatrak* and the *Sabarmati*-meet at Vautha but before their confluence, the *Hathmati* has already met the *Sabarmati*; the *Khari*, the *Meshwo*, the *Mazam* and the *Shedhi* have met the *Vatrak*.

Thus, the fair at Vautha begin officially from the 11th day of the month of *Kartak* and lasts till *Dev Diwali* or the Full-Moon day of the same month i. e. for five days. As a place of a confluence of seven rivers, it is as important as visiting the ancient temples of the Siddhanath Mahadev and Chakaleshwar Mahadev besides taking a bath in the holy confluence which is considered very sacred.

(2) Fair at Hingalajmata:

It is believed that on the fourth day of the month of *Vaishakh*, Hingalajmata had started to come to the *Nal* Lake from the *Sindh* area. So, this festival is celebrated on this day and a *naivedhya* (an offering) is given to her. This fair is held at the temple of *Higalaj* on the island in the middle of the *Nal* Lake.

In the eleven villages around the *Nal* Lake, the *Padhar* community lives. Goddess *Hingalaj* is their family goddess. So, the *Padhar* participate in this fair in a large number. The beautiful surroundings of the *Nal* Lake also provides it a great attraction.

(3) Fair of Shivaratri:

A fair of Lord Shiva is held at Sanand (Dist. Ahmedabad) on 13th day of the second half of the month of *Maha*. People throng in this fair of *Shivaratri* in a large number with a deep faith and great zeal. This fair is held on the day of Shivaratri and lasts till late night. In addition to Sanand, people participate from areas like Bavla, Dholka, Viramgam and many other areas.

Thus, in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, big and small fairs are traditionally held every year. Changes in their form and appearance as well as religious, social and cultural changes are quite clearly visible in all these fairs.

6.38 Changes in the Religious and cultural fields:

In the *Karadiya* Rajput people of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, religion has been maintained traditionally but there are changes in the rituals and cultural features related to religion for which machines and matters connected to them are responsible. Certain rituals connected with religion in their precise form as well as the high

proportion of expenditure in religious matters in the present time have made the Hindu rethink about these factors. This awareness is seen in various religious matters, festivals and so on.

No major changes are seen in the definition, form and importance of religion due to industrialization in the modern time in this community. Even today, the *Karadiya* Rajput believes that they are the protectors of the cow and the Brahmin. Their faith in goddess *Shakti* is reflected in their words, '*Jai Mataji*' used in addressing each other. Various cultural rituals are traditionally performed including rituals from conception though entire life. In the naming of a child, a new tradition of giving modern names has begun. In the rituals of wedding and in the last rites, there is virtually no change. There is some awareness about the expenses in giving meals to community on death in the family; people consider it useless. There is hardly any change in the tradition of women's mourning on deaths. Beliefs about statues and *Khambhi* of the martyrs are still maintained but there are no erections of statues or *Khambhi* or events of a *sati* for the last several years. People still show faith in inviting the exorcist and in *Mataji* and her *Madh* (traditional temples of goddesses) but in traditional matters like inviting the exorcist or wearing a talisman or taking magical ashes or water in the events of illness have been replaced by scientific medical treatment. Superstitions of good or bad omen are there to some extent and people's blind faith in *mantra-tantra* (black magic), ghosts and witches, worship of the evil elements with instruments like *Dakalu* (a small drum played by the exorcist) is gradually disappearing in the modern time. Modernity is seen in celebrations of festivals and sacred occasions. Due to contact with other communities, castes and religions, celebration of common festivals and celebrations is seen in the modern time. People have turned to religious activities like the *Swadhyaya Parivar*, *Gayatri Parivar*, *Swaminarayan* sect and so on besides enjoying traditional fairs and pilgrimages. Tendency towards organizing programs like *Bhajan-Kirtan* (programs of mass-prayers and with music) and worshipping God has increased replacing the tactics of *mantra-tantra* (black magic).

Thus, a lot of changes are seen in the past traditions of religious and cultural areas of the people of the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area, due to factors causing changes like education, especially British education, means of communication, contacts, Westernization, urbanization, modernization, novelty, engineering and technology and so on. Modern

religious system has replaced the traditional system. Superstition, bad traditions are disappearing. So, it could be observed that in the modern India the changes in the religious and cultural fields in *Karadiya* Rajput community have come and are still coming just like those in the other communities.

6.39 Conclusion:

The impact of religion and culture is seen on every community in the world. Emile Durkheim has observed that collective life is the strongest cause of religion; especially mass frenzy is caused by collective ecstasy of celebrations of festivals. A person forgets his individual existence. Religious and rituals become symbols of the collective. According to Durkheim, God and society become moral authorities. Religion performs the duty of self-sacrifice, devotion, unity and solidarity. Thus, the significance of the social unity is in the concept of religion. So, from the sociological point of view the effects of religion are seen in the social life of human communities. In the same way, impact of religious beliefs, faith and superstitions on the institutes like marriage, family and good and inauspicious events in the *Karadiya* Rajput community in the *Bhal-Nalkantha* area is seen. *Karadiya* Rajput is a Hindu community but in its social transactions its own religious rules, vows and rituals are found implemented in a simple way. Religion keeps optimism alive in human society. It becomes a support for man in any adverse situation and frustration never arises with the support of religion and his faith in it.

Thus, in religion and cultural fields traditional method has changed in different matters due to several factors and its modern form is visible in it.

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