

CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Festivals are a part of religious activities in the rural area. Hindu festivals have been referred to ideas and have been continued the rural society from age to age. Every society has one or the other form of ritual and they are performed since the past. They are transmitted from one generation to the another and they have been institutionalized and become an integral part of the society.

In Hindu society we notice that, the social philosophy of the Hindu social organization has prescribed in detail about the activity of an individual from his birth till the death and even after the death. In the life of an average Hindu, religious customs, samskaras and rituals plays an important role. An attempt is made here to study the place of festivals in the rural social structure.

In this connection, an attempt is made here to take a brief review of the important contributions made regarding the important festivals, which take place in the life of an average ruralite. Here, Ganesh-chaturthi, Dassara, and Diwali some of the important festivals performed in the rural areas have been taken into account.

The important festival which marks the beginning of the Hindu calendar is known as Gudhi-Padava. Regarding the origin of Gudhi-Padava - satyabhamabai pandurang in her book Ram-Vijay has dealt about, why Gudhi-Padava is the first festival of the year ?¹

Kaka Kalekar in his ' Jivant Vratotsava ' writes about that, how the Gudhi-Padava festival has come into practice and why particular type of performances are done ?² The question why the first day of chaitra month should be the first day fixed for this festival ? and why shukla paksh ? and why the first day i.e. pratipada has been accepted is given by Purushottam Sharma Chaturvedi; in his book Bharatiya Vratotsava.³ There are Rigvedi,⁴ Sadananda Chendavankar,⁵ Y.R. Date,⁶ P.N. Joshi,⁷ Balkrishna Tanay,⁸ P.V. Kane,⁹ Sulabhaa Jogalekar¹⁰ and B.A. Gupte,¹¹ have substantially contributed regarding the performances about the Gudhi-Padava festival.

Another important festival in the life of an average Hindu in the rural area is the Makar-Sankrant. The word sankrant means coming togetherness of people on the day when the sun enters into the Makar-Rashi to greet each other. It is common belief among the rural Hindus that, the sun and the moon influence on the mind and the body of human beings. Due to influence there are the ups and downs; in the life of the human beings. The Makar Sankraman is to bring love, co-operation and to stop the fights between them. This has been explained by B.R. Kulkarni,¹² P.V. Kane.¹³ In their works Vatsala Bhate has dealt with the present state of Makar Sankrant and performance i.e. the giving of sweet in the form Tilgul.¹⁴

Another important festival is the Ganesh-Chaturthi. According to Hindu mythology the Lord Ganesha is powerful deity and it is the

deity which is to be worshipped before we start any activity economic and social. This festival is celebrated on the fourth day of bright fortnight of lunar month Bhadrapad. Lord Ganesh is worshipped as a god of knowledge and remover of obstacles in some achievements. This has been stated by K.B. Das and L.K. Mahapatra.¹⁵ Regarding the question, why Ganesh puja is in the Bhadrapad, sixth month according to Hindu calendar is given with the mythological and puranic explanation by Arun Tamhankar.¹⁶ About the origin of this festival and Myths regarding the Lord Ganesh W.J. Wilkins, explains in detail. According to him, Ganesh is the Hindu god of prudence and policy. He is the reputed son of Shiva and Parvati (in padma puran alone we find that - Ganesh was the actual child of these deities.) and is represented with an elephants head - an emblem of sagacity and is frequently attended by and is riding upon a rat. The details of physical structure of Lord Ganesh has been given and then discussion about his importance is explained by the author.¹⁷ We find the details in the puranic and upanisadic literature which has been dealt by Rigvedi¹⁸ and S. Chendavankar.¹⁹

Philologists and ethologists have tried to trace the origin of Ganesh to the harvest season, comparing Parvati to the earth and the clay of which the figure was made to the alluvial crust found on the banks of the rivers; soon after the Bhadoi crop. Some derived

his origin from ' OM ' but a recent examination of the sign of zodiac discloses the origin of Ganesh as belly from the big body of crab or cancer, which stands in heaven just near Shiva, who as the main part of the jemiini or intervenes between the female part of that sign (Parvati) and the zodiceal sign of cancer or the crab or big belly.²⁰

Tanay Balkrishna gives the details about the religious rituals and performances.²¹ The volume festivals of India written by Sulabha

Jogalekar also given us about the performances of the festival,²² forms of Ganapati which are thirteen and eight holy places have been discussed by Arun Tamhankar;²³ and Sadananda Chendavankar²⁴

respectively Rigvedi has dealt with the sects of Ganapati devotees, which are known as Ganapatya pantha. He has described how the

Ganapati sect have been originated and are existing in the Hindu society.²⁵ H. Heras deals with the appearance and development of

Ganapati.²⁶ There are other scholars who have contributed regarding the Ganesh deity and the festival, among them Shankarrao Sawant is one of the important name.²⁷ Y.R. Date and C.G. Karve have discussed

about the role of Lokamanya Tilak using this festival to integrate Hindus and to develop spirit of unity among them.²⁸ Tarkatirth Joshi has

given, how the Ganesh festival has changed from time to time and how in the present era. It has become a festival of more pompous and light, recreational one than the religious one.²⁹ Although the people

still have some faith and belief regarding the god of wisdom, one can observe that individuals are trying to get rid of superstitions beliefs

according to sabita Babani.³⁰ Dr. Dhanavantaji discusses about the festival as of samskaras. It is believed that without the blessings of Lord Ganesh, no intellectual work takes place.³¹ M. Arunachalam as discussed about the importance of Ganesh festival from the point of view of children. According to him, creative activities are blessed by Ganesh.³² Seth Tribhuvanadas Damodardas looks at the festival, which builds the nation for the national progress this festival can be utilized.³³ Lokmanya Tilak has utilized this for the social unity purpose. S.K. Phadake explained the type of devotees.³⁴ The social thinker Bhaskarrao Jadhav gives his opinion that, the stories regarding the Ganesh are fantasies. He says that, worship of deities is useless because they are imaginary and fantastical. In the last para Bhaskarrao Jadhav says about the deities and idol worship that - (1) culture is not merely depending on the facts. (2) culture of human welfare though depends on imagination is more important from the facts. (3) In the whole life span all things are taken for granted. (4) Idol worship is stepping stone of the immortal worship.³⁵ The purpose and significance of Ganesh festival is given by Tanany Balkrishna,³⁶ and Sulabha Jogalekar.³⁷ However, the drawbacks or weaknesses in the festival has been described by Chandrakant Awate.³⁸

Vijaya Dashami is celebrated on the tenth day of Ashwin. The glaring history of victorious Bharatiya is reflected in this day.

For all varnas this day is important and how they enjoy is given by P.N. Joshi.³⁹ Rigvedi gives about the origin of the word⁴⁰ and date Y.R. contributes about the historical accounts.⁴¹ C.P. Sharma says that even prior to the muslim period this day was celebrated by all the kings. Lord Rama's conquest over Lanka was commenced on this day. Ever since then this day come to be regarded as the day of victory or conquest, while considering the time and duration of navaratra, it had been concluded that in Bharat Varsha spring and autumn are the best seasons. Between these two spring is not much useful for any march or conquest because immediately following spring is the hot summer and summer is not so much helpful for the movement of an army. The details about the time for an army endeavours has been given in the Raghuvansha by Kalidas - All these details have been given by Sharma.⁴² The myths regarding Dassara have been discussed by Rigvedi,⁴³ and Tanay Balkrishna⁴⁴ - Dassara also refers to the fight between Kauravas and Pandavas. This has been narrated by Javaji Pandurang in Pandurang Pratap.⁴⁵ The concluding day of this Dassara signifies the day of Ramas victory over Ravana. A huge monster like figure of Ravana is prepared. It burnt in an open ground according to Sulabha Jogalekar.⁴⁶ Rules of Dassara rituals, the worship of Aparajita and Shamee, worship of weapons, seemolanghan and customs regarding it have been discussed by Chendavankar;⁴⁷ and Rigvedi,⁴⁸ C.P. Sharma,⁴⁹ Agarkar A.J.⁵⁰ In their works Dassara is the festival about

agriculture is discussed by Kalelkar⁵¹ and Rigvedi.⁵² The message of this festival is that - if we have an earnest desire for prosperity, then everyone of his must labour hard to achieve the blessings of the great goddess viz. Saraswati and Seeta, has been dealt in detail by Rigvedi.⁵³ The social significance of Dassara is manifested an the alround joy and spirit of the togetherness among the people. It is an occassion for a family reunion. Especially, the Vijaya Dashami festival is a day for meeting and greeting brothers, relatives and friends and even foes. It is also believed to be the most auspicious day for patching up quarrels and differences. This has been emphasized by Amit Ray.⁵⁴ According to Vatsala Bhate Dassara will generate an affection and will bring about unity and organization in our society. This must be emphatically stressed upon the minds of our people.⁵⁵ In modern days we find that the festival as far as the way in which it is performed is changing rapidly to Sabita Babani.⁵⁶ Harihar Sinha says that - Dassara should bring people together and extend the love and co-operation among them.⁵⁷

Hindu festivals plays an important role and since the historical period they are observed and performed by Hindus. It is necessary to study them from the sociological point of view in the modern period.

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