SECTION- III

Cultural environment is created by people’s culture which is time and location specific. Different ideas and notions on the resource potentialities of physical environmental components and processes lead to resourcisation in conjunction with other factors. But it is art, artifacts, artisans and artists who are treated as components of cultural environment in general. It is again ideas and notions which give rise to folk rituals, festivals, handicrafts and cottage industries within behavioral environment. Resourcisation of cultural concepts and ideas may enrich or degrade the cultural environment. Enrichment or degradation is reflected on space and society.
CHAPTER - 7

Silk industry at the interface between historical and cultural environment

7.1 Introduction

The origin of silk production is very ancient. However there is no doubt that it began in China in 3rd millennium BC and trading of silk started by the 1st millennium BC within a few centuries, Caravans were regularly carrying silk to India, Turkistan and Persia. According to legend, in about 140 BC sericulture as well as silk spread overland from China to India. By 2nd Century AD, India was shipping its own raw silk and silk cloth to Persia. It flourished in Europe from 1480 AD. Silk route was extended through Himalaya- Tibet (Lassa) - Khotan (Middle Asia) - Kashgarh and Yarkhand. Ladakh linked China with the west. Traders carried goods and ideas on silk between the two great civilizations of Rome and China and flourished silk industry in the 11th and 12th Centuries (Encyclopedia Britannica and Hornblower et al, 1978).

7.1.1 World distribution of silk industry

Japan, China and South Korea are the leading silk producing countries of the world. Russia and India are the next sericulture countries. Among the developing countries India is most favorable for silk rearing and production.

7.1.2 Indian scenario of silk industry

India is famous for its good quality silk production. Raw silk is produced in many parts of India. It produces all the known commercial silk varieties viz. Mulberry, Tasar, Eri and Muga. India produces currently (2000) about 14,050 tonnes of silk. Sericulture has confined to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir (Kurukshetra, 2003).

India has a long history of silk industry. Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556 - 1605) established workshop for weaving brocade at Lahore, Agra Fatehpur Sikri bringing skilled worker from Safavid of Iran (Ain - i - Akbari, 1596 - 1602). Jehangir and Shah Jahan also patronized silk weaving. At the tine of Ahmad Shah dynasty (1398 - 1572) silk industry flourished in Gujrat (Ahmedabad) Berhampur in Khandesh, a provincial capital under Shah Jahan was famous for silk.
7.1.3 History of silk industry in West Bengal

Since the early medieval and late medieval periods Bengal attained celebrity in the art of silk rearing and weaving. In 13th & 14th century silk goods were exported from India especially from Bengal. During the late 17th and early 18th century silk processing was recognize as a cottage industry. By the 19th Century Bengal with its natural resource in will and cultivated silk and supreme skills in dying and developed a sophisticated style blending Mughal style and floral ornamental theme with imaginative indigenous figurative design. The renowned centre of trade in Bengal was Baluchar and other centers at Buswah Coggrah in Murshidabad. Baluchar was a small village near Cossimbazar (4 km from Berhampur ). The part of the Bhagirathi which seperated from Padma and joined Jalangiwas referred to as Cossimbazar River and the triangular land surrounded by the Padma, Bhagirathi and Jalangi was called Cossinbazar Island. It was an important trading island for silk and muslin. Most part of it has already been engulfed by the Ganges. (Gazetteer of India, Murshidabad, 1968).

At a time when several modern civilized races were living in a state of Burbarism of using the bark of the trees as their apparel, Bengal was producing these valuable stuffs and was sending them to the well known marts of Dacca, Sonargaon and Satgaon for the use of princes and noble men. (Bag, 1989)

In West Bengal two types of silk are reared, Mulberry and Tussore. The first one is domesticated and the second if of wild variety. Silk cocoon are reared as well as silk goods are produced in many regions in West Bengal. These are

i. The Ganga-Mahananda doab in Malda District.
ii. Murshidabad and its environ.
iii. Nalhati-Bolpur region in Birbhum District.
iv. Bishnupur-Sonamukhi (tantipara) region in Bankura District.
v. West Dinajpur District.
vi. The piedmont plains of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar District.
    Darjeeling Hills
vii. Raghunathpur region in Purulia District.

(Source: Mookherjee, 1980)

Among these regions Murshidabad and Baharampur, Tantipara - Nalhati -Bolpur, Bishnupur -Sonamukhi of Bankura and Raghunathpur of Purulia district are important centers of silk weaving in west Bengal.
7.2 Objectives

i. To evaluate silk industry at Sonamukhi and Bishnupur within a historical and cultural environment.

ii. To analyze the place specificity of silk industry with special reference to Bishnupur baluchari silk industry.

iii. To introspect the woven designs on baluchari sari.

iv. To find out the factors behind the use of concepts and ideas translated in to designs.

v. To study health hazards associated with silk weaving.

vi. To make an observation the future trend in the silk industry.

7.3 Methodology

Ideographic method is applied in this chapter.

7.4 Technique

Field survey technique is adopted to generate data. Perception survey technique is also used.

7.5 Discussion

Bankura has a position in weaving sector of West Bengal. All over the district around 20000 (Census, 2001) people are engaged in weaving sector. Sonamukhi was known as the village of weavers and Bishnupur has a Tasar silk weaving platform. Mr. N. G. Mukherjee in his monogram on 'The silk fabrics of Bengal' (1903) has remarked on the indigenous silk weaving centres of Bankura District. In a report on the state of the Tasar Silk Industry in Bengal and Central Provinces (1905) he states “the tussore weaving industry of Bankura seems to be more famous than any other place I have yet visited. The saris and dhutis of Sonamukhi and Bishnupur are very famous; even in Dacca or Mymensingh, they are prized”.

It is thought that the weaving industry of Bishnupur and Sonamukhi started in the reign of Malla Kings but the exact time is not known. But history says that the Malla Kings once brought some weavers from Murshidabad and patronized the silk industry.

The tribes of the study area used to collect tussore silk worms from the local forest and sold them to the substantial merchants, who retailed them to the hands of the weavers the fabrics mostly woven consisted of tussore silk. But the weaver opted for silk than tussore because people prefer a silk sari (Mukherjee, 1905).
The study has a platform of silk weaving from the time of Malla Kings. After the abolition of Baluchar village in Ganga (the original centre of Baluchari weaving), the weavers migrated. The wavers of Baluchar may migrate to Bishnupur but there was debate about this fact. According to Manik Lal Singha, after independence, Government of India tried to rejuvenate Baluchari weaving. The then Assistant Director of Culture (ShyamaDas Babu) selected Bishnupur of Bankura as new weaving centre under the supervision of Akshay Das Patranga (Singha,1978). Another report says Subho Thakur, the then Director of Regional Design Centre (Kolkata) was fond of sculpture, art and architecture. He brought an old Baluchari sari from Akshay Das Pathan (Patranga), took the ideas and created Bishnupur Baluchari Shari in late 1950’s.

7.5.1 Distribution of silk industry in Bishnupur

Bishnupur is a silk weaving centre since the time of Malla kings. In Bishnupur municipality the weaving centers are mainly related to Baluchari silk weaving(photo.7.4). These centers are located at different paras namely- Gopal Ganja, Krishna Ganja, Barakalitala, Patrapara, Raghunath Sayer (Fig.7.1).

7.5.2 History behind silk industry in Bishnupur and Sonamukhi.

Silk industry of the study area developed on the local raw materials collected by the tribes from local forest. The tribes of the study area used to collect tasar silk worms. This wild silk worm is grown on locally available plant species like Arjun, Asan and Sidha etc.

Sonamukhi is famous for tasar silk saris and dress materials. In ‘Deshabalibriti’ it was known as the village of weavers (Ghosh, 1977). From pre-British period Sonamukhi was a trade centre of tusser silk. In British period East India Company established a large factory at Sonamukhi and members of weavers’ families were engaged in cotton spinning and cloth making; but the introduction of European Piece-goods led to withdrawal of this trade from Sonamukhi and the weavers again started silk-weaving. Sonamukhi silk industry produces tusser dress material, cut-piece, than etc. These than (dress materials) is mainly used for designed kantha-stich saris. There is also a great demand of Sonamukhi silk from Afganisthan for turbans mainly. Bishnupur is famous for its figurative Baluchari Silk. It is mainly made from mulberry. Previously Bishnupur produces a special kind of silk which was known as ‘dhupchay’ and ‘alpaca’ silk. The color mainly used for dying was natural colors from Arjun, Mango trees or form Laksha (lac), haritaki and khayer.
Distribution of handloom and cottage industries & places of tourism attraction

Legend

- Bishnupur Municipality boundary
- Road
- Rail
- Bandh
- Lodge and hotel zone
- Bishnupur mela place (23-27 Dec)
- Sankha shilpa production centre
- Baluchari silk production centre

Fig. 7.1
Besides tasar and mulberry silk the study area also produces some low quality silks. *Kete* which is coarse in texture and mainly used for making Shawls, *Matka* from pierced cocoons and *Bapta* is a mixture of cotton and tasar threads.

### 7.5.3 Baluchar village

‘Bishnupuri Baluchari’ is famous for its miniature figurative design. But the word ‘Baluchari’ came from the ‘Baluchar’ a small village, the original centre of Baluchari weaving in Murshidabad. Baluchar was engulfed by the river Ganga and the weavers migrated (Sen, 1994). The part of the Bhagirathi which is bifurcated from Padma and joined the Jalangi was called Cassimbazar River and the triangular land sarrunded by the Padma, Bhagirathi and Jalangi was called Cassimbazar Island. It was a big trading island for silk and muslin. It was situated about 4 km for Berhampur.

The looms for making the figure on Baluchari silk were extremely complicated in construction. When this book ‘A history of Murshidabad district... families’ was written by Major J.H. Tull Walsh in 1902, Dhubraj (80) was the only person who understood how they are made and set in the *naksa* loom (the kind used for weaving figured silk). Two men have to work together, one of them devoting his attention solely to bringing up the proper thread of the wrap. The cost of ordinary loom varies from Rs 4-10, while the naksha loom cost as much as Rs. 30. The main centers were Baluchar, Khagra, Mirzapur and Islampur (TullWalsh, 1902)

In mid 19th century distinctive saris were produced by highly skilled weaver of Baluchar. The original Baluchari sari used to include fine blend of Muslim culture with Hindu culture. The original Baluchari designs were based on floral designs, motifs, figurative design and different types of geometric designs. British and British periodic culture has an impact on the design of Baluchari. The saris of 19th century includes design of a large central floral motifs surrounded by rows of small panels with various pictorial subjects as elephants, horse riders, men smoking hookah and some times the figure of the Europeans. A sari (1860) in London Victoria & Albert Museum depicts the design of a bridegroom on horse back attended by a canopy bearer and a woman bearing a lamp. It was popular among Europeans as collective pieces (Mukherjee, 1897) and (Dewar, 1904).

### 7.5.4 Baluchari of Bishnupur

From the time of Malla kings the study area never come directly under Muslim Raj. This is a Hindu dominated area. The Malla kings
were of warrior race but later they attracted to Vaisnabism (from Birhambir).

When Baluchari Shari comes to Bishnupur the original design has been changed. The original Baluchari design fevers floral, geometric design of Muslim culture. But when it comes to Bishnupur the designed has been transformed by the local Hindu culture (photo.7.4 & 7.5).

The first woven Baluchari (Smritirekha) depicts the story about the nawabs was woven by Akshay das Patranga and Gorachand Disai (Chandra, 2004).

7.5.4.1 Raw materials

For both wild silk and domestic silk, raw materials were collected from local forests previously. Mulberry is a bushy plant. All over India 120567 hectares of land supports mulberry cultivation. In West Bengal four species of mulberry plants (Morus alba, M.indica, M.senata and M.laevigata) are planted for mulberry silk worms. Silk moths directly depend on mulberry leave. A unit of 400000 leaves (1000fls) required a total quantity of 500 - 600 kg of leaves. In the study area both bi-voltine and multi-voltine species are reared. The quality of bi-voltine is superior than multi-voltine. Bishnupur sericulture complex is one of the oldest sericulture farms in West Bengal. It was established in 1922-23 in Marar area of Bishnupur. Bi-voltine and multi-voltine both cocoons are reared here. Improved multi-voltine races are maintained. BMI, BMII, BMIV, BPI, BPII are very much popular in the district and other districts also.

Tussore is a wild variety of silk. In the Jungle Mahal (Previous name of Bishnupur), Arjun (terminalia arjuna), Asan(terminalia tomentosa) and sisha(lagers troemia parviflora) trees were found. Once this area was famous for rearing rather than weaving and commercial tusser cocoons are sent to weaving centres of tantipara and adjoining areas of Birbhum. (Mukherjee.S.;1980)

At present the raw materials reared domestically but wild cocoons are also collected. The tasar raw materials at present are imported from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand and Mulberry cocoons are imported from Malda of West Bengal and from Southern states specially Bangalore. After the opening of silk route on sixth July, 2006 when India opens Nathula Pass, permission granted for 15 goods to be brought to India include silk. (Unnithan, 2006).

The dye previously used in this saries was vegetable dyes. But at present synthetic dye is bought from Bara Bazaar of Kolkata.
Customers are not satisfied with the longevity of this synthetic color specially the foreign tourists. So the weavers are trying to use vegetable dyes.

7.5.4.2 Baluchari silk weaving and social stratification

Mainly the weavers do this work. The weavers are classified into four; patrnga, Mandaranya, Uttarkuli and Aswini. Patrangas are related to dying of clothes, Mandaranya came from Mandaran, Aswini from the Bengali month Aswina and Uttarkuli from north.

It is thought that there is a relation between Jain and the weavers of rarh. There are seven gotras or exogamous groups among the weavers. Adidev, Dharmadev, Rishidev, Sandilya, Kashyapa, Ananta and Bharadwaja.

There is a sub caste based on occupation viz, the Saraki Tantis or Tanti Sarkars of Bishnupur Sub-Division who live by weaving and are hold to be degraded. They are further sub-divided to Aswin, Patranga, Mandaranya and Uttarkuli. In Sonamukhi the weavers belong to Santirishi or Santinath Gotrawhich may have been derived from Jain Tirthankara Santinath.

Chronicle says that at the time of Malla reign a community of weavers came to Sonamukhi and Bishnupur from Murshidabad. The title Khan, Kit is derived from Muslim title and they got it from Mughal Nawabs. Some weavers of Murshidabad were transferred to Muslim religion also (Ghosh, 1977).

The weavers of rarh used to dye clothes from jute by lac, bark, route fruit etc. Lac is used for red and indigo is used for blue color. For permanent color they used natural acid from tamarind and alkali from burnt banana leaves. The title of the rarh weavers are – Dutta, Kundu, Laha, Das, Rakshit, Chanda or Chand, Pal, Kar, Patra, Bit, Kit, Sen, Khan, Dey, Hens, Guin, Mitra, Nandi, Basak, Sil, Pramanik, Loksman, Barik, Mandal, Lo, Su, Sau, Ash etc.

At present the other castes are also doing weaving. The caste specificity is going to break especially in designing or coloring section.

7.5.4.3 Distribution of silk industry in the study area

In Sonamukhi the weaving centers are centered in Sonamukhi Municipality mainly. Ward No. 9, 10 & 11 are the centers silk weaving in Sonamukhi. Surrounding villages like Birsingha are also weaving silk dress materials. In Bishnupur the weaving center for Baluchari are
located in Bishnupur Municipality belt. Word no. 7, 6, 17, 8, 14, 10 are main silk weaving area of Bishnupur Municipality (Fig. 7.4). Now a day the weaving of silk has spread to the surroundings of Bishnupur.

7.5.4.4 Designs of Baluchari

The weavers take their concept from terracotta temples. The stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and Lord Krishna are designed. Physical environmental components are also used in designs: Flower, Climbers, Creepers, Birds and Animals, Alpana (geometric design), Paisley are very common.

Krishna at amorous position, blowing flute are seen as a part of Vaisnav culture. Impact of folk and tribal culture is seen in the form of tribal folk dance, animal poaching, etc. Designs of Hindu marriage, groom riding on horse, bride in palki are seen. Fictitious animal like dragon is a new element in the design of Baluchari. The story type designs make it unique from other designed silk saris. In a nut shell the Bishnupur Baluchari designs are shown in Fig.7.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ramayana</th>
<th>Sitaharan, war between Ram &amp; Ravana, king Ram, Ram at marriage, Hanumana &amp; Lanka dahana.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahabharata</td>
<td>Swayambhara of Droupadi, Chess playing of Kuru &amp; Pandaba, kurukshetra war, Abhimanyu baddh, Visma at sarasaiya, Sakuntala &amp; Dusmanta, way to mahaprasatthan, story of Ekalabya, Arjun &amp; Krishna on chariot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Krishna &amp; Vaisnavism</td>
<td>Child Krishna, Kangsabadh, Noukabilas, Raslila, Kalia daman, Tarakasur badh, Dolyatra, Krishnalila.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story of Aesop</td>
<td>Grapes are sour, Kathuria and Jaladevata, unity is strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk culture</td>
<td>Tribal dance, stick dance, Raban kata dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Norms</td>
<td>Marriage ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social event</td>
<td>Nawabs smoking hookah, servents at fanning Nawabs, war beteen kings etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples &amp; other structure</td>
<td>Bishnupur terracotta temples, Dalmadal canon, Jorbangla, Rasmancha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Flowers, trees, creepers, climbers, kadamba tree, grass, paisley, rose etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Camel, elephant, horse, deer, parrot, peacock and different types of bird.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fictitious Animal</td>
<td>Dragon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age-sex structure of the artisans in the selected part of the study area (Bishnupur Municipality-2004)
Present problems in the silk industry (Bishnupur Municipality- 2004)

Fig. 7.6

LEGEND
- Municipality Boundary
- Railway line
- Road
- Supply of raw materials
- Cost of raw materials
- Color and glaze
- Changing dress and code
- Duplicate baluchari
- Marketing

Scale

0.1 0 0.4 Km
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of transport</th>
<th>Elephant, horse, camel, boat, palanquin, chariot, Dingi (country boat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>Arrow, bow, sword, a spear like missile, gada, charka, dhul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>Sari, dhoti, chapkan, turban, ghagra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract design</td>
<td>Geometric designs, paisley, temple like border (triangle), Alpana etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornaments</td>
<td>All types of ornaments are seen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.7.5

7.5.4.5 Infusion and diffusion of Baluchari concept.

Bishnupuri baluchari is famous for its unique figurative designs. At present the weavers are borrowing new concepts for the survival of this industry. Brocade baluchari or Swarnachari is a new entrant in this industry. Generally baluchari is made of mulberry silk but now the weavers are weaving it in tasar also. Influence of Swarnakatan and Benarasi is also found now.

Imitation of Baluchari in synthetic and cotton printed shares cause degradation for silk baluchari weavers.

7.5.4.6 Silk industry and hazardous consequences.

From the field survey it has been seen that the education level of the male and female artisans are medium. Out of 912 surveyed people 244 male and 17 female are educated up to class IV. 286 male and 188 female are up to class X. 82 male and 30 female are educated at H.S. Level. 58 male and 20 female are educated up to graduation level and above (Fig.7.2). The educated people are no more interested in their family business. So lack of efficient labor may create problem in future.

Most of the weavers of the study area come from low income group. Daily wage of the weaver is too low. Malnutrition is a common problem here(photo.7.2). It is the main cause for which they suffer from different disease.

Problem of eye is a common event. The weavers work in a dark and damp room with the help of electric light of low intensity. Fine design of Baluchari needs concentration and continuous working in such a condition which causes eye sight problem.

Spondylosis is another problem. Continuous working in the same posture is the reason.
Level of Education among the artisans in Bishnupur Municipality-2004

LEGEND
- Municipality Boundary
- Railway line
- Road

Educational Structure
- Non educated Male
- Non educated Female
- Up to class-IV Male
- Up to class-IV Female
- Class-V to X Male
- Class-V to X Female
- Class-XI to XII Male
- Class-XI to XII Female
- B.A/B.Sc/Above Male
- B.A/B.Sc/Above Female

Bar Scale

Scale

Fig. 7.2
Bronchial problem is caused due to working in a damp room. Bronchial problem also caused due to inhale of dust during reeling.

Dermatological problem has also seen among the weavers due to use of synthetic dye. Women often roll tasar thread on their thigh, it is also cause of skin disease on their thigh (Fig. 7.3).

A common problem, gastro enteric problem is common among the weavers. This is because of the very posture of the weaver during weaving for a long period of time in a same position (photo.7.1). A black patch is often seen on the belly of weavers or it is a occupation symbol of the weavers. Renowned laureate Samaresh Basu in his book 'Tanaporen' has stated about this problem.
Health hazards among the artisans in Bishnupur Municipality-2004

LEGEND
- Municipality Boundary
- Railway line
- Road
- Viral Fever
- Bronchial Diseases
- Asthma
- TB
- Dermatological Problem
- Eye Sight
- Spondylosis
- Other

Scale
0.1 0 0.4 Km
Major findings

1. Baluchari mulberry silk industry is a continuation of tasar silk industry at Bishnupur and Sonamukhi.
2. Concept of Baluchar silk was transmitted from Kolkata to Bishnupur by Akshay Das Pathan.
3. Original Baluchar silk weaving center at Baluchar on the Ganga river in Murshidabad district was destroyed due to bank erosion.
4. But the name of Baluchar has been retained.
5. Designs on Baluchari silk produced at Bishnupur has been influenced by Hindu epic and Vaisnab culture and folk culture.
6. Original geometric floral design of Muslim culture of Murshidabad district have thus being replaced by Hindu religion or Hindu culture.
7. Different modes of transport, symbols from botanical and zoological environment have also been used as designs.
8. Historical events have also been depicted together with folk culture and festivals.
9. Changes in dress code initially adversely affected the silk industry but at present salwar kamiz, unisex shawl and other goods are also produced (photo.7.3).
CHAPTER – 8

Conch shell industry

8.1 Introduction

Conch is a small marine shell, univalve or bivalve of the type. Conch is a marine grasped. It is of Strobes genus and strombidae family. Most of the conchs are found in Indo pacific oceans and specifically in Carribean region. Conchs have spirally constructed shells. According to the biological characteristics conch grow in two ways, Sinistral or left handed and dextral or right handed. Conch has eye like stalk a long narrow aperture and a siphonal canal with an indentation near the anterior end called a stromboid notch. They have foot also. Conch shell usually found in warm tropic water but some times many conchs such as the Queen conch are found among the beds of sea grass (Wikipedia,2006).

8.1.1 Use of conch shell

Importance on the use of conch shell can be found through the world. From prehistoric time to the present civilization, utilization of conch shell is found. Conch has a powerful symbolism. Conch shell powder is also used as color (Saraswati, 1978). Conch shell is also used for making medicines.

Conch shells are occasionally used as building material. Queen conch shell is 10-30 times stronger and 1000 times tougher than brick and mortar. It is because of aragonite (CaCO₃). It is suitable for load bearing ceramics and is suitable for computer application and aerospace engineering (Ballarini, 2000)

Conch shell is also used in jewelry. Different types of Jewelry like necklace, bracelet, clip etc are produced from conch shell. Conch shell itself used as show piece by carving on it. In our mythological stories also Parvati, the wife of Lord Shiva ornamented with sea shell. The mermaid also wearing ornaments made from conch shell.

In burial places also existence of conch shell proves its superpower beyond life. It is used as a symbol of love, fertility and eternal life.
8.1.2 Use of conch shell in different countries all over the world

In Africa shells fetishes were often used in worship. Ceremonial garbs are many times decorated with shells and used in religious ceremonies.

The North American Indians also made fashions of shells. The Canadian Ojibwa tribe maintained a Grand Medicine Society with a secret conch shell symbol. It is used as curving tools, drinking cups, medical containers and jewelry. Columbus stated about the Arawak of the new world who eat conch and use the shell as musical instrument.

In Asia importance of conch can be found through its use in religious purposes. In Buddhism it is used in ritual, music and ceremonies and figures into Buddhist iconography. In Tibet the conch shell is used both for receptacle for holy water and blown. In Tibetan orchestra it is used as a musical instrument (Rose, 2006). Some inscribed conch shells were discovered in the ruins of a Buddhist establishment at Salihundam in the SriKakukam district of Andhra Pradesh. The inscriptions were votive in character (Sircar, 1965).

The Aztec believe that serpent God Quetzalcoatl tricks the lord of the under world with a kind of conch shell magic.

The Hawaiians use a ceremonial conch known as “pu” which is related to the myth of Menehune. At present “Pu” is used to announce the opening of the Hawaii state legislature(Aloha-hawaii, 2003-2004).

In Spain the home of the shrine Santiago or St. James badge represents a shell. It means pilgrimage to their shrine and statues of this saint throughout Europe.

In Egypt, China conch shell is used to perform their rituals.

In Sierra Leon the Cannibals used the shells in part of their ceremonial rituals.

In Columbia, South and Central America the archaeological evidences prove that conch here played a role in religious ceremonies. In Andes a giant pacific conch has been explored. Still its importance is found.

In Crete shell trumpets were used in religious ceremonies (Wikipedia, 2006).
8.1.3 Use of conch shell in India

In India also conch shell has survived as the original horn, trumpet from time immemorial. Evidence of utilization of conch shell was found in Southern India 2000 years before. The conch artisans were called “paroa”. We get the evidence of conch shell at Kerkai and Kayel town of Tamilnadu. The conch shell and bi-products of it was exported to Greece and Egypt and to the whole world. This information is borrowed from a Tamil poem “Maduraikakkki”. Another Tamil epic “Silapptikaram” (1st century A.D) also tells about the conch shell industry. Not only in Tamilnadu but in Gujrat and other part of South India this industry was developed. Mahisur (Mysore), Belari, Anantapur, Kuddapa, Kurnul, Hyderabad, Kathiabwar were known for this industry. (Mitra, 2005).

8.1.4 Use of conch shell in West Bengal

In West Bengal Birbhum, Bankura, Burdwan, Hugly, Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24 Paraganas and some parts of Kolkata are the conch shell trading centres(Sen, 1994).

In Bankura district - Bishnupur, Halagram; in Birbhum - Baram, Rampurhat, Suri and Koeidhya; in Burdwan - Ghoranas, Bagnapara, Patuli and Katoa; in Hugly - Dhania khali, Dasghara, Chandannagar and Bhadreswar; in Murshidabad - Domkal; in Nadia - Ranaghat and Nabadwip; in Howrah - Bantul; in North 24 Paragana - Habra and Barrackpore; in Kolkata - Bagbazar, Amherst Street, Jorasanko are well known places of conch shell works(Sen, 1994).

8.1.5 Conch shell and religion.

In every religion importance of conch shell can be found. The Buddhists used it as trumpet and vessel for precious medicines, oils. They believed that the hair whirls on Buddha's head are like a spiral of conch to the right. Hair of bodies also resembles right spiral conch and his ravel also the conch like swirls. In Hindu religion most the rituals start trumpeting announcement. European shrine Santiago also used the badge of shell. In America shell trumpet is also played at the time of religious ceremonies. Tealoc God of rain of Aztec religion is depicted emerging from a conch shell. The Minoans also used shell trumpet in their religious ceremonies. The Christians also made many of their churches after the shape of conch.

(Wikipedia, 2006)

Vajrayan Buddhism symbolize conch as the truth of the dharma. Buddhism spreads in all directions like the sound of conch trumpet.
The ‘conch’ also appears as an auspicious mark on soles, palms, limbs, barest or forehead of a divine person (Nitin Kumar, 2004).

8.1.6 Concepts and ideas on conch shell
Conch shell, *sankha* in Sanskrit has served as horn trumpet since time immemorial. Various epic, stories, mythological stories, mythological character, historical character increased my interest on conch shell.

Belief that, holding a conch shell to ones ear, the sound of the ocean humming gently can be heard. It is the natural vibration which enters into the conch shell. For this reason blowing of conch shell can dispel evil forces from the earth and clear environmental pollution including ozone layer which causes global warming. To some extent it is true scientifically. The scientists of Europe use certain species of conch to clear oil spills in the North Sea (Wikipedia, 2006). Conch also thought to be a symbol of birth. It is believed to be the musical instrument of mermell & mermaid.

In India the sound of the conch is associated with the sacred syllable AUM, the first sound of creation. It is said that the spiral clock wise conches which symbolize the expansion of infinite space. This type of conches are said to defy the ‘laws of nature’ and belong to destroyer or transformation God. It is said to finish evil spirits avert natural disasters and scare away poisonous creatures. The subcontinent of India itself is in the shape of a conch (Wikipedia, 2006).

8.1.7 Conch shell and mythology

Greek neighbors believed that blow of conch can control the magnitude of the waves. Hindus use the conch as a part of their religious practices. They blow it during worship at specific point with bells. The kings and warrior used this at the time of war. In the Mahabharata, the Hindu epic, the war of Kurukshetra began with blowing of conch shell. Visnu, the God of preservation is said to hold a special conch which represents life and is known as ‘panchajanya’.

Some famous conches of the mythological character are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krishna/ Vishnu</th>
<th>Panchajanya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arjuna</td>
<td>Devadatta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhima</td>
<td>Paundra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yudhisthira</td>
<td>Anantavijaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakula</td>
<td>Sughosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahadeva</td>
<td>Manipuspaka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Dashavatar of Vishnu, he uses conch shell as his weapon. In the story of Dhruba, the devine conch shell plays an important role.

8.1.8 Conch shell and social stratification

Ancient Indian belief classifies conch shell into male and female varieties. The thick shelled bulbous shape is thought to be male and thin shelled conch shell as the female. The four fold caste division also applies on shape and color of conch shell.

  a) The smooth white conch represents Brahmin caste. (Priest)
  b) The red conch, the kashatriya (warrior)
  c) The yellow conch, the Vaishya (Merchant)
  d) The grey conch, the shudras (laborer)

(Nitin Kumar, 2004)

Hindu married women in general and Bengali women in particular used the bangle as a symbol of married woman.

8.1.9 Conch shell and literature

William Goldings, lord of the flies referred to the conch which symbolizes democracy and order. In Mangalakavya, Manasamangal the heroine Behula danced before the gods to save her husband; then she wore conch shell ornaments (Padmapurana). It is the symbol of nobility in Indian literature. Chandidas stated about conch in his poems.

8.2 Objective and related issues.

Objective of this chapter is to trace how conch shell a physical component enters into the resourcisation process and accruing hazard risk accrued on the utilization of conch shell and conch shell industry. Objective is also to trace the importance of conch shell on the socio-cultural life. Elaborately the objectives are pointed as

i. To find out the significance of conch shell in socio cultural process.
ii. To find out use of conch shell over time and event
iii. To find out the Space specificity of conch shell industry
iv. The significance of use of conch shell
v. To find out if it is caste specific.
8.3 Discussion

Hindus used to blow conch shell at the time of worship especially in the morning and in the evening. It indicates the transition of time. Conch shell is also blown to make aware people at the time of natural calamities. In West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar married women wear conch shell bangles to show marital status. At the time of socio cultural ceremonies or rituals worship of conch is common.

Previously conch shell bangles were imported from Dacca to all over India. After partition of India, conch shell artisans migrated. In the study area the conch shell artisans were related to this work for hundred years. Present discussion is based on the resourcisation of the conch shell and accrued hazard and risk.

It is a question that why conch shell industry developed in Bishnupur being a land blocked area where the raw material or conch shell coming from ocean or sea? The answer is very astonishing. The conch shell workers migrated from different parts of Bengal. The Malla kings invocated them for doing this work. Janta is a small village on river Darakeswar, where the artisans live previously. They got the same material through water transport on river Darakeswar. The artisans live all over Bankura district such as Hatagram, Sashpur, Patrasayer, Raibaghani, Gandy etc. (Chandra, 2004).

In the study area Sankhari Bazaar, the place of conch shell working is known as 'Ustadpalli' or the place of masters. Sankhari bazar, Kadakuli Biswas para are the main places of conch shell carving (Fig.7.1). About 1500 people are engaged directly with this (Field survey, 2004). Conch shell industry started in the reign of Mallakings in Bishnupur.

8.3.1 Types of raw material

The conch shell imported from Sri Lanka are known as Dhola, Salamat, Jagi, kachchaspati, kori etc. conch shell imported from Madras and tuticorin are titkuti, pati, rameswari (from Rameswaram) and downi.

Conch shell is mostly found in the tropical warm waters and it is seen that with the increasing depth the quality of raw material increases. The quality of conch shell of Sri Lanka is better than the conch shell of Southern India. But due to political problems the artisans have to procure raw material from south India. The weight of each conch is also lower which increases the breakability. In late 1980's and early 1990's Manjusa supplies them raw material during the period of scarcity.
8.3.2 Conch shell and socio economic process

Conch shell artisans are known as Sankhari. In the study area 1500 artisans are engaged in conch shell carving. The artisans mainly produce bangles. Each member of the family is related to this work in different stages. There are ten stages or steps through which a conch shell becomes a beautiful bangle.

i. Bhanga: the front part of the conch shell is not used in bangles. So it is separated from the shell.
ii. Phura: A hole is made to the inner part.
iii. Genra: The body of snail is removed from the shell.
iv. Leveling: The knob inside the shell is leveled by machine.
v. Majar: Cutting of shell. Previously it was done with the help of a saw but now it is done by machine.
vi. Grinding: The upper layer of the shell is polished.
vii. Piece cutting: It depends on the size of the conch shell. From one piece of shell 3 to 5 bangles can be made.
viii. Designing: There is no catalog for designing. The artisans make designs by their own skill. The design may be further modified in jewelry shop.
ix. Polish: It is a tough work. Bangles and conch shell are polished by heating and application of Nitric Acid. Bishnupur bangles are famous for ‘Cora’ (unpolished) type.
x. Finishing: This is the last stage of making bangles. The defects of bangles and conch shell are repaired by wax, coal, wood, lac and zinc oxide. Now it is ready for marketing.

8.3.3 Other Uses of Conch Shell

The part excluded at the time of making bangles are used in different ways. These are used to make Hairclip, Ring, Pedant, Broach, Necklace, ‘Khilan’ bangle, Cod bangle etc. Even the conch powder is also used to prevent different skin problems. Khilan or joint bangles are those which is made by two different half bangles. The main customers of joint bangle are tribal because it is cheap and for its longevity. Other reason is the tribal do ceremony work so their hand become hard and it is easy to wear joint bangles in their hands. It is of only Rs. 18-20/-. The workers of Bishnupur make another type of bangle. This is cod bangle. It is red in color. It is prepared by the conch powder, vermilion and lac.
Its use is found in Sonamukhi of Bankura district at the time of marriage.

8.3.4 Production cost

The workers pay Rs 2400 for 100 Pc of conch shell. Division of labor is found here. At present 10 people are engaged for making different parts of a bangle. In Bhanga & Phura the wage rate is Rs 90-100 per 100 Pc. The major is done by machines; the rate is Rs. 30 -40 per 100 Pc. For grinding & piece cutting the wage rate is Rs. 3-5 per couple of bangles. And lastly design. The cost depends on the accuracy of the design. The price of bangle depends on the color, thickness, design and quality of conch shell.

8.3.5 Present condition of the conch shell workers.

At present the condition of the conch shell workers are not so good. The main problem is scarcity of raw material. Beside this they have no permanent co-operative society from whom they get loan. They do not get any facility from Government also. Only exception is Manjusa which supplied raw material for a very short period of time. The workers do this work as a family tradition. At present the demand of conch shell and its other bi-products are declining. The workers of conch shell industry leaned to do other handicrafts like wood cutting, coconut shell cutting and oyster cutting etc. most of the workers become jobless. They do not have enough capital to buy raw material from Kolkata. Educated new generations are now doing other jobs for their lively hood (Fig.7.2). Health hazards like bronchial diseases - T.B, asthma, dermatological problem are common(photo.4). Beside these accidents at the time of cutting conch shell is also hazardous (Fig.7.3).

At present 1000 persons are engaged directly with this work (Fig.7.4). They are in deplorable condition. They conch shell industry is the pride of West Bengal and also of India. So the Government should have to pay special attention to mitigate the plight of the work force otherwise this remarkable industry will be abolished for ever for the lack of proper nourishment.
Major findings

i. Conch shell is a freely available component of Zoological environment and its availability depends on temperature, salinity and depth of the ocean.

ii. It has socio cultural significance. It has an economic value also. Because of certain social processes (norms, belief, system) it enters into the behavioral environment and fictionalization of conch shell takes place.

iii. It produces a sound which indicates interface of time, event and make people aware of ominous events.

iv. Conch shell transformed for certain concepts vertically and horizontally.

v. It takes place in a specific area away from place of origin.

vi. Initially conch carving was caste specific but now caste barrier is broken.

vii. Horizontal diffusion multiplied the concept.

viii. Natural phenomena like tsunami destroy the species which increases supply of raw material.

ix. Over catching creates problem in eco-system.

x. Cost of production increases which increases the cost of bangles. Plastic bangles are used in place of conch shell bangles.

xi. Enrichment of ideas informs of different decorative pieces for the survival.

xii. Lack of demand affects the artisans. They become jobless which is hazardous.

xiii. Gradual deterioration of health due to constant inhalation of conch shell dust and bad smell emanating from conch shell during processing.
CHAPTER - 9

Bell metal, lantern and Dashavatar play cards

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter some cottage and handicraft items are analyzed from socio-geographical perspectives. Bell metal, Lantern and Dashavatar play cards are three distinct items in the study area. I have included these three items in this chapter as these three are very much Bishnupur town specific. Bell metal industry and Dash avatar play card were made from the time of Mallah kings. They used to patronage these artifacts. Unlike Dashavatar play card and bell metal, Lantern is a new entrant in the resource base of the study area. Attempts have been made to discuss these items from a resource hazards perspective also.

9.2 Objective

Objective of this chapter is to trace the process and factors behind the development of bell metal and lantern industries at cottage level in the study area. In what socio-cultural environment these industries were developed is another question to be solved. Objective is also to study the importance of bell metal and lantern in local economy and society at present and future as well.

9.3 Methodology and technique

Nomothetic method has been adopted to analyze the physical process behind these two cottage industries. To assess the hazardous or unwanted situations ideographic method has been adopted.

Technique is mainly field survey. Data collected from door to door survey in bell metal and lantern industries. Data from web site, different books and newspaper has also been used in this chapter.

For convenience of discussion is these three items are discussed separately.

9.4 Bell metal

9.4.1 Introduction

Use of metal is historically routed in ancient past. Evidence of metal works from different ancient civilizations proves its existence in
ancient history. Numerous ancient metallurgical artifacts from different parts of the world are also examples of utilization of metal works.

Archeological evidence indicates that Bengal's metallurgists were practicing the art and science of bell metal workings as early as the second millennium B.C. Bell metal utensils are produced in Bankura, Bishnupur, Ghatal and Chandanpur in Midnapur district. These bell metal utensils are used for everyday use and for observance of rituals also. Chitpur, Bhawanipur of Kolkata and Nabdwip were famous for making bell metal gods, goddesses, and decorative figures. There is a specificity of making utensils of different places in West Bengal. Tamluk (Purba Midnapur) is famous for 'chakabati,' 'chambighati,' 'phero' of khagra and 'kalshis' of Bishnupur (metalware-of-west-bengal, 2006). These are the name of some specifically produced utensils in different districts of West Bengal.

Besides making bell metal utensils, this metal is also used by different tribes of semi-nomadic character. They used to make different show pieces, figures of Hindu gods and goddesses, ghunru, paikona, dhunuchi, panchapradip, anklets and figures of animals by lost wax method. They live in several parts of West Bengal mainly Bankura, Purulia, Midnapur, and Barddhaman. These artisans are locally known as Dhokra Kamar (craftsandartisans.com, 2006).

Present chapter gives emphasis on the making of bell metal utensils of the study area. Dhokra is not produced in the study area but marketed through Bishnupur which was discussed in a separate chapter.

9.4.2 Discussion

Bell metal work in the study area started way back in the reign of Malla kingdom. This art of Bishnupur is more or less 450 years old. In part of the district bell metal and brass utensils are produced. Ajodhya, Chuamasina, Patrasayar, Kengakura, Lakshmi Sagar, Mainanagar, Madan mohanpur, Jorsa, and Gadadihi are mention worthy places.

In Bishnupur it is distributed in Krishna Ganja (Ward no. 12), Matuk Ganja (Ward no. 11), Krishnaganga-Kaitypara (Ward no. 13 & 12) and Hazrapara (Ward no. 5). There are almost 500 families engaged in this work at present.

9.4.2.1 Origin of this industry

As mentioned above, this industry was started at Bishnupur almost 450 years ago under the patronage of Malla king. Bell metal artisans are belonging to "Nabasakh" (nine caste divisions on the basis of
occupations). Chronicle says that the artisans came from Mayurbhanj of Orissa. Previously they were working with octoalloy. The octoalloy (Gold, Silver, Copper, Tin, Nickel, Zinc, Lead and Iron) Gods and Goddess were made by these bell metal workers in lost wax method (Chandra, 2004).

9.4.2.2 Bell metal work and social stratification

Bell metal workers are Kansari by caste (Bezier). They belong to Karmakar of Nabasakh group. In West Bengal there are eight Karmakars. These are Lohar-kamar (Black smith), Pituli kamar (Brass metal smith), Kansari Kamar (Bell metal smith), Swarna kamar (Gold smith), Chand kamar (Brass mirror smith), Bhatra Kamar (Artisans who make iron flowers, fruits and small decorative pieces), Dhokra kamar (Lost wax smith) and Tamar kamar (Copper smith). In Rarh Bengal there are four categories of Karmakars or Kamars. Those working with bell metal, nickel, German Silver and other alloy are known as Ostoloi. They are mainly produce domestic utensils. Biraloi karmakars are making agricultural instruments by iron. Copper kamar and Dhokra kamar are used to make utensils with copper and bell metal respectively. Kangsakars or Kansaris (Brazier) are belongs to ostoloi group (Chandra, 2004).

9.4.2.3 Raw Material

It is a matter of question that why bell metal industry started at Bishnupur being a place far from source of raw materials. In case of Bishnupur, it is because of the very culture and behavioral environment of the study area. It is the very decision of the Malla Kings to set up this industry in Bishnupur. It is also an important factor that all the family deity of Malla kings were made of octoalloy and are made by lost wax method by these artisans. The raw materials are collected from Kolkata in form of scarp metal. Previously it was coming from South India through road ways.

Besides metal there is a need for soil, charcoal, wood, zinc at the time of production. Both sandy loam and clay are used for making moulds. First the moulds are made by sandy loam and then a layer of indurated horizon (10m.) usually red or ocherus in color and upper part of molted clay (10-12m.) often with quartz grains are used for primary moulds. Pallid soil is dried and sieved for final coating of moulds. Cost of one bullock cart soil is Rs. 60/- and cost of 150 cft. soil is Rs. 300/-. Charcoal and wood are required for furnace during melting the metal.

Lead, tin and zinc are mixed in a certain ratio to make alloy (Fig.9.1). At present German silver also used for making utensils which are
coming from Kolkata. Artisans used to collect raw material from stockiest.

**Raw materials & their mixing for different alloy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copper (7kg) + Tin (2Kg)</th>
<th>Bell Metal (9 Kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copper (1Kg) + Zinc (1kg)</td>
<td>Brass (2 Kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper (1Kg) + Zinc (1kg) + Nickel (250 gm)</td>
<td>German Silver (2.5kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper (1kg) + Zinc (800gm) + Tin (200 gm)</td>
<td>Bharan (2 kg) only used in Bishnupur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.9.1

### 9.4.2.4 Bell metal and socio-economic process

Bell metal workers are Kansari by caste. Caste name is after their occupation. In the study area about 500 people directly and total 1500 people indirectly related to this industry in different stages. Job classification is seen here. Females make the moulds and men are doing furnace work, polishing, grinding etc. Bishnupur is noted for specific kalshis (pitcher) and glass (tumbler). The stages of production are as follows

i. Bring soil from lateritic field or buy it

ii. Dry it, make dust through hammering, sieved and now prepare it for moulds

iii. Making mould (photo.4.17). In case of glass there are two parts and in case of water vessel it is of three parts

iv. Molten scarp metal is put into moul.

v. Cutting and polishing through machine

vi. Finishing and designing

vii. Ready for marketing.

Production cost per glass is Rs. 70-80 approximately and one pitcher is Rs. 400/- approximately. Small water vessel is also produced here.

### 9.4.2.5 Usage of bell metal utensils.

Bell metal and other metals are in use from early civilization. Bell metal is used as domestic utensils like Plate, bowl, ghati (drinking pot) (photo. 3 men at work), iota, and pot for betel leaf, large water vessel, tumbler, show and decorative pieces etc. Previously these are used at a large scale. At present these utensils are used only in occasions and rituals. In cities it is no more in use. Stainless steel, glass, fiber, plastic
goods are used in place of bell metal, copper or brass. The utensils of Bishnupur are made as chak-kalki, nath-katki, manohara, kangeswari, gayeswari are the name of different types of plates. A high rimmed metal dish is known by gasbagy, bilapbagi, plain bagi, khankri bagi and Khagraibagi etc. Bowls are known as jambati, ramgandi; drinking water pots are named as hambu, kashial and patnai etc. Brass and bell metal are gifted at the time of Bengali marriage. Kalshis of Bishnupur are famous for its unique shape and manufacturing method. To make it more unique and increase its demand, temples of Bishnupur, Dalmadal canon, flowers and creepers are designed on it.

9.4.2.6 Present condition

The market of bell metal utensils are decreasing with changing time. Concept that stainless steel is handier than bell metal is the basic reason. Besides this other supplementary utensils are used in place of bell metal.

Raw material is another problem of this industry. This industry is controlled by big merchants. The artisans get Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 as daily wage. It is to meager to meet the present market demand. They don't get any loan from bank, co-operative or any help from NGOs. Scanty capital is another problem.

Education level among the artisans is poor (Fig. 7.2)

Artisans are switching over to other jobs. To survive in a stiff competitive market some of the artisans are trying to make show pieces, paper weight in form of local temples.

In this chapter it is seen that changes in behavioral environment due to changes in demand from socio-cultural environment. The notion on utilization of bell metal works changes with changing culture. This change in notion directly affects the artisans. Hazards do not seen in terms of loss of life or loss of property but joblessness due to changing cultural environment is a problem.

9.5 Lantern industry.

9.5.1 Introduction

Lantern industry is an indigenous cottage industry of Bishnupur. It was started in Bishnupur on or after the extension of South Eastern railways in this area. Unlike silk industry, bell metal and conch shell industry it was not patronized by Malla kings. It is the last entrant in
the realm of cottage industry in Bishnupur. Kerosene lamp was widely used before coming of electricity all over India. Bell metal and conch shell are produced in many parts of India and West Bengal (discussed in relevant chapter) but Bishnupur lantern is only produced in Bishnupur.

In Bishnupur this industry is found in station para & station road, Hazra para ward no. 5), Ainsbazar (ward no. 6), Matukgang (Ward no. 11). There are 150 families who are making lantern at present in Bishnupur.

9.5.2 Discussion

9.5.2.1 Origin

After the extension of Railway in Bankura district use of Kerosene (for domestic consumption) began in the study area. Kerosene tin was used as raw material for making these lanterns. Raicharan Garai was the person who made this typical lantern in 19th Century.

Raicharan Garai was Kolu by occupation (oil man). With the advancement of technology Ghani (grinding tree) was no longer used for oil extraction. Electric machine took its place. The Kolu community becomes jobless and they were started to make Bishnupur lantern.

9.5.2.2 Raw materials for Bishnupur lantern

Raw materials for making Bishnupur lantern are now coming from Kolkata. Previously tins were collected from England and rejected mirrors (used for making glass wall) from Belgium. Tin and lead are used for soldering. Galvanized sheet, iron wire, glass, solder, muritic acid are used as raw material.

9.5.2.3 Lantern making process

Job classification is found in lantern industry. All the works are mainly done by males. In some places females make some of the parts. There are eleven parts of a lantern. These are handle, chaki (rounded sheet on the top), mouri (small wire for joining), kadam (flower on the top), chal (top), merap (boarder just bellow the top), glass, bit, tank (for oil), pipe, tip made of tin etc. (information from field survey, 2004). These all parts are made separately by separate man and then joined to make a complete lantern through eight steps

i. Parts are cut according to size
ii. all parts are made separately
iii. Soldering  
iv. Making oil tank  
v. Making four walls of the lantern  
vi. Making the top shed  
vii. Making designed flower on the top  
viii. Finishing through joining all parts.

Cost of procurement per dozen lanterns varies from Rs. 120 to Rs. 130 and the market value is Rs 150 to 160. There are two types of lantern, one is plain lantern. It is four sided and are of small, medium and large size. Another is six sided lantern. Demand for plain lantern is more than the six sided lantern. A typical shape of the lantern resembles with Bishnupur temple structure (Fig. 9.2).

9.5.2.4 Uses

Before the availability of electricity these lanterns are mostly used by common people for domestic purposes. Previously these lanterns are used as street light. The demand for Bishnupur lantern is high because of low kerosene consumption. Now the lanterns are used in orchards and agricultural fields at night to keep vigilance on fields and particularly on pumps installed for irrigation.

9.5.2.5 Export

The lanterns are used mainly in villages. These lanterns are distributed to different parts of West Bengal mainly Malda, Murshidabad, Barddhaman and Hooghly district. These lanterns have a demand in Bihar, Jharkhand and back ward areas of Madhya Pradesh. With the help of a NGO, Bishnupur lanterns are exported to Mozambique and Senegal of Africa. Sudan demands for these lanterns. Around 19000 lanterns were exported to Mozambique and Senegal (Anandabazar Patrika, 2004). Another demand for 10000 lanterns came from a French organization. (Anandabazar Patrika, 2004). The price rate of the lantern exported varied from Rs. 25 to 35/- per lantern which is much higher than the local price. (Rs. 15to 20/-).

9.5.2.6 Present condition

The demand of Bishnupur lanterns generally comes from lower income groups. The price of glass and galvanized sheet has become doubled. But the lantern makers can not increase the cost of lantern for it will go beyond the purchasing power of the common buyer. There is also a risk for failure of market demand. They do not get any loan or help either from Government or from NGO to flourish this industry at a large scale. It's also a problem. Increased price of kerosene also retards
RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE STRUCTURE OF BISHNUPUR TEMPLE AND BISHNUPUR LANTERN

Fig. 9.2
the demand. Education level among the lantern worker is poor (Fig. 9.2).

9.6 Dashavatar play cards

9.6.1 Introduction

Playing cards are rectangular pieces of thin, stiff card (or more recently plastic) marked with one or more symbols and used in various games, in fortune telling and in conjuring. The origin of playing cards is unclear. It is almost certain that it began in China after the invention of paper. Description of play card is seen in a Chinese text, kuei-tien-lu of 11th century. They were certainly known in Europe by 13th century and they were used in several countries. One of the earliest cards made in Europe were Tarot Cards, which embody an obscure system of occult philosophy and were used in fortune forecasting and magic, cartomancy and inscription. A Tarot pack usually consists of 78 cards. The familiar 52 card pack is divided into four units. This specific standard originated in France in the 16th century. The modern double headed (reversible) Court cards with King, Queen, and Jack first appeared in 1827 in France (Norwich, 1990). Existence of play cards is found in China, India, Europe, England and Egypt. Most of the playing cards include 52 cards comprising four ‘suits’. In late 1300’s the use of playing cards spread rapidly across Europe especially in Spain (1371), Switzerland (1377), Paris(1369) etc. Early play cards were made by hand on paper or woodcuts or engravings. Use of four suit card was originated in 1480 by wood-cuts or stencil. Later the design changed and now the most popular play cards are made by machine printing (Wikipedia, 2006).

In India Akbar, the Mughal Emperor started playing cards. These cards represented the then miniature form of Mughal culture. Mughal play cards consist of 144 cards. These cards represent the rank as King then Vajir. These cards were divided into twelve suits and every suit had 12 cards. The highest card represents a king on a horse back resembling the King of Delhi with the umbrella, the standard (salem) and other empirical ensigns. The second highest card of the same suit represents a Vajir on horse back and then comes ten other of the same suit with pictures of horse from one to ten (Blochmann, 1984 ). In the same manner the second suit is called Gajapati or the King of Orissa; third suit is called Narapati, the king of Bijapur; the fourth suit known as Garhpati (king of fort), fifth suit is called Dhanapati; sixth suit is called Dalapati, seventh suit is called Naupati(ship), eighth suit is called Stripati (Queen), ninth suit is called Surapati or Devapati (represents God Indra), tenth suit is called Asurapati or king of Devils, the eleventh suit is called Banapati or king of Forests symbolized by tiger
and the twelfth suit is known as Ashipati or the king of China. The first six suits are powerful than the rest.

In India designed play cards were drawn by ‘Patuas’. The use of ‘pata’ is an old practice in India. Utilization of ‘pata’ is seen in several ancient literatures like Panini’s ‘Asthadhyay’ (4th Century BC) give much information about Patuas. Patuas were known as Souvik in Mahabhasya Sutra of Patanjali. Avigyanaka Sakuntalam of Kalidasa also states about the Patuas. In Mudra Raksas of Bishakhet Dutta 98th Century AD) describes how the Patuas collect secret information from different parts of India and informed Chanakya. But the oldest Pata is discovered in Egypt which is about stories from ‘Old Testament’ of Bible (Hazra, 1993). The patua or Chitrakar are belonging to nine castes or nabasakh group. The patua used to draw on clothes but drawing on wood is also common.

In West Bengal Patua community are found in Nadia, Hooghly, Murshidabad, Medinipore and Bankura. In Bankura district patuas centered in Beliatore of Barjora Block. The favourite subject of drawing are collected from Hindu mythology. But santhals pata includes their deities. But the patachitra of Bishnupur is distinct from other parts in Bankura and West Bengal. Besides Mughal dynasty Naksha playcard is found in Samanta bati of Maharashtra, Hyderabad and Siharh museum of Ahmedabad and in Orissa(Ghosh,1976). An agreement was signed in 1592 between Mughal king and King of Orissa, Fatehbad, Bamanbhum, Nagabhum and kings of Mallabhum. The kings were the Zamindars under Mughal emperor. So there was a great impact of Mughal miniature culture on Dasabatar cards (Blochmann, 1984).

9.6.2 Concepts and ideas

Playing cards is an indoor game. It is believed that this game is popular among lazy and jobless people simply for time-passing. There are many proverbs regarding this like ‘Tash pasa sarbanasha’ i.e., playing cards and chase is dangerous. It is associated with gambling. Cards used to be played by Royal families, Kings, Nawabs and Zamindars. Example of such kind can be seen in the reign of Akbar when it was a popular game.

Though playing cards has a negative meaning but Naksa card or designed card is a reflection of mass culture. Dashavatara play cards are one of the important Naksha cards in India(photograph 10.1&10.11). The best known symbol integrating the cosmic interaction and human being is frequently referred to as Mandala. The complex duality of disintegration and reintegration is symbolized with the mandala. These mandala has been further narrated as the presence of God in the form
of incarnation of Vishnu (the projector of God). Vishnu is incarnated in 10 forms which also symbolize the evolution of mankind (Singh, 1987). Every avatar is related to a particular happening or phase or stage in the process of man-nature relationship. These 10 avatars are Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (beer), Narasimha (the half man and half lion form), Vamana (the dwarf form), Parashurama (Rama with the axe), Rama, Balarama, Krishna and Kalki (the destroyer) (photo 9.2 & 9.3). This order suggests the development of animal life on earth to its more evolved form. The science of evolution suggests that animal life first appeared in the ocean. Then the amphibians came and from there evolved the more advanced forms like mammals and human (Fig. 9.3).

### The First Five Avatars of Vishnu and Symbolism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarnation</th>
<th>Gross Symbols</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Nature Symbol</th>
<th>Body Symbol</th>
<th>Main Item Offered in Puja</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matsya</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Saving organic life seeds from great cosmic flood</td>
<td>Origin of life in water</td>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammon</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Providing base for creator from water</td>
<td>Life in water and earth</td>
<td>Breath</td>
<td>Copper/Ghee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurma</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Getting submerged earth out of the cosmic flood</td>
<td>Life in forest and land</td>
<td>Proper Substance</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraha</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Getting established human power over demons</td>
<td>Phase of cooling earth</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasinha</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Getting control over the three realms of world</td>
<td>Origin of man primitive</td>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaman</td>
<td>Sky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suram symbolizes the prehistoric man as axe is his weapon. Rama is the man in the hunting stage as he holds the bow and arrow. Balarama holding the plough symbolizes agriculture. Krishna is depicted as a philosopher or scientist and Kalki holding a sword symbolizes the destroyer.
9.6.3 Objective

Objective of this chapter is to find out why and how a mythological concept like Dash avatar enters into the socio-cultural process. In what ways the process creates job opportunities among a group. Does the mythological concept ultimately participate in resource appropriation process? One of the objectives is also to trace the changes in the concept and in the utilization of resource products as well.

9.6.4 Discussion

Bishnupur is noted for manufacturing of special cards known as ‘Dash avatar Tash’. The tradition of making this type of card started 350 years ago in the reign of Mallaking Birhambir. From the historical evidences it can be said that the concept of Dash avatar play card came to Bishnupur from Mughal culture of Akbar. Another evidence is about the impact of Orissa which is proven by the existence of ‘Jagannatha’ in place of ‘Buddha’ in the 9th position. Jagannatha temple was constructed in the mid of 12th Century in Orissa. Naturally the king of Orissa imprints Jagannatha in place of Buddha.

Haraprasad Shastri noted about the Dash avatar play cards as “I fully believe that the game was invented about eleven or twelve hundred years before the present date” (Shastri, 1895 cited in Ghosh, 1979). According to his statement it is originated in the 7th or in the 8th Century. Buddha stands in the 5th position in these cards in place of 9th position in present play cards. It is thought that this positional change happened in the 12th Century in the reign of Joydev. So it may be older than Joydev’s period. Emphasis on Buddha is due to origin of this card in Pal dynasty. Another factor is the drawing process has resemblance with the drawing of Pal era. The artisans of Bishnupur follow this type of drawing in Dashavatar play cards (Ghosh, 1979).

The Mallaking Birhambir patronized this art under his patronage Kartick Fouzdar started making Dash avatar card in Bishnupur after Mughal style. Fouzdar family is the only family in Bishnupur who make Dash avatar play cards. This Fouzdar family belongs to Sutradhar (Carpenter) by profession. In West Bengal there are four types of Sutradhar according to medium of works. These are wood, stone, earth and drawing. Sutradhars of Bishnupur are famous for drawing. Mallakings titled them as Fouzdar. The well known artisans are gadhadhar Fouzdar, Satish Fouzdar, Kedar, Jatin, Sudhir, Patal Fouzdar.
The number of Bishnupur Dashavatard card is 120. Every avatar has 12 cards with one ‘vajir’. In Bishnupur Dash avatar card the 10 incarnation of Vishnu and its symbols are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avatar</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raghunath Ram</td>
<td>Arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaram</td>
<td>Gada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasuram</td>
<td>Axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Chakra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baman</td>
<td>Kamandalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagannath(Buddha)</td>
<td>Padma(Lotus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varaha</td>
<td>Sankha(Conch shell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matsya</td>
<td>Matsya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurma</td>
<td>Kurma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalki</td>
<td>Kharga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.9.4
These avatars are related to the evolution of human (Fig.9.5). Category of play card like king Vajir depicts the then social structure clearly. The playing system is unique. If it starts at day time then Rama is the starter and in night Matsya is the starter. The scientific reason behind this is night shows the darkness through Matsya avatar and day shows with Rama the divine God, which symbolizes that an enlightened morning comes after a dark night.

9.6.4.1 Making process
The artisans make dashavatard card collecting materials from physical environment. The base is formed by 3 or 4 layers of cloth one upon another and it is colored by coating white kaolin first. The radius of the circular card is 4”. A special adhesive made from tamarind seed is used to harden the cloth. For drying they collect natural goods from physical environment directly. The materials are Hingul red – Red color, Hingul hartal or yellow, stone of white clay, girimati, mottled clay for brown color, leaves of sim(kidney bean) for green, carrot for orange color. To increase glaze and longevity they use tentul (tamarind) and bel (wood apple) gum. Here we may refer Jamini Roy who used these earthen colors in his paintings.

9.6.4.2 Changing concept
Only one family of Bishnupur is engaged in this the work. In this era of globalization the significance of playing card exists in a poor form. Once these cards were made for kings and Nawabs simply for time pass. Dashavatard cards are no longer used for playing. Recent trend is ethnic. People started to collect ethnic goods like Dash avatar playing cards for interior decoration or for pendal decoration during festivals (photo9.1). Dash avatar playing cards were likely to be extinct but recent trend or craze about ethnic goods help the artisans to survive.
Major Findings

i. Dasavatar is a mythological concept. This concept was transferred on playing cards. Therefore a cultural concept becomes a resource base.

ii. It was introduced in Bishnupur by Malla kings.

iii. It is a caste and group specific occupation and this specificity is still observable.

iv. Through the materials used in making of cards, these cards are related to the physical environment.

v. The use of these cards was restricted to the upper strata of Bishnupur society.

vi. With the abolition of raj system the use has become defunct in Bishnupur.

vii. Due to rejuvenation of ethnic concept these cards are used in interior decoration by urban population.

viii. The cards are widely used in pandal decoration.

ix. Within West Bengal it is extremely place specific therefore it can not compared with conch shell, bell metal or silk industry.
CHAPTER - 10

Manasa puja and Jhapan, Kartika Puja and their relevance on society and space

Hindu festivals and fairs are often centered on concepts and rituals based on the concept of Hinduism. At a glance it is seen that this dissertation gives emphasis on religious concepts. To a lay man such festivals and fairs have a very strong religious connotation but in the present research the Hindu concepts, rituals and associated festivals and fairs have been evaluated from environmental perspectives. This environment is physical, socio-cultural, economic and political environment as well. In the present chapter emphasis has been given on Manasa, the goddess of snake and Kartika the god of war. Through our Bankura district there are many other festivals and fair centered on Hindu culture in general and folk culture in specific (Fig.10.1). This chapter has been divided into two subchapters of smaller dimensions. 10.1 discusses Manasa puja 10.2 evaluates Kartika puja

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>English month</th>
<th>Bengali month</th>
<th>Place specificity</th>
<th>Type/nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tusu,Makara samkranti, Ekhan</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Pousa-Magha</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Agricultural festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraswati puja</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Magha-Phalgun</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Education and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolyatra, Charak</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Phalgun-chaitra</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Pray for water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charak, Nababarsha</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Chaitra-Baishakh</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Pray for water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashahara</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Baishakh-Jaisthya</td>
<td>Place specific</td>
<td>Pray for water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashahara, Manasa puja, jhapan</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Jaisthya - Asara</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Fores, tree and snake worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasa puja</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Asara-Sravana</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Fores, tree and snake worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasa puja</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Sravana-Bhadra</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Fores, tree and snake worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadu</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Bhadra-Aswina</td>
<td>Place specific</td>
<td>Agricultural festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durgapuja, kalipuja, Dipabali</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Aswina-kartika</td>
<td>Ubiquitous</td>
<td>Auspicious to protect evils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kartika puja</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Kartika-Agrahayana</td>
<td>Place specific</td>
<td>Fertility and pray for child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishnupur festival.</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Agrahayana-pousa</td>
<td>Place specific</td>
<td>Economic and commercial festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 10.1
10.1 Manasapuja and Jhapan

10.1.1 Introduction

Manasa is the Goddess of snake in India. It is thought that she save the human beings from snake bites. Manasa is the daughter of God Siva, wife of sage Jaratkaru and sister of snake Vasuki. All over India she is worshiped as the Goddess of snake and fertility. Manasa is much worshiped in West Bengal where she is invoked against the ever present danger from poisonous snakes. Her cult is believed to be much older than this Hindu manifestation of it.

10.1.1.1 Other names of Manasa in India

Manasa the goddess of snake has a position in Hindu religion. It is believed that she is goddess or non-Aryans. In Rig-Veda the goddess is known as ‘Mona’, the goddess of anger who is also known as Chandi in Hindu mythology. ‘Manchamma’ (the Hindu goddess of snake and a kind of xerophytic plant which is related to snake goddess) is the goddess of non-Aryans in southern India which also relates Mona with Dravid Culture. The resemblance of structure between Manasa and Manchamma also proves that she is the goddess of non-Aryans (Ghosh, 1990 cited in Chakroborty, 1995).

Manasa is also known as ‘Padma’ as she was born on lotus leaf or ketaki. She is also known as ‘Nagmata’ as is ornamented by snakes. She is also known as the Goddess of fertility, ‘Sakambhari’. In Andhra Pradesh from Vishakhapatnam to Nelore she is worshiped as Nagmata (mother of snakes) (Sengupta, 2001).

In northern India she is worshiped at Manasa pahar in Haradwar. Muniak nath of Rajgir, Bihar is famous for Manasadeity. In Deoghar of Bihar she is also worshiped as snake goddess. In Gurgaon and Ambala district of Punjab they also worship Manasa deity. The tribal also worship Manasa. The Oranos of Jharkhand and Bodo of Assam also worship Manasa. In West Bengal also she is worshiped in different forms.

10.1.1.2 God of snake in other (religion) culture

Snake Goddess has a position not only in Hindu Religion but in other religions and culture also. In Buddhist mythology, presence of snake can also be found. There is a great resemblance of ‘Janguli’ with Hindu snake goddess Manasa. The picture of ‘Vajra yogini’ also shows the importance of snake in Buddhist culture. In Jain
mythology also the presence of snake can be found. The Jain Tirthankar Parsanath is ornamented by many snakes. The Jain deity Padmabati usually sits on snakes (Ghosh, 1990 cited in Chakroborty, 1995). God Susano of Shintoism is related to water, thunder or snakes. Nigi-ni-tama God of thunder is also associated with snakes (Graves, 1994).

10.1.1.3 God of snakes in other countries

In Greek mythology is ornamented by snakes in the hair. In Greek mythology the great earth mother and fertility goddess of eastern Mediterranean, carry the serpents which are age old symbols of fertility. In Inca culture snakes were greatly revered, such as uncaguary, the god of underground treasures who is represented in the form of a large snake, with the head of a deer and little gold chains decorating his tail. (Graves, 1994). In Japanese mythology the main descendent of the God Susano are related either to water thunder or the snakes. Nigi-mi-tama -God of thunder is also associated with snakes (Encyclopedia of Mythology: R Graves: 409). In Egyptian mythology, Mertseger, the snake goddess of Theban nacropolis, protected the desert tombs. Another goddess portrayed as a winged Cobra was Buto, the Protector of Pharaoh (Graves, 1994).

10.1.1.4 Snake a component of Biosphere

Snake is a component of bio-sphere. It comes under squata genera. There are about 2700 species of snakes. Amongst them 80% are non-poisonous. It is a predatory reptile with a long slender limbless supple body (Wikipedia, 2006).

10.1.1.5 Type of snake

The word snake is coming from old English snaca means to craw. This is a legless, cold blooded reptile of sauropsida class, squamata order and serpents, Linn suborder which comes from 'serpent' meaning 'to creep'. Snakes are generally of two types, Venomous and non-venomous. Venomous snakes are generally classified in four taxonomic families. Elapids (kobras, king cobras, copper head and coral snakes); viperids (vipors, rattle snakes, copper heads / cottonmouts, bushmasters); Colubrids (bloamslangs, tree snakes, vine snakes, mangrove snakes etc.). All colubrids are not venomous; Hydrophiidal (sea snakes). In India cobra is center of all interests. The diversity of snakes appeared in the Pliocene age following the extinction of dinosaurs (Wikipedia, 2006).
10.1.1.6 Classification of niches

Snake is a reptile. They can live both in land and water. Snake can also leave in trees, mangroves, vines; sea snakes live in shallow tropical seas. Fossil of snakes from early late cretaceous marine sediments proves that they also lived in oceans in that period. Some species of snakes live in land and territorial bodies and also in aquatic environment. In general they are found in equatorial region to tropical region. From tropical rainforest to desert type of climate they are adopting themselves for survival (wikipedia, 2006).

10.1.1.7 Concepts and ideas on snake

Allover the world, especially in India it is thought that snake has supernatural power and that is why people used to worship snakes. Centering snakes many concepts have come into being. Concept of snake is used for ornamentation of different temples in India (Fig. 10.3). Worship of snake is a common ritual all over Bengal. Entire Bengal is covered by river-network and jungles. So snake-bite is a common problem here. People worship snake in that belief that if they worship snake they might be danger free (Sengupta, 2001). It is found that the southern part of Bengal covered by rivers and canals and the people of southern Bengal mostly worship Manasa at the time of rainy season. Centering snakes many idioms and proverbs proves its importance in society. Besides this, Mangalkavya, Manasamangal which is mainly the story of Chand Sadagar is based on the Goddess Manasa. Mr Sambhu Mitra is a globally known theater personnel. He visualized the concept of Manasa puja and the concept of acceptance of Manasa by business man community through a drama known as “Chand Baniker Pala” (Mitra, 2003). Manasa is believed to be the God of so called Jele, Kaibartya. Through Manasamangal, the author points to prove the acceptance of Goddess in upper castes.

Snake is the symbol of Fertility (Fig. 10.4). The statues of snakes always placed under a tree or an uncultivated space or jungle where the snake God can move freely (Graves, 1994). These places are generally called “than”. Snake goddess is worshiped in the form of pitcher. This pitcher is the symbol of women womb. It also proves the fertility cult. Besides that snake is worshiped in the form of tree which is also a taboo of fertility cult (Choudhary Kamilya, 1989).

10.1.1.8 Snake & mythology

In Greek mythology the great earth mother and fertility Goddess of eastern Mediterranean, carry the serpent which is age old symbol of
Concept of Snake in Architecture

The Snake God Naga and his consort

Krishna dancing over snake Kaliya

Snake goddess, carving on volcanic rock

Eagle God

An open shrine where people offer prayer to the snake gods

Snakes protects the saint

Krishna dances over the snake, Kaliya.

Snake worship

A motif of snake and Nandi

Vishnu rests on the giant snake in ocean

Fig. 10.3
FERTILITY GOD AND MANASA

Fig.10.4
fertility. In Mexico snake -bird is the God of wind, master of life and patron of every art (Graves, 1994).

Snake has a position not only in Hindu Mythology but also all over the world. Importance of snake is found in folk stories, holy books, literatures and epics. Lord Vishnu used the person Ananta Deva, the king of snakes as His bed which implies the profile of equilibrium of earth in Hindu mythologies. In the story of Krishna, he is found dancing on the serpent Kaliya where Kaliya salutes the god and holds his left hand the end of the serpents' tail meaning defeated evil, symbol of sovereignty (Art of India, 1965). In another story of Krishna we found that an eight chief snake collectively covered baby Krishnato protect him from the vagaries of torrential river. At the time of churning ocean by Gods and Demons snake Vasuki was used as rope in Hindu mythology. Another snake Sesha, Takshak has also importance in Hindu mythology. In Mangalkavyas (a kind of Bengali epic poems about popular deities) the presence of snake is found. Manasamangal epic poem is about the snake goddess Manasa. Many folk songs, proverbs, stories about snakes reveal the importance of snake and snake goddess in India.

In Buddhists mythology deity ‘Janguli’ resembles with Hindu snake goddess Manasa(Kundu,1996). The picture of ‘Vajrayogini’ is also of snakes in Buddhist culture. In Jain mythology The Jain Tirthankara Parshanath is ornamented by snakes. The Jain deity Padmabati is seated on snakes(Bhattacharya, In Greek mythology mortal Medusa is ornamented by snakes in her hair. In Inca culture snakes were greatly revered. Urcaguary, the god of underground treasures is disguised in the form of a large snake with the head of a deer and little gold chains decorating his tail (R. Graves, 1994). In Japanese mythology the main descendents of god Susano are related either to water thunder or the snakes. Nigi-ni-tama, god of thunder is also associated with thunder. In Egyptian mythology, Mertseger is the snake goddess of Theban necropolis, who protected the desert tombs. Another goddess also portrayed as a winged cobra was Buto, the protector of Farooh (Graves, 1994).

10.1.1.9 Snake at tropic level.

All snakes are carnivorous, eating small animals including lizards, rodents and other small mammals, birds, eggs or insects. As a general rule snake belongs to the second level consumers. In general they do not prey on people. But in some cases it is found that small children being eaten by large constrictors in the jungle. Some species are aggressive, especially cobras. The majority of snakes are eaten either
non-venomous or possess venom that are not harmful for human beings.

10.1.1.10 Common meaning attached to snakes.

Snake is related to the social life also. Some common meanings attached to snakes are: Crooked minded, malicious persons are often compared with snakes. In many proverbs, idioms snake has been used. We often use the term fung of a snake to express a people of bad character. The word cyclone comes from coil of a snake, remain dormant then it becomes ferocious.

Positive meaning also attached to snakes. In the emblem of Ramkrishna Mission snake is associated with ‘Kulakundalini’, meaning the vital force latent in a creature according to scriptures (Vivekananda). Snake also attached to the symbol of knowledge. In a sculpture named tree of life and knowledge of 17th Century, from South India where a serpent, its tail coiled in two loops raises its five heads, is depicted as a symbol of knowledge. (Kraurisch. Stella; 19 ).It is also thought that snake protects from illness and other evils. For this reason Indonesians worship Naga Standard (Oriental Art and Culture, 1981) (Fig.10.2).

10.1.1.11 Snake and products from snake as a resource

Snake itself is an environmental resource. Venom is used for making medicines. Snake skin is used for making bags, shoes and other goods. Snake-charmers earn their livelihood on snakes by exhibiting snakes, collecting venom from snakes or by giving ‘kabaj-tabij’ (amulet or trinket) and ‘Jaributi’ (medicinal herbs) which are not scientifically proven but people believe on these. Snake is also consumed by certain population groups as food item. It is delicious and less costly. These are all economic resource from snakes.

Centering snakes many books, theaters, cinemas, folk -lore, folk stories enriched the socio-cultural environment, which are also resourceful. Social mixing at the time of snake worship or exhibition also binds social relation. Generation of money at the time of festival or mela also treated as resource.
SNAKE IN ORNAMENTS

RAINBOW SNAKE, SERVENT OF THUNDER OF AFRICANS

SNAKE AS A SYMBOL OF FERTILITY IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY
(Source: Graves, 1994)

Fig. 10.2
10.1.1.12 Sij tree and its significance

In Hindu religion worship of tree is an old ethic. Serpent goddess Manasa is symbolized by Sij tree (Euphorbia niveelia). It is a tolem culture of the non-Aryans. It is believed that latex of Sij has anti venom characteristics. The shape of Sij tree looks like a snake. All over India worship of Sij as snake goddess is common. In Assam, a branch of Bodo worship Sij tree. In Southern India Sij tree is known as ‘Chengmur’ from which the name of the deity ‘Chengmur’ comes (Kundu,1996).

Besides Sij, the other trees like Keya or Ketaki, Lotus are also worshipped as her symbol. Belief is that Manasa was born on lotus flower or Keya flower which is the niche of snakes. As metalled icon, from Rasulpur, Mymensingha districts two Sij branch on both soldier of Manasa also proves the relation between Manasa and Sij tree (Chandra,2004).

Till now in some places of Rajsahi, worship of Sij in place of Manasa is a common practice. The name Janguli also resembles with Jangulitara, a floral species.

10.1.2 Objective

Objectives of this chapter are to analyze

1. The geographical specificity of Manasa Puja.
2. The significance of Manasa puja in social environment.
3. The resource potentiality of Manasa puja in economic environment.
4. Realised and potential hazard risks associated with Manasa puja.

Snake is an important component of biosphere. In eco-system it has a position. In tropic level snake stands in the third level or it is the second level consumer in eco-system.

The study area once covered with dense forest and rich species diversity is found in this area. A great percentage of population belongs to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who previously lived in the forest or in the forest-fringe. They had to go to forest for earning their livelihood and them often died of snake-bites. The very concept that worships of snakes or snake goddess may help them to get rid of snake-bites. And the people started worshipping Manasa (Manasa Puja).
Centering snakes many concepts, ideas, proverbs, stories, songs proves its importance in social and cultural environment. For this reason snake and worship of snake-goddess has been taken as a festival in the study area. To some extent it is resourceful in terms of income generation but it may also be hazardous. In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyze snake as a component of biosphere, snake-goddess a component of cultural environment at lower level in indigenous medicines and in higher level as narcotics. Attempt is also made to analyze snake, snake-goddess, and its relation with society and impact on space.

10.1.3 Discussion

10.1.3.1 Time or month specificity

The word cyclone mean coil of snakes which is dormant and suddenly attacks. People used to worship snake God or snake Goddess for deliverance of snake bites. Throughout the year people worship Manasa in different forms in forested riverine areas of India. But in the month June, July and August worship of Manasa is mostly found. Because in these months snake bite become hazardous in all parts of India, mainly in southern West Bengal. In Bengali month Ashara and Shravana, worship of snake deity are mainly performed. In the study area she is worshiped from Dasahara (10th day of Bengali month Jaistha) to Shravana Samkranti (end of Bengali month Sravana) it is June to mid of August when all the rivers are fulfilled and flooded. The niche of snake also flooded and they come out. The very concept that the venomous snakes may leave them if they worship snake Goddess plays a role. Another concept that during frashets the venom of snakes is washed away with water and the people pray to God for rain on the day of Dasahara (Chandra, 2004).

10.1.3.2 Occupation specificity

The study area lies under 'rarh' of West Bengal. Rarh is referred to as an isolated land covered by jungle. It is subdivided into 'Uttar Rarh' or northern portion of river Ajay and 'Dakshin Rarh' or the southern part of river Ajay. The study area comes under dakshin rarh (Ghosh, 1983). According to L.S.S.O.Malley, in his Bankura district Gazetteers marked 'rarh' as the country lying to the west of Bhagirathi River and south of Ganges. (O.Mally, 1908)

Jain tirthankaras spot it as the land of uncivilized people (Singha Maniklal, 1951). The tribes migrated from chhotionagpur plateau inhabited in the forested tracts. Naturally their culture varies from the Jain culture and they belittled them as uncivilized population.
From census report it reveals that a large percentage of population belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. They used to go to forest and aquatic sources for their livelihood. Because of these very occupations, they often died of snake bites. The frightened people worshiped snake Goddess for deliverance of snake bites. In the study area the people of fisher men community (keot, jele, majhi, bagdi, and khaira) worship Manasa as their 'kuladevi’. Hanri, Lohar, Layek, Bauri also worship Manasa. She is kuladevi of Bhumij and they worship Manasa in Sravana Samkranti (mid of August).

The weavers of Mallabhum also worship Manasa on the 5th new moon day after Dasahara. They worship eight nagas which is known as Nagapanchami. They believe that when they start weaving, the eight chiefed snakes are used as thread (Singha, 1978).

The caste system is developed on occupation structure. The people of a particular occupation which have fear of snake bites, people of that occupation worship snake Goddess.

10.1.3.3 Place specificity

Manasa is worshiped all over India in different forms. In southern India mainly in Andhra Pradesh and in northern India, mainly in Uttar Pradesh she is worshiped. In West Bengal also, worship of Manasa is a popular festival. The historian says that the concept of Manasa is coming from South India in eleventh century by the Sen Dynasty. It is a common ritual in entire Rarh.

In Bankura district Manasa is worshiped at Ajodhya, Bir Bandh (Bishnupur Police Station), Routhkhand, Dasdighi, Gelia, Rohilkone, Phutkara, Mirzapur, Laugram, Balitha, Nirisha, Narayana Sundari, Sonamukhi, Phulkushma, Motgoda, Sarenga, Raipore, Ramsagar, Khatra, Simlapal, Susunia, Taldangra, Ranibnandh, Bankadaha, Jaikrishnapur, Gangajalghati

In Burdwan district Kejagram, Satgachi (Memari), Kalsa Budra (Ausgram), Bhadiara (Raina), Kalyanpur (Ketugram), Matilpara (Kalna), Jhapandanga (Jamalpur), Hatgobindapur, Rampur, Katnabil (Raina), Koaldanga, Gopalpur, Jhikra-Dharmadanga, Narenga (Kalna), Jahannagar, Bhandertikuri (Purbasthali)

In Medinipur district Barda(Sutahata), Silda, Binpur, Banspahari, Lalgarh, Rungarh, Kankajhor, Nipura, Dajuri, Belatikri, Nalpa (Garbeta), Gopalpur (Pataspur), Panskura, Bhogpur, Jara, Chandarakona.
In Purulia district Palson (Arsa), Ruchap (Balarampur), Jargo (Jhalda), Narra, Harialpara, Hadalda, Kashipur, Manbazar

In Birbhum district Birorichandipur, Balahari (Durajpur), Kamira, Pean, Nanur, Jaidev-kenduli, Ilambazar, Mouulpur (Mahammad Bazar)

In Hoogly district Manasadanga, Rasulpur (Arambag), Khanpukur (Singur), Sarainpara (Haripal), and Devigarh (Balagarh)(ChoudharyKamilya,1989)

Though Manasa worship is found in many districts of West Bengal, in Bankura district the intensity is very high. The route behind this worship came from south India but evidences in the study area tells another fact. From field survey it has been seen that in most places different Jain figures are incarnated as Manasa deity(Photo 4.19). In Dharapat (Bishnupur Police Station a naked image of Jain Tirthankar is worshiped as Manasa. In Dihar village also incarnation of Jain to Hindu image are found. A stone made Jain temple is worshiped at the eve of Manasa worship in Chuamasina village. Practically it is seen that more or less all deities are worshiped in different temples, holy places, proximities are nothing but incarnation of Adinath, Parsanath, Santinath and Mahavir (four tirthankaras) as Padmabati, Gouri Devi of Jain origin.

10.1.3.4 Descriptions of Manasa deity and symbols used for worship of Manasa

Manasa is worshiped in different forms (photo10.1). These forms are divided mainly into following types:

i. Inscription of female figure on stone which is incarnated in the form of Manasa. Most of them are setting on lotus with a seven headed or five headed snake like an umbrella. She is sitting on goose, lotus etc.

ii. Stone head image or rounded stone.

iii. Ancient metalled picture image of Manasa

iv. Terracotta ‘bari’ which is found in the border areas of West Bengal mainly in south west boarder. Bari consists of a terracotta pan with eight headed snakes on fan sides.

v. Manasa chali which is also found in western boarder of Bengal. It is made of terracotta and shaped like a winnowing platter or tray. The height of the chali sized from 1ft - 10ft. Manasa used to sit on the middle of chali accompanied by many female figures with snake or lotus in their hands.
vi. Manasa idol is made of earth, dry straw and color.

vii. Symbol of Manasa like Sij branch, an oven etc. (Kundu, 1996).

10.1.3.5 Rituals & taboos related to Manasa Puja

i. In the study area snake plays an importance role on socio-cultural life of inhabitants. The weavers of the study area are subdivided into four sub-divisions like Aswini Tanti (Weaver), Patra, Uttarakuli and Mandaran. The Aswini tantis of Bishnupur believe themselves as son of Lord Siva and Kushavati (Parvati) and they also thought that they were born on the 11th lunar day of the bright fortnight (sukla ekadashi) of the Bangali month Aswina. So they were called Aswini Tantis. They believe that different parts of their loom are made of snakes. To bind Lachna (part of a loom) eight chief snakes, to bind Jutashe 10 chief snakes, to bind Lagami (two snakes), to bind Galani (two snakes), to bind Larage (two snakes), to bind Dakti (two snakes). And for that reason they do not weave on the day of 'Nagapanchami'. On the next day of nagapanchami, people used to eat fruit, sweet, curd, puffed rice instead of rice or bread. This ritual is called Khaidhara. It is related to fertility cult. During marriage ceremony the people used to worship Snake goddess to avoid any unavoidable circumstances (Singha, 1978). Many local social festivals in terms of religious rituals are also observed during Manasa Puja.

ii. People worship trees as a symbol of snake Goddess. It is a common ritual which mainly comes from taboo cult. Sij, Bel, Neem are symbols of Goddess Manasa.

iii. Taking a typical bitter fruit 'kelekara' in belief that it is anti venomous.

iv. Worship of Sij branch in a belief that the latex is anti venomous.

v. Worship of snakes will bring rain which will wash the venom of snakes.

vi. Used to border their houses by cow dung in belief that it will protect them from snake bytes.

vii. Snake bitten person is laid before Manasa. The belief that the snake comes to withdraw the venom.

viii. Shading of skin makes them as a symbol of eternal youth (Wikipedia: 2006)

ix. Belief that she is the Goddess of black magic. So people worship them on cloudy, rainy, new moon day. (Mitra Sambhu: )

x. Some rituals related to snake worship; worship of Manasa by 'Rajbansis during marriage
xi. Worship of Manasa in different forms; Icon, Bari, Chali etc and inscription (photo.10.1).

xii. Sacrifice of terracotta horse, elephants or snake ornamented pitchers etc.

xiii. China rose or red lotuses are used for worship and she is the Goddess of anger.

10.1.3.6 Customs related to Manasa puja

i. People do not go outside their villages on these days.

ii. As snakes are thought to be the child of goddess Manasa, people do not kill snake.

iii. People do not cook on the day of Manasa Puja.

10.1.3.7 Village fair, festival and income generation

Centering Manasa Puja the main festival is locally known as Jhapan(photo.10.13). Jhapan comes from Japyajan or riding. All over southern West Bengal people observe the days of Manasa puja as a folk festival. Burdwan district, Medinipore, Purulia and hoogle districts are famous for Manasa Puja festival. In Bankura district the famous places are – Raipur, Phulkusma, Matgoda, Jambani, Melera, Dhanara, Khatra, Jhapandih, Chanpasole, Gopalpur, Dahala, Simlapal, Susunia, Parswala, Moukura, Pukhuria, Dubrajpur, Harmasra, Panchmura, Sabrakone, Bibarda, Kamardiha, Sonajhor, Taldangra, Ranibandh, Bishnupur, Bankadaha, Jaikrishnapur, Ajodhya, Dashera, Kotulpur, Ramdiha, Balitha, Koalpara, Indpur, Pairachali, ramsagar, Chandabila, Jamdahara, Medinipore, Onda, Malatore, Palsbon etc are famous for Jhapan festival during Sravana Samkranti.

Mallabhum is famous for its unique Jhapan festival. Entire western boundary of Mallabhum was famous for its Jhapan festival amongst them Ajodhya and Bishnupur are famous. In Bishnupur it was started in the 18th century (Approx 1784) in the reign of Chaitnya Singha.

The main attraction of Jhapan is exhibition and snake playing (photo10.13). Jhapan is of two types.

a. Gari Jhapan: Snake charmers are riding on cart track. Charmers locally known as Gunin (exorcist) used to sing songs from Manasamangal. Snakes are hanging from their hands, heads, tongue; they are totally indifferent of snake bites.
b. Bagh Jhapan: Bagh Jhapan is superior to Gari Jhapan. The snake charmers are coming riding on earthen tigers and 'Chaturdola' (Chandra, 2004).

Malla Kings previously patronise this festival. Awards in term of money, agricultural field were given.

Snake charmers gather at Rajdarbar. They come from the neighboring villages Ajodhya, Ramsagar, Jaypur, Jhapandi, Kamardiha, Chandabila, Ambika, Loara, Paherdanga, Patpur, Prakakash Ghat, and Phulbani. The local snake charmers also take part in the exhibition.

At present the diversity of this festival decreases with changing culture and modernization. The Malla kings also have not that financial power to patronize this festival. Government has decided to exhibit snake in Bishnupur Festival for tourism attraction.

10.1.3.8 Efforts to prevent snake bites at Government level

Efforts have been made to increase awareness about snakes by Bigyan Mancha. Information that snake bitten people can survive with proper medicines not by black magic or Kabaj-tabij. Efforts have been made to supply enough anti-venom serum in hospitals, primary health clinics.

10.1.3.9 Change in the concept

The actual reason behind worship of Manasa has been changed. The forest has been cleared by deforestation activities and replaced by mono species. The diversity of snake's species is decreasing. But the people worship it as a ritual. The fertility concept behind snake no longer insists people to worship for child. The increasing population and the awareness about the present economic condition forced the population to check birth rate. So the concept has been changed but the process continues in a different forms.

10.1.4 Analysis of observed phenomena

It is month specific. In monsoon months the vegetal growth increases so is the incidents of snake bites.

It is caste centered or based occupation specific

Place specificity has lost its prior significance

Rationale itself is losing its significance due to development of awareness among people.

Incitement of snake bites decreasing. It is proven by hospital or health centre data
With the development of medical science for snake bites decreases the importance of exorcists. Due to deforestation activity incident of snake bites has been decreased. Original floristic composition is replaced by domesticated species and species diversity decreased. Rational thinking, ideas have entered the behavioral environment due to change in cultural environment. This is due to spread of education, particularly among female. The number of children has been restricted due to growing consciousness among educated couples that small family is a boon. This is due to increasing price of daily needs. Increase in expenditure on education, marriage and restricted job opportunity bound the people to think about over population.

So the previous concept that bigger the families better the position in society has been replaced by “one or two children family” size. The concept has been strengthened by Government Slogans Decreasing economic feasibility is another factor. It is mainly due to lack of fertile agricultural land in the study area or the way living.

Once worship of components of environment was a ritual all over the world. Later it was restricted to tribes in India who have interaction with nature. Ultimately it becomes caste specific.

Due to change in behavioral environment the linkage between physical environment and socio-cultural environment has become weak. There has been prohibition on snake charmers. Items for Manasa puja are now used in the household for interior decoration and for decorating pandals.

10.2 Kartika Puja

10.2.1 Introduction

Kartika is the war god in Hindu mythology. He is also known as ‘Deva Senapati’ or Chief of military as he got married with ‘Devasena’ daughter of Daksha. Kartika can conquer God, demon, jaksha, Kinnar. He is ornamented with weapon ‘shakti’. The idols from different parts of India depict Kartika as a war God. Bow and arrow are placed in his two hands. Kartika is a preferred theme in traditional classical dance and folk dance as well. Uday Sankar, the noted classical dancer is famous for the dance of Kartika as the war god. Chhaw dance of Purulia is a form of folk dance. Chhaw dancers also adopt Kartika as war god for dancing.
10.2.1.1 Kartika in Hindu Religion

War God Kartika is known by different names in Hindu mythology. 'Skanda', ‘Kukkutdhwaja’, ‘Kumares’, ‘Mahasen’, ‘Guha’, ‘Krounchari’, Shaktiman, Shaktidhar, Kumar, Dev Senapati are some of his names. Different ancient scripture from different places gives the evidence of Kartika as an ancient God. In some scriptures we seek him as a child in the womb of mother. In the famous temple of Rohtak he is depicted as the main God. In mediaeval period he was very famous in southern India where he was imagined as a power giving God. The Khsatriyas used to worship him before going to the battle field. A sculpture of Kartikaya in Bharat Kala Bhawan Museum in Benaras where he is seen as a two handed God (Bhattachrya, 1978)

10.2.1.2 Existence of Kartika in other countries

Existence of Kartikeya is found in China, Japan and East Indian islands. In Japan he is known as Kumar-ten. Other names are Kend (Skanda) or Idaten. He is the son of Dijejoi or Shiva or firegod Katen. He is riding on a peacock, one headed or six headed with two or more hands. According to Kongo-koi-shichi-shu he is blue in color, bell in his right hand and left hand set on his left thigh. In Sosestu Fudo Ki he is described as Kumar-ten with six heads, bell in his right hand or conch shell but the left hand is on his chest but in Doichido -Ron he is described as Kumar-ten with four hands, riding on peacock, red flagged and cock-bell (Bhattacharya 1984)

In Jain religion existence of Kartika festival found (Scanda festival in Jain Acharangasutta). Boudhayan Dharmasutra also tells about Kartikeya where he is associated with Rudra (God of Anger) (Bhattacharya 1984)

10.2.1.3 Evidence of Kartik Puja in ancient India

Evidence from Mahenjodero, Crete depicts worship of Kartikeya was practiced at that time. Inscriptions of peacock also prove his existence. The old coins and seals from different parts of India prove his impotents in India. Coins of Kushana king Hubiska depict Kartikeya in different names as Skanda, Kumara, Bishakha, and Mahasen. He holds javelin and flag of Garoda in his hands. Johio community of Vawalpur also presents some figures of Kartikeya in copper and silver coins of second century A.D.
10.2.1.4 Birth history of Kartika

Kartikeya is the son of Siva and Parvati. There is a need for military chief to kill demon Tarakasur. So Gods pray before Mahadeva for a super power in the form of Kartikeya. But after birth he was surcharged by six krittika (nymphs) from where he got the name Kartikeya.

There is a relation between Kartikeya and the Sun God. According to another view fire god is his father. Agni spread his power to ocean, earth, sun and planets. It creates race or attendant of Kartikeya. It is no doubt the sun rays which enlighten the earth, oceans. So at the time of worship of Kartikeya sun is also worshiped.

According to the Ramayana he is the sun of Mahadeva and Uma.

According to Matsya Purana Kartikeya is the son of Agni (fire God). He is accompanied by Sakh, Bisakh and Naigurnya. Kartikeya is a fictitious God. Like Buddha, Mahavir he has no historical and physical exisstance. In Hindu Mythology his birth is related to Rudra, Agni, Parvati, Ganga (River) or river Kutila and six nymphs.

From the mythological evidence it comes to know that Kartikeya is son of Agni in form of Rudra. He is known by Skanda, Kartikeya, Kukkutdhwaj (cock flaged), Kumares, Kumar, Guha, and Mahasen. According to Shiva purana he is described as Skanda with vermillion red body and ornamented with pearl necklace and golden crown on his head. Here he resembled with Ganesha or four hand. He has six head, twelve eyes, twelve hands holding weapons and twelve sole. Some times he is attached with Digambar, Kumar, Son of Swaha (Scanda Purana, Bhattacharya, 1984). He looks like a child. He is sitting on peacock and must have piece of rag or flag and a staff. In Matsya Purana it is said that according to place of worship, number of hands will defer. If he is worshiped in forest or village he will be two handed, in small towns he will be four handed and in his own place of worship he will be twelve handed. The weapons on Kartikeya's right hands are Shakti, pas, kharga, SAR, shul, bar and abhyay and weapons of left hands are Dhanu (bow), pataka (flag), musti, expanded four fingure, khetak and tamra chur. Of a two handed kartikeya must hold Shakti in his right hand and left hand must be placed on peacock. If he has four hands, two left hands must hold shakti and pas and one of the right hands holds asi (Sword) and the fourth hand for grant of desire and assurance of safety. In Linga Purana Kartikeya or Kumara is said to be a part of Shiva. Dr. Gurudas Bhattachrya stated that Kartika and Ganesha are two forms of Ganapati. He is son of Shiva and Brother of Ganesha or Shiva, Ganesha and Kartikeya are form of a sain divine. In
Rig Veda Kartikeya named as Guhas as his origin is in vague. Resemblance between Sun and Kartikeya is, in Vedic mythology Sun (Pusah) is riding on goat and one the six heads of Kartikeya is of goat (Bhattachrya, 1984)

10.2.1.5 Riding animal of Kartika

There are several riding animals of God Kartikeya who symbolize the God. Peacock is the riding bird of Kartikeya for what he is known as Sikhi. In the Vedic India Peacock was the emblem of Agni and Fire God, of Indra, Usa, the dawn and Rudra. Kartikeya is son of Agni. For this reason his riding bird is Peacock. In some places cock is his riding bird. But it is thought that cock is metamorphosis of Garuda (the mythological bird on which Visnu rides). It is thought that worship of Kartikeya first started in the places where peacock is naturally found and the sikhi or five evaluated in form of peacock’s plumage. Suparna is the sun in rounding the earth. Some times he also symbolizes Kartikeya. There is an intricate relation between peacock, cock and sun. Both of them were warbling at the time of sun rising. So peacock, cock and Garuda are symbol of the Sun. Kartikeya is the son of Agni. So is his emblem (Bhattachrarya, 1984).

10.2.1.6 Positive & negative meaning of Kartika

Kartikeya is believed to be the chief caption of Gods. He is married with Davasena and got the name Dev Senapati. It is believed that he is the strongest person in the world. He can sanctify any mishap, protects from enemy, save children from devil stars. So people worship Kartikeya. He is often attached with fertility Goddess Sasthi. Belief that he is the husband of Goddess of Sasthi or Devsena. Women used to desire Kartikeya for child. According to Scanda Purana people may get child by Kartikeya’s blessings (Bhattacharya 1984). From the time of Panini Kartikeya cult was practiced in northern India. Myth that, Agastha (sadhu/monk) defused worship of Kartikeya in southern India. In south India he is known as Subrahmanyam or the person from whom Brahma took knowledge (SenGupta, 2001).

Kumargupta of Gupta dynasty also use the coins embalmed with Kartikeya (catalogue of Gupta coins in Bayana Hoard site at Bhattacharya 1984). In Rohtak of Hariana, the then Yodha community (Kamilya, 1989) worshipped kartikeya. Mourya Kings were also worshippers of Kartikeya. Gupta King Skandagupta took his name after the name of Kartikeya (Sengupta, 2001). After Kumargupta and Skandagupta, importance of Kartikeya became diluted in Northern India. It is because of spread of Buddhism in India. Buddhism is based on nonviolence and for this reason worship of war god became less
important. But in South India he is an important God till now because Buddhism has not reached in South India.

But Kartikeya is often attached with a derogatory meaning. In Brahmapurana Karikeya is depicted as a behaving person. In Bayupurana and even in Mahabharata he is known as killer of child, killer of fetus etc.

Belief that Kartikeya is the God of prostitutes. They worship Kartikeya for a male child because they do not want their child come to the same profession. In red light areas of Kolkata and surroundings intensity of Kartikeya worship proves this truth. (Sen Gupta, 2001).

Kartikeya is often said to be the god of theft (taskara). He knew every art and technique of theft. In Mrichhakatikam he is described with a derogatory meaning like theft.

Some times he is treated as a greedy God. In Bengal he is worshiped just after Durga Puja in the last day of Bengali month Kartika (i.e mid of November). Though other Gods and Goddesses (Lakshmi, Ganesha, and Saraswati) all are worshiped with Godded Durga, only Kartikeya is attached with the derogatory statement that once he comes with his mother, then he comes alone. The adjectives like ‘Kelekartk’ (black person), ‘Nabakartik’, and ‘Kachakartik’, all have negative meaning in society.

Women in north Bengal dance naked at the time of Kartik Puja where men are not allowed. In many places women do not worship or even touch Kartika with a fear to become widow or remain unmarried.

10.2.1.7 Spatial distribution of Kartik puja in India

All over India Kartika is mostly worshiped as war God. In Surma Barak Valley and in South India worship of Kartika is observed. In south India especially in Tamilnadu he is worshiped in the name of Subrahmanyam. It is said that Bramha gathers knowledge from Kartikeya so he is called Subrahmanyam. Though in Surma Barak Valley he is attached with a derogatory meaning. He is not worshiped by women as they believe that due to worship of Kartika they may remain unmarried or become widow (Sengupta, 2001). In Maharastra he is worshiped as Kumara or a bachelor and women are not allowed to worship in his shrines.
10.2.1.8 Spatial distribution of Kartik Puja in West Bengal

In West Bengal he is worshiped in many places. Katwa in Bardhaman district, Bansberia, Chuchura, Bandel-Sahagang in Hooghly district, Meherpur Nadia district, Sonamukhi in Bankura district are famous for Kartika puja.

10.2.2 Objective

Objective of this chapter is to analyze Kartika as a component of socio-cultural environment and socio-economic environment as well.

10.2.3 Method & technique

Method is Ideographic method & technique is field survey

10.2.4 Discussion

In Bengal Kartikeya is worshiped mainly by childless women. According to some mythological stories Kartika is thought to be the husband of Sasthi, the Goddess of fertility. Kartika itself is a concept, has no physical existence. He is symbolized as a male good looking god. He is conceptualized as war God (photo.10.2). In the study area worship of Kartika started by the traders. Sonamukhi is a trade centre of weavers from the British period. Traders of Sonamukhi used to go Calcutta for trading and they may visit the red light areas from where they get the concept of Kartik puja and they introduced this festival in Sonamukhi. Those who attached with trading of tusser goods, mainly started this festival. Previously it was related to a particular group (sex workers). Now the worship of Kartika is a community festival. Here we see the upgradation of Kartika puja in the study area in the one hand on the other it indicates the transfer of ideas from Calcutta to Sonamukhi. All over West Bengal it is found that worship of Kartika mainly centered in the areas of trading place or marketing place. (Fig.10.5)

The study area embraces an extensive rural background. There almost 351 villages, only two municipal towns. So it is obvious that the society is basically a rural society and the cultural environment has a very strong rural bias. Sonamukhi the main place of Kartik puja was a trade centre on the bank of the river Damodar. L.S.S.O.Malleey in Bankura District Gazetteer states that; many rituals in West Bengal have a close link with the growth and development of trade centre. Chuchura, Chandannagar. Katwa all are the then famous trade centres of Bengal (it is thought that the traders often fill alone when they were far from their home and it may be the cause of their visit to proisti-quarters from
where they borrowed the concept of Kartik Puja. Kartik Puja as a folk festival thus flourished in Sonamukhi and surrounding areas.

RELATION BETWEEN TRADE CENTRE & KARTIK PUJA ALL OVER WEST BENGAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Physical Environment</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Environment</th>
<th>External Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>Katwa</td>
<td>Katwa</td>
<td>Confluence of river Ajay and Bhagirathi</td>
<td>Trade centre and water transport upto 18th century. Hindu culture.</td>
<td>Influenced by Nabadwip Vaishnab Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalna</td>
<td>Bansberia</td>
<td>Tribeni</td>
<td>Water transport &amp; trade centre</td>
<td>Influence of Kolkata, Chandannagar &amp; Vaishnab culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoogly</td>
<td>Chuchura</td>
<td>Chuchura</td>
<td>Situated on the bank of river Ganga</td>
<td>Trade centre &amp; railway station, Dutch colony</td>
<td>Weak influence of Chandannagar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.10.5

10.2.4.1 Positive and negative impact of Kartika puja in the study area

The positive sides of worship of Kartika in the study area are

i. It sets a platform for social interaction
ii. It breaks isolation
iii. Mundane life is rejuvenated through this festival
iv. Through this festival transaction of money took place.

The negative sides of worship of Kartika in the study area are

i. Noise pollution and dust pollution occur during emersion of Kartika. Excessive use of crackers (photo.4.18), bombs cross the normal limit which is hazardous.
ii. Gambling is another social problem during this festival
iii. Excess consumption of liquor makes the environment unhealthy.
Major findings

i. Kartika and Manasa both are concept entered into socio-economic process

ii. Both are conceptualised as god or goddess of fertility

iii. Snake is a component of zoological environment. Sij is a component of Botanical environment. Both of them have real existence.

iv. Both of them (Sij tree and snake) enter sociocultural environment through the ritual Manasa puja.

v. The ritual is performed to protect from snake bite and Sij tree is worshiped because it has anti venom property.

vi. Manasa puja was predominant in jungle terrain, the niche of snakes

vii. Forest may disappear but ritual continues.

viii. Kartika is a mythological concept but Manasa is a folk concept

ix. Kartika puja started in trade centers like Sonamukhi, Chuchura, Bansberia, and Katoa. Initially it was restricted with in the sex workers but now Kartik puja has been upgraded to community level.

x. Kartika puja in different places has influenced by local culture

xi. Both Manasa and Kartika puja are associated with village fair which has economic significance though of small scale. This way the concepts ultimately enter economic environment through behavioral environment.

xii. Manasa puja has hazardous consequence. Snake population has decreased and Sij tree has cleared off. Kartika when worshiped at community level creates noise pollution.

xiii. Manasa and Kartika puja has no relevance on urban society.

xiv. But Manasa bari or chali are used in interior decoration in urban centers. Similarly chhow mask of Kartika decorates urban walls.

xv. Prohibition on snake catching has affected the snake charmer community.
CHAPTER - 11

Bishnupur festival

11.1 Introduction

The term festival includes holiday, feast day, anniversary, commemoration, rites and rituals. It is associated with merriment. But there is a conceptual difference from carnival in the sense that carnival is associated with loud noise and hooliganism. At national level it differs from ceremony which means formal procedure related to social and religious norms and practices. Festival is classified as religious, social and cultural festival. All over India different types of religious, social and cultural festivals observed through out the year. Eid, Pongal, Dashera, Navaratri, bihu, onam, ursi and so many other festivals are observed in India. Some of them are religious, some have social and cultural heritage. West Bengal is famous for its Durga Puja. It is Bengali community specific. There are many other religious festivals are observed in West Bengal like Kalipuja, Manansapuja, Kartikpuja, Laxmipuja and Saraswatipuja, Gajan etc. Those are self sponsored festival. Unlike these festivals Bishnupur festival is a Government sponsored festival superposed on the cultural environment of Bankura district since 1988. There are similar festivals which are promoted by the Government. For example Khajuraho (Bundelkhand, MP), Konarak (Orissa), Elephanta festival (Maharastra), Rajgir (Bihar), Pattadackal festival (Karnataka), Chidambaram Kamalapuram festival (Tamilnadu), Goa festival (Goa), Puskar (Rajasthan) are note worthy. Most of these festivals occur in temple complex. Khajuraho festival at Western group of temples, Konark at Natyamandap, Elephanta at Maheshmurti cave of 6th century, Chidambaram and Kamalapuram at shore stone temples and Nataraj temple, Pattadackal dance festival at the temples created by Chalukya Kings, Rajgir at temples by Magadh Kings and Buddha and Jaina temples etc. Bishnupur has a temple complex near and the festival started here at these temple complexes. It is to be noted here that the temple figure of Khajuraho and Konarak are erotic but Bishnupur temples show terracotta carvings of gods and goddess from epic and mythology.

11.2 Objective

Objective of this chapter is to bring out the relevance of Bishnupur festival on local society, local industries and overall on local economy. Emphasis has been given on the role of Bishnupur festival in commercial tourism.
<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Random Manasa Puja  Concentrated Bishnupur Festival Kartick Puja</td>
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<tr>
<td>Season of Festival</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time span</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Non specific  Kartick Puja - Specific (4 days)  Bishnupur Festival - Specific (5 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial scale</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Large  Kartick Puja - Medium  Bishnupur Festival - Small</td>
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<td>Cetripetal force</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Strong  Kartick Puja - Strong  Bishnupur Festival - Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festival ground/place</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Fixed  Kartick Puja - Fixed  Bishnupur Festival - Fixed till 2005, will change in 2006</td>
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<td>Marketing opportunity</td>
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<td>Items offered for marketing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals observed</td>
<td>Jhapan/Manasa Puja - Yes  Kartick Puja - Yes  Gajan - Yes  Tusu - Yes  Bishnupur Festival - No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on space</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>Economic activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle pattern</td>
<td>Folk festivals - On foot, cycle, rickshaw, motor cycle, tracker, bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional attachment</td>
<td>Folk festivals - high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Folk festivals - Age old (300 yrs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural mixing</td>
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<td>Items offered</td>
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<td>Food items offered</td>
<td>Folk festivals - Contemporary food &amp; Liquor</td>
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<td>Survival potentiality</td>
<td>Folk festivals - weak day by day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idol worshipped</td>
<td>Manasa Puja - Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism potentialities</td>
<td>Commercial - Medium to High in Bishnupur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 11.1
11.3 Method & Technique

Method adopted for this chapter is ideographic method and technique is field survey technique. Data is generated through primary field survey and in some cases information gather from previous souvenir published by the Tourism, information and Cultural Department, Government of West Bengal.

11.4 Discussion

11.4.1 Year of origin & objectives behind the festival

Bishnupur is the capital of Malla Kings. It is famous for its unique terracotta carving. In chapter nine we have given an outline of location of temples in Bishnupur and surroundings. The structural and ornamentation of the temple have been described in that chapter. In what way these temples differ from others. Bishnupur has a very beautiful temple complex. The Government of West Bengal motivated by Minister Achantya Krishna Roy to start this festival in 1988 (Chakroborty, 2002). District Magistrate Ardhendu Biswas stated that this festival would follow the Khajuraho Festival which is also held in the temple complex (photo.11.1). It is the very decision of the Government behind Bishnupur Festival. The main objective of this festival was to highlight the local heritage, folk and tribal culture, artifacts and rich physical environment.

11.4.2 Cultural program

To fulfill the objective of Bishnupur Festival cultural programs are set in that way. Emphasis is given on local classical gharana of music, folk dance, folk musics, jatra and drama etc. These cultural programs are changed to meet the changing demand of the people. Now a day this festival has given emphasis on the popular music and artists especially from Kolkata. At the beginning artists like Amjad Ali Khan, Bhupen Hazarika, Asish Khan, Ajay Chakraborty, Jamini Krishnamurthy, Amita Dutta et al performed in Bishnupur festival. But today different bands, cinema artists, modern singers from Kolkata are invited. Only a few local classical singers are invited to keep alive the main cultural goal of the festival (Bishnupur Festival Souvenir, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005). Ultimate objective of this festival is to promote and extend commercial tourism potentials of Bishnupur.

11.4.3 Items offered for exhibition and sale.

Bishnupur has a historical root. The Malla Kings of Bishnupur were fond of music, dance and fine arts. They brought several artist and
artisans and patronized them. Silk especially Baluchari, Conch shell carvings, terracotta goods, bell metal works are the result of this cultural platform. The neighboring villages of Bishnupur also produce indigenous artifacts like terracotta of Panchmura, docra of Bikhna and stone cutting of Susunia etc. these indigenous products are offered for sell through this festival. Beside these other goods like wood carving, coconut shell carving, ceramic pottery, lantern etc are also marketed through this festival. Beside produce of Bankura district, other goods from several parts of West Bengal are also sold here (photo.11.2). Agriculture department, forest department, sericulture department and tourism department also make stalls to show the development of the department and to sell their products.

11.4.4 Participation of locals

Local artists performed classical songs, folk songs, dance and recitation. There are total four stages for cultural programs. These are Jadubhatta Mancha, Ramananda Mancha, Gopeswar mancha and Lok Mancha. Gopeswar Mancha and Lok mancha are specially for local artists.

11.4.5 Number of regional tourists

Bishnupur festival is nineteen years old. From its beginning the number of regional tourists and total spectators are increasing. From the information brochure of 18th Bishnupur Festival it is seen that in 1988 total number of spectators were around 300000, which was around 500000 in the year 2004 (Information brochure, Bishnupur festival).

11.4.5 Generation of resource

Hoteliers, restaurant owners, rickshaw pullers et al are economically benefited during this festival. Foreign tourists and off beat tourists some times want to visit the places where artifacts are produced. So these places may be of tourism attraction and generate income. Bishnupur festival acts as a centripetal force for economic and social activities within a broader spatial network. In this respect Baillie (1986) has given emphasis on distance, time and space. Panchmura a small village under Taldangra Police Station is not within our study area. Dit is famous for stylized terracotta horse, terracotta tablets, ornaments and show pieces, which have demand in urban centers. They are used in interior decoration by urbanites. But Panchmura lacks a market of its own. Products are therefore marketed through Bishnupur. Bishnupur festival give the artisans an opportunity to exhibits their products to urban tourists organized at the administrative level on other hand are
also economically benefited. Tourists at the other end are apprised of Panchmura and its artisans. Thus Bishnupur has a comparative spatial advantage over others. In Geography connectivity and spatial advantage are significant.

Bikhna is another small village in Bankura Police Station. It is famous for docra or Cierepardue or lost wax works. The artisans are very poor and Government assistance is meager for their daily livelihood. Docra products were previously used for social and religious purposes. History says that the Malla Kings invited them and settled them at Gopalpur. But they are nomadic. Now they live at Bikhna. Docra products have a great demand in interior decoration, show pieces, ornaments, attractive decorative household utensils etc. These products also sold through Bishnupur.

11.4.6 Hazardous consequences

During this festival (23rd to 27th December) a large number of population gathered in the festival ground. The festival ground is surrounded by many ancient temples. For the huge gathering, noise and vibration the heritage temples are badly affected.

A large number of temporary tourists visit Bishnupur Festival and make the town dirty.

The organizers are least interested about the repairing works needed to maintain the mela ground. Big and small holes are found here and there which cause soil erosion.

Due to increase in the number of vehicle particularly in the time of festival make the surface condition of moram covered roads are affected. It also creates dust pollution.
Major findings

Bishnupur festival unlike Kartik Puja or Manasa puja is a Government sponsored festival with a well defined aims and objectives.

Space, time and scale is bigger than that of Kartik puja or Manasa puja. Scale of participation is bigger than that of Kartik puja and Manasa puja.

More economic opportunities are created.

Through this festival a social relation grown up with the people of different localities, states and countries and in this way local culture is defused and at the same time local handloom and handicrafts gets an world wide recognition.