This chapter examines the religious ecology of the city of Cuddapah in terms of its religious structures, key personnel in rituals, class and religious activity, life-cycle rituals of different caste, and caste like populations, festivals and their functions, magical beliefs and practices and the religious ties with other places.

While examining the religious structures, the description shows the cultural patternings of space in terms of sacred and secular activities with reference to the whole city as well as the individual households.

The discussion on the key-personnel in the ritual realm highlights the importance of both the religious and magico-religious specialists. The analysis shows how the temple and domestic priests, religious preceptors and personal teachers, holy men and women, astrologers, geomancers, and water diviners, bards story tellers, and magicians form as an indispensable functionary to perform rituals at the individuals, family and community level in order to regularize and maintain ecological relationships between the caste, caste-like populations, the community and the world around them.

An examination of the religious activities of the castes and caste-like groups reveals how there is a cleavage within the
religious beliefs and practices in terms of the upper, lower and lower classes among the Hindus, upper and lower classes among the Muslims and Christians and how there are striking divergences in the religious behaviour of the different classes among the Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

The description on the life-cycle rituals of all the classes reveals how the former aid status change and acquaint people with the roles they have to perform in their new status and motivating them to perform well. The discussion on festivals in all classes shows how the festivals validate and reinforce values of a population and its creed provide reassurance and feelings of security in the face of the psychological disturbances of every day life, provide social, solidarity influence the specific choices made among the various options available for coping with the natural and supernatural environments with in which the city of Cuddapah functions.

The discussion on magical beliefs and practices shows how magic is still existing in the city, how it comes into play by assisting man in adjusting to the social and physical would i.e. the natural and divine order, how the inhabitants utilize protective magic to are off evil and to keep the social or natural order in equilibrium, the productive magic to overcome certain of their problems, the destructive magic to overcome the malevolence of enemies or influence the behaviour of others.
favourably, and the predictive magic to foresee the future and determine proper course of future action.

Finally, the discussion shows how the city of Cuddapah and other places have links between them and how they reinforce social, economic, and religious ties between them in a patterned way.

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

Hindu religious structures:

The religious structures among the Hindus include temples, shrines, sacred trees, peals containing the images of several deities, isolated idols and Bhajan Mandirs. Table-1 shows the number of these structures and the deities to whom they are dedicated.

Among the temples, the one dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, the God of the city, stands out as a great monument. All other temples are next to it in terms of popularity, number of daily visitors, art and architecture and antiquity. These temples are dedicated to the great traditional deities like Anjanya, Siva, Rama, Chennaraya, Durga, and Kanyaka Parameswari to the little traditional deities like Gangamma, Poleramma, Ankalamma, Matamma, Kannikalamma, Ekaveera, Sattemma, and many others and to the saints namely, Avadudentra Swamy, Saibaba of Shirdi in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Different Religious Structures and Their Particulars</th>
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<td><strong>Religious Structures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Particulars</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(1) Temple</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Temples of Great Traditional Dieties:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Venkateswara Devalayam</td>
<td>Temple of the God of the namely Lord Venkateswara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Saiji Gudi</td>
<td>Temple of Saiji, it is a small temple dedicated to Lord Venkateswara who also goes by the name Saiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anjaneya Gudi</td>
<td>Temple of Anjaneya, the Monkey-God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sivalayam</td>
<td>Temple of Lord Shiva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lewara Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Lord Lewara, who is the same as Shiva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kodanda Ramalayam</td>
<td>Temple of Ram with bow and arrow in His hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ramalayam</td>
<td>Temple of Lord Ram.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Chennaraya Gudi</td>
<td>Temple of Lord Chennaraya, a form of Lord Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Durga Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Durga, the Great Goddess who is the wife of Siva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kanyaka Parameswari</td>
<td>Shrine of Kanyaka Parameswari, the Virgin Goddess of the Caste of Vaityna</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Sathiya Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Sathiya of Shirdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Raghavendra Swami Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Raghavendra Swami of Mantralayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(2) Temples of Little Traditional Dieties</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gangesa Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Gangesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Polorama Gudi</td>
<td>Shrine of Polorama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Twenty-two Shrines of They are dwarf shrines; they Traditional dieties house the dieties like Akalumma, Polorama, Gangesa, Matamma, Kankikalamma, Nallanamama, Suruppana, Cattamma, Vuppallapallema, Kasumma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(3) Images installed on plams around trees</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. They are sixteen in number located in different parts the city</td>
<td>Installed on these platforms are stone statues or images of the snake gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(4) Isolated Idoles</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. They are fourteen in number installed in open places</td>
<td>different dieties like Shiva, Kam, Krishna, Vishnu, Pravati, Lachami, and Durga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(5) Pipal and Margosa trees</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. There are twelve pairs of Pipal and Margosa trees</td>
<td>They represent Vishnu and Lakshmi in their union, they symbolizes fertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(6) Sacred Spots in each house</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sacred space where the dieties are housed</td>
<td>They are in the form of 'Dhutyo Placa', 'Dhaty rover' or 'Dhuty house'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sacred Plants</td>
<td>They are the sacred trees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MUSLIM RELIGIOUS

(a) Mosques (Masjids)

(1) Haji-Khan Masjid
The oldest mosque; it was constructed by the Haji Khan in the 16th Century A.D. in the premises of his palace; now it serves the public.

(2) Maqbool Khan Masjid
The second oldest mosque; it was constructed in the 16th century A.D.

(3) Quddus Shah Masjid
The third oldest mosque; a 17th century A.D. construction

(4) Jama Masjid
The fourth oldest mosque; a 17th century A.D. construction

(5) Juma Masjid
The fifth oldest mosque; an 18th century construction

(b) Shrines (Darbars)

(6) Hazrat Syed Mir Ansari Qadri
The oldest Shrine; it belongs to the 17th Century

(7) Hazrat Khaja Syed Shah Peerullah Mohammad Rumi
The second oldest; it belongs to 18th Century A.D.

(8) Hazrat Shah Mir
The third oldest Shrine; its owner belongs to the present century

(9) Hazrat Syed Ali Murtad Shah Qadri
The fourth oldest shrine that belongs to the present century

(10) Chaudhri Gunbadh
The fifth oldest Shrine; it belongs to the present century

CHRISTIAN AND HINDUS RELIGIOUS

(I) Christian Religious Structure

(1) Old London Mission Church
Constructed almost three centuries ago; the oldest church in the city, very imposing building

(2) German Lutheran Church
Constructed in the 18th Century.

(3) Anglican Church
Constructed in the 19th Century

(4) Catholic Church
Constructed in the Present Century

(5) Catholic Church
Constructed in the Present Century

(6) Christ Church
Constructed recently, it has a modern look with a vast open space around

Religious Structure of Hindu

(7) Mahavir Mandir
Temple of Mahavir, the founder of Jainism. The Harivad is the city constructed this temple in 1960s.
Maharashtra, and Raghavendra of Mantralayam in Karnataka. As a class, the temples of the great traditional deities stand in contrast with those of the little traditional deities. The temples of great traditional deities are located over vast areas in contrast with the areas where the temples of the little traditional deities are constructed. The temples of great traditional deities include a number of subsidiary divinities installed either in small shrines or separate enclosures or in open places. None of the temples of little traditional deities including subsidiary deities. All temples of the little traditional deities are small and many of them are even dwarf structures. The number of temples dedicated to great traditional deities are only twelve in number but those dedicated to great traditional deities are 24.

Apart from the temples there are pials raised around pipal trees. Installed on these pials are the stone images of snakes. Such pials contains two to thirteen stone images of snakes. Almost all these pials are located either at one side of a specific road or at a corner of specific.

At 12 places in different parts of the city, there are sacred trees in pairs, each pair including a mango tree and a pipal one. Only four are recent plantations and the other eight are very old trees.
There are also idols of great traditional deities which are installed in open places. All these ancient structures. Their antiquity goes back to several centuries. However, they are more ancient than the temple of Lord Venkateswara.

There are 11 Bhajan Mandirams in different localities of the city. They contain the images or lithographs of great traditional divinities like Rama, Krishna, and Venkateswara. Every night people from the locality assemble in each of these sacred buildings and sing devotional songs.

Apart from the religious structures in the form of temples, Bhajan Mandirams and other symbols of worship, there is a deity place (devuni chotu), deity-room (devuni Gudi) or deity-house (devudillu) in almost every Hindu household in the city. These spaces are considered sacred because the activities that take place there are religious activities. Within the compounds of several houses, there are small plants namely the sacred basil (tulasi) which are said to be pervaded by the essence of Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi. These plants are worshipped by women every day. Thus in the city of Cuddapah and even within almost every Hindu home certain spaces are designated as sacred and others secular, spaces with sacred activities and spaces with secular activities.
Religious structures of Muslims:

Table- I gives the religious structures of the Muslims in Cuddapah. Five of these symbols of worship are mosques (masjids) and five shrines of great saints (darghs). Each mosque is a place of public prayer (namauz). All the mosques are built of stone and brick, in the form of a square, in the centre of which is an open courtyard, surrounded with cloisters for students. In the centre of the wall facing Mecca is the niche (mishrub) which marks the direction of the Kaba at Mecca, and on the right of this niche is the pulpit (ninbar) from which the Friday oration (khutbah) is recited. Round each mosque there are either two or four high minarets (meenar) and from them the people are called to prayers (azaun). Each mosque has also a spot which is the burying place of its founder. Women are forbidden to go into the public mosques. Therefore the wealthy families have a mosque in their own compound where females perform their devotions. Such a mosque was the Masjid-e-Azam located in the premises of the Nawab's (Muslim ruler) palace in Cuddapah. It is the oldest one. It now serves the public. It is the most imposing of all the mosques. All other mosques were constructed between the 16th and 18th century A.D.

Attached to each mosque in Cuddapah are several officers: Priest (imam), ecclesiastical judge (kazi) school master (mullah).
Aputies of school master (naibs), a sweeper and a guide (rahbar daur).

Of the five shrines of muslim saints, one belongs to the 17th century A.D. All others have came up between the 18th and 19th century. Each one is a place of religious resort and prayer. Three shrines are located in the Muslim cementaries and one is located in an open place and it is here the Muslims of Cuddapah hold their large congregations on important occasions.

A mosque in a specific locality draws its visitors from that locality. However, a popular mosque like the Masjid-e-Azam draws the worshipers from different parts of the city. This mosque is populous known as Badah Masjid or Big Mosque. On the contrary, each shrine attracts Muslims from all parts of the city and sometimes even from outside the city.

Religious structures of Christians and others:

Table-1 shows the religious structures of the Christians and Marwadis in the city of Cuddapah. The Malayalis and the Tamilians have no religious structures of their own; they visit the temples, shrines and other places of worship of the Hindus, Muslims and Christians depending upon their religious affiliation and sectarian adherence. The Marwadis have their own temple namely Mahavir Mandir.
There are six churches in the city of Cuddapah. Of these the old London Mission Church enjoys an unenviorned position for it is the oldest, most popular and the most well-furnished one. It was constructed almost three centuries ago. The German Lutheran Church is a later construction going back to the 18th century. It is also a popular church mostly used by the Protestants among the Christians. The Anglican Church was also constructed in the 18th century but later than the German Lutheran Church. The two Catholic Churches and the Catholic church are constructed in the past 30 years. These are exclusively used by the Catholics among the Christians.

KEY-MEN IN RITUALS

Key-men in Hindu rituals:

Poojaris (temple priests) are important functionaries of Hindu rituals. These priests are wholetime specialists who propitiated the deity or deities on behalf of the entire city or on behalf of a particular caste group in the city. For example, the Kanyaka Parameswari temple is owned by the caste of Vaisyas. The ancestors of the Vaisyas in the city appointed a Brahmin as the priest of this temple. On behalf of the entire caste group of Vaisyas the priest conducts various rituals in the temple of Kanyaka Parameswari. The Madigas own the temple of Matamma. One of the Madigas acts as a priest of this temple. So it is in the case of Malas who collectively own the temple of
poleramma. On the contrary, the temple of Lord Venkateswara has Brahmin priest whose ancestor was appointed as a priest of the same temple by the whole community of Cuddapah long ago.

Likewise, the temples of Poleramma and Gangamma owned by the whole city community have put in-charge of priests appointed by the whole community of Cuddapah. Similarly, the temples of Anjaneya, Siva, Durga and other great traditional deities have their own hereditary priests. The priests of the temples of great traditional deities are Brahmins and the priest of the temples of little traditional deities are the non-Brahmins. However, the priests of the temples of the little traditional deities of Poleramma and Gangamma are Brahmins.

Whether the priests are in-charge of the great or little traditional temples, their functionaries are more or less similar. Every day they worship the deities under their custody. Their knowledge about the deity or deities makes others feel that they are endowed with special powers, hence, they are revered and held in high esteem. They always get in touch with people and whenever a festival comes nearer they inform the temple trustees about it and make a list of requirements to perform the rituals.

The priests freely mix its the people but during the ritual the neither touch anyone nor allow anyone to touch them because
they are considered sacred conduct worship of the deities in the household then proceed to conduct the worship in the shrine.

The Brahmin priests make sacrifices of vegetarian food to the deities. The non-Brahmin priests also make sacrifices of vegetarian foods to the deities but on special occasions they make animal sacrifices. The Brahmin priests serving the temples of Poleramma and Gangamma do not make animal sacrifices. The Madiga who is a hereditary functionary of the temple beheads the animals and bird. This Madiga claims the heads of the sacrificial animals or birds.

The office of the priest is hereditary. The eldest son of the priest learns the things from him and succeeds him after his retirement or death. When a priest is childless, one of his nominee acts as the priest and the trustees accept it. The new person is necessarily trained in worshipping the deities during the festivals.

Different from the temple priests are the domestic priests who are called purohits. The Brahmins and Vaisyas besides all agricultural, weaver, oil-sellers, toddy-taper, fisher, shepherd and other clean castes, have domestic priests. These domestic priests are Brahmins. all other castes, who are unclean and untouchable, have no domestic priests and the households they serve have mutual obligations in terms of patron-client
relations. They conduct all rituals in the houses of their clientele, read religious texts for the clientele, read the dreams of the clientele if informed, and fix up auspicious days for making journeys, conducting house-warming ceremonies, starting agricultural operations and undertaking a new enterprise. Their clientele make remunerations in the form of cash or kind to them.

There are other religious functions like Gurus whose primary function is to disseminate knowledge about the basic religious concepts at all levels of society. The Gurus are of two types: the Kula Gurus (the religious preceptor of the caste) and the Kaarva Gurus (personal teacher). The Kula Gurus are the hereditary teachers of caste groups. They maintain genealogical records by means of which an individual can validate his membership. They serve as a resort in times of crisis. They visit the city once in two or three years, meet their clientele, explain religious principles to be followed by the clientele and receive fees (dakshina) from every family of the clientele. They familiarity with the scriptures, caste myths, important personages in the caste and their direct and saintly religious experience guarantee their knowledge of proper behaviour.

The Kaarva Gurus are often associated with important temples, religious centres or meditational centres but some of
them are ordinary men or women who established their religiosity by adopting an ascetic life-style. They are holy people who renounced village, caste, and family to become holy. They are not totally divorced from society. They both teach ordinary men and depend upon the ordinary men for food and shelter as they tour the villages, town and cities or as they stay at a particular place and receive their disciples. All problems, from crop failure to marital quarrels are resolved through consultation with Kaarva Gurus. Gifts of money in the form of fees (dakshina) are given to the Kaarva Gurus whenever the disciples visit the latter and seek their help in all personal matters.

Jyotishkas (astrologers) are also important functionaries in the magico-religious realm of the city. Their customers belong to all castes. The astrologers receive stipulated fees for tendering specific predictions and the relevant advice. They fix the auspicious moments for various purposes, give advice for starting a journey, an enterprise or joining a job and so on.

They are also Saamudrikas or specialists in palmistry. They read the palms of the individuals and make predictions. The Yerukala women are experts in Sode or reading the future. Several individuals are Jyotishakaars or specialists in futurology. People try to seek answers for the specific questions they have or remedies for the troubles they face.
There are water diviners who go by the name Jalavaastukars. Farmers, merchants and every other person who want to tap underground water seek the services of water diviners. There are also geomancers or Vaastudaaar. They advice on the suitability of specific sites for specific purposes such as house construction, factory establishment or extension of specific buildings and structures. All these specialists charge specific amounts for their particular services.

Apart from the priest, religious preceptors, astrologers, geomancers, and divinators, there are the magician namely the Mantrikas. Their office is not hereditary. There are two types of Magicians: Mantravaidugudu and Bhuta Vaidyudu. The Mantra vaidyudu cures troubles of supernatural causation and the Bhuta Vaidyudu cures troubles of supernatural as well as natural causations. The difference between the two is in the type of treatment they offer to the people. One specialist gets his training from an established magicians, to get the favours of the spirit, and during the course of training he receives certain esoteric formulae from the expert magician, the perfect recitation of which results in commissioning the service of the spirit familiar. Another specialist in addition to possessing the power of commissioning the spirit familiar combines in himself the knowledge about herbal medicines. This type of specialist wields more influence than the first
one. It is this one who serves as an expert sorceress. Both the specialists carry on several types of benevolent and malevolent magic when required. In requital of their services they are paid in cash or kind by the parties concerned.

There are also experts in the cultural field whose services are procured on many religious occasions. Coming under the category of specialists are Bhajanaguruvelu (the experts in devotional music), the veedhi Bhagavatars (specialists in street corner plays), Tolubommalollu (billiards) gayakas (singers), Haridasa Bhagavaturs (religious story narrators), and drama artists. Their services are procured on different religious occasions and they are remunerated according to their fixed fees.

Key-men in the rituals of non-Hindus:

The key-men in the rituals of Muslims are the Imams (priests), Hakims (physicians and philosophers), Maulvis (teachers or scholars) and Fakirs (religious mendicants). The Imams are in-charge of the mosques and shrines. The Hakims and Maulvis attached to the mosques. The Fakirs render specific services during important festivals and collect alms from the individual Muslim households.

The key-men in the Christian religion are the pastors and bishops who are in-charge of sectarian churches and faiths respectively. Even though there are Reddi Christians, Maia
Christians and Madiga Christian, they all have common pastors and bishops. This is one area where the caste rule is not adopted by these converted Christians.

The Marwadis have their own priests. They bring the priests from their native places or from other cities whenever they want to conduct their marriages and death rites. For other purposes they utilize the services of the local Brahmins.

The Malayalis have no their resident religious specialists in the city. To undergo specific life-cycle rituals, they visit their native places and after completion of all formalities they came back to the city. On the other hand they bring the specialists from Kerala when they want to celebrate some important festivals like Onam. This contingency does not arise from the Tamilians because all local priests, hence they procure the services of the local priests.

CASTE, CLASS AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

Upper class religious activity:

The highest caste namely the Brahmins and its immediate inferior namely the Vaisyas comprise upper class religious category. Both the castes form into a separate class so far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned. They have their own clergy, their own ritual idiom and ritual
practices. Both follow highly intellectual, standardized, textual "great traditions". Men and women among both of them are literates, hence they adhere to the great traditions.

Both the castes have a special class of literature to read to understand and to follow the ideal norms. Treatises in the form of Purnas, Stotra Maalas, Maha Vratas, Gayatri Mantram, Bhagad Gita, Ramayananam, Mahabharata Bhagvata, Upanishads and so forth comprise an abundant reading material for them. During leisure time, during night times, and on all occasions of ritual importance, they recite the hymns, poems and songs in these books and read them loudly to the men and women in the house so as to make them listen. If the younger folk are not present in the house, because they are busy with their secular occupations in the shops, offices and other places, the old or the senior most male in the house reads these texts, and even inform the meaning of the text stanza by stanza or para by para.

Many of the gods and goddesses they worship are "great traditional" deities. Their deities include Vishnu and all His incarnations, Siva and his manifestations, the consorts of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, Vigneswara, KumaraSwami, Surya, Chandra, Angarakas, Buddha, Brishaspati, Shukra and Sani and several hundred of personages depicted in the sacred mythologies, legends, epic stories and narrations provided by many digests, commentaries and other. All these divinities are
high gods who play important roles in sanskritic literature. Their images are served by the worshipers themselves or their own priests who are Brahmans. The highest deities, Vishnu, Parvati, are the special concern of the Brahmans and Vaisyas. The Vaisyas specially worship Kanyaka Parameswari, their caste deity. All the innumerable deities whom they serve are vegetarian deities just as they are vegetarians. Especially, Lakshmi the Goddess of Wealth is daily worshipped by the Vaisyas whereas the Brahmans think of Gayatri and Saraswati every day and even recite a number of hymns in their name.

Both the caste groups also consider a large number of animals as symbolic of several divine beings or their representations. Cow is considered the most sacred, being representative of Kamadhenu, the Wish Fulfilling Divine Zebu species. Every day, they worship the Cow. The milk of the Cow is a vital food; its urine is invaluable as quick hand wash, cure for various diseases and a purifying agent. A sprinkling of cow's urine purifies the house and its surroundings. Cow is a treasure source of clarified butter (ghae), the highly valued fact, the most acceptable one to the gods. The milk required for the survival of children is from the cow. In different parts of a cow reside thirty million deities (Mukkoti Devatalu). Cow worship is an much as worshipping the very divine order itself.
Next cow, a bull occupies an important place in the animals considered as sacred by both the caste. A bull is a representative of the vehicle of Lord Siva. Likewise, rat, ram, elephant, horse, swan, eagle and peacock are the vehicles of the divinities namely Vinayaka, Agni, Indra, Kalki, Brahma, Vaishnavi, and Skanda. Lord Vishnu appeared in the forms of fish, turtle and boar, hence the latter animals are regarded as sacred. Lord Siva made His appearance to his devotees in the form of crow and pigeon, hence the corresponding birds Kukkura and Kapata and their images are revered and worshipped on specific occasions.

Lord Bhairava appeared in the form of dog, is sacred. Monkey is the symbol of Anjaneya, the great devotee of Lord Rama. Vishnu rides on Garuda, the Eagle. Hence eagle is sacred. Water buffalo is the vehicle of Yama, the god who is in charge of taken away the lives of organisms after completing their life in this world.

The Brahmins and Vaisyas also worship some plants according to several deities according to holy texts. The pipal tree is symbolic of Vishnu. The creator of the universe sleeps on the banyan leaf made afloat on water when He has wounded up this creative activities. Hence banyan tree is sacred. Margosa tree is the consort of pipal tree, a symbol of Lord Vishnu. Therefore in many places both the trees occur together. A toddy palm and
In the order of divinities, several inanimate items are also treated as symbols of specific deities. The sacred texts usually studied by the Brahmins and Vaisyas are filled with mythologies that explain the origins of all these inanimate items representing the gods and goddesses. The local river Penna, as a symbol of Parvati, the far-off rivers like Ganges, Jamuna, Krishna, Godavari and Kaveri as symbols of the goddesses of the same names, are revered and holy bath in their waters are considered as a holy act that 'washes away sins.'

The religious behaviour of the Brahmins and Vaisyas is strikingly based upon the sacred writings, repositories of the ideal religious beliefs and practices. As a consequence, their religious behaviour is standardized. It displays remarkable homogeneity within the Brahmins and Vaisyas. Of course, they may have their sectarian affiliations. Despite this, the religious behaviour common to them reveals patterns of semblance. Their formal variety of language, style of worship and conduct of their behaviour stand in contrast with those of other classes. The pious among both the groups finger their rosaries (rudrakshas) and chant verses from the sacred texts a fixed number of times. Several Vaisyas wear rosaries set in gold round their necks.
The religious activities of the Brahmins and Vaisyas diverges from those of other classes in the city of Cuddapah. The number of festivals celebrated by the Brahmins are almost twice the number of those celebrated by all the other classes together. Apart from the thirty festivals common to the Brahmins and Vaisyas, and the agricultural, weavers and other castes, the Brahmins and Vaisyas celebrate a number of festivals like the twenty four Ekadasi and the elaborate special sectarian ritual complexes. No other caste performs as many daily rituals as those performed by the highest religious class of Brahmins and Vaisyas.

Further, both the Brahmins and the Vaisyas incur heavy expenditure on the celebration of the festivals in a year. The celebration takes a lot of time, effort and financial resources if one is to fulfill the religious requirements set forth in the sacred texts. The procedures of worship are complicated. The preparations for the worship consume lot of time and extract exacting labour. Materials used in the conduct of rituals are sometimes rare which are to be brought from the nearby forests and hills or procured from distant places. Such materials are costly. For performing certain rituals, journeys are to be made to distant places like Gaya, Kasi, Puri, Kanyakumari, Rameswaram, Dharmsathalam, Pandaripur, Tirupati, Srisailam and so on. Such journeys and pilgrimage involve heavy expenditure. However, not many among the Brahmins and
Vaisyas have fulfilled this requirement because of their economic limitations.

Apart from the cycle of elaborate festivals celebrated every year, there are family centered rites like name-giving ceremonies, tonsuring ceremonies, sacred thread ceremonies, weddings, ceremonies during pregnancy, funerals and feeding on special occasions which are costly ventures. All these are celebrated with so much pomp and festivity and they are so emblematic of the religious way of life of the upper class that they can be celebrated on such a grand scale only by the agricultural castes and weaving castes but not any other caste belonging to the lower.

The most popular kind of religious activity among the Brahmins and Vaisyas is devotional: a much easier path to salvation than meditations or elaborate rituals. A Brahmin priest makes religious readings (purana pathanam) every day. A large number of clean caste people assemble in the portico or front yard of his house to listen to what he reads and interprets. On the other hand there are rich Brahmins and Vaisyas who do not have the time to perform or attend themselves to religious readings or religious ceremonies. They satisfy their conscience by financing religious or ceremonies. This sort of vicarious ritualisation reveals how the traditional religious rituals are modernized by being performed
efficiently by a specialists all alone. The Brahmins working in
the modern sector do not devote longer years to the study of
sanskritic sacred religious texts. Likewise, a Vaisya immersed
in mercantile enterprises pays less attention to the study of
sacred texts. Thus certain religious activities are adopted
to the modern conditions by both the rich Brahmins and wealthy
Vaisyas.

Lower-upper class religious activities:

The lower-upper class religious category includes the high
ranking agricultural castes and the middle ranking
weaver, shepherd, toddy-taper, oil-merchants, artisan and potter
castes Their domestic priests are Brahmins. As such their
religious beliefs and practices in many respects conform to
the textual traditions propagated by the Brahmin Priests.
However, many men and women among them folk, non-intellectual,
oral, little traditional beliefs and practices.

All the caste groups comprising the high class religious
group have no literature of their own. On which they can
depend for the ideal norms they have to follow. What all they
do is to read and understand those texts recommended by their
Brahmin priests and their own spiritual teachers who are well
versed in sacred scriptures. Most of the households keep
Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Bhagavtam not in their sanskrit
original but in Telugu version besides a number of Sumati satakam, Krishna satakam, Venana satakam, Narayana satakam, Ramarama satakam, Kumara satakam are meant for ladies. The verses in the vernacular highlight about high philosophies doctrines, moral values and satirical imports. Women among the Reddis who are little formed in education or not literate, invite old Brahmin women to read these satakams for them and explain the meanings of all these verses in detail. For rendering this kind of service the Brahmin woman receives vegetables, rice, clarified butter, milk, curds, pulses, tubers, and spices from the Reddi women. At the time of making religious vows (vratas) the women among the Reddis, Kammas Razus, Balijas, and Mudaliars invites a Brahmin women to assist them in making the various arrangements for the conduct of the rituals concerned. In this context the Brahmin priest simply conducts the rituals by uttering the relevant hymns. Neither the Brahmin women nor the Brahmin priest returns empty handed; they receive some remuneration in the form of cash and kind. All the raw food materials given to and accept by the Brahmins often include highly preferred, costly foods such as rice, rice flour, sugar, sugar candy, clarified butter, curds, fruits, betel nuts and a variety of spices. These raw foods are preferred, because they can be used readily as a currency in a variety of subsequent transactions.
Unlike the Reddis, Kammas, and Balija women, there are illiterate women among the other castes like the weaver, artisans, toddy-tapper, oil-merchant and other groups who make it a point to go on every week end or on occasions of religious importance to the houses of the Brahmins and didactic portions of sacred texts in a narrative form from the Brahmin women. In all these instances, the Brahmin women interpret the phenomena of nature, society and the world in terms of the creations of God and explain how the children are the gifts of gods and explain and goddesses, and how wealth, property, success, failure, illness, and death all are governed by the will of the divinity. All such interpretations, explanations and narrations induced the illiterate non-Brahmin women to observe a number of ritual performances.

The non-Brahmin women, especially those in the neighbourhood of the Brahmin households, attend the musical recitations performed in the evenings the Brahmins or Vaisyas women either in group or alone in the home. On almost every day some among the non-Brahmin castes like Reddis, Kammas, Balijas, Gandlas, Kamsalis, Kummaris and a few others assemble in temples and conduct Bhajans or sacred musical recitations. Large numbers of men and children gather at such places, and women join towards the end, to see the final proceedings.
conducted in holding the flame of prosperity (haarati) to the deity in the temple.

All the above mentioned non-Brahmin caste are very much oriented to elite religious beliefs and practices because of their direct contact and communication with the upper class religious specialists and their families. Both the males and the females among the non-Brahmin in their respective spheres are ritualistically included. The men, owing to their religious consciousness and different professions, appear to be very much ritualistic in public life. The women, though confined to their respective houses are in no way less ritualistic their male counterparts. In some cases their excel the males. They undertake several religious vows (vratas), conduct musical gatherings in the house, listen to the devotional narrations (harikathas) and attend to the song recitations (bhajans) in the temples. Both men and women often quote the sacred sayings of sages, saints, holy men and women and stories relating to the ideal womanhood of divine personages, practical difficulties in performing this worldly centered activities, the acts of sin (papa), merit (puny) rebirth (punerjanma) duty (karma) righteousness (dearness) dharma) and hell (narakam) and heaven (swargam). When they do not find any reference for their thoughts they quote them as the words of the Brahmin priests and Brahmin womenfolk. The non-Brahmin women and men of these above mentioned caste are
thus ritualistically oriented in their thoughts, actions, and ways of living.

All these non-Brahmin caste people worship several high gods and goddesses like Vishnu, Siva, Rama, Krishna, Narasimha, Lakshmi, and Vinayaka, who are vegetarians many deities like Hanuman, Durga, Balarama, Bhima, Arjuna and several others who are personage of terrible size with great strength and bravery also find a place in the pantheon of these caste groups.

As cultivators the Reddis, Kammas, and Balijas specially working Bhudevi the earth goddess, Vinayaka the god of obstacles and Lakshmi the goddess of wealth. As per the textual explanations and according to the traditions propagated by the Brahmins, the farmers believe that money (dhana) grain (dhaanya) children (santaanam) and property (showbhagyam) are the manifestations of wealth and as such the are the forms of Lakshmi.

The Padmasalis, Thogats, and Kaikolas consider Siva, and Parvati, Vishnu and Lakshmi important to them because these divinities were the primeval weavers. The Gandlas worship Parvati because she taught their ancestors the art of extracting the oil and worship Lakshmi for she taught them the art of selling the oil.
The toddy-tapper caste namely the Edigas have an elaborate mythology depicting how Lord Vishnu in the form of a toddy-tapper helped the first stock of their caste to deal with tapping of juice from the palm and extracting of palm sugar from the juice as the means of livelihood for them. Hence, they specially worship Lord Vishnu.

The Jangams or low rank Saivite priests worship Bava the white bullock who serves as the vehicle of Siva and who came to the earth in human form to establish the pure form of Saivism. Those who were converted gave up meat eating and agreed to dine with, but not to intermarry with, all other Saivites. The Jangama are descendants of non-Brahmin converts and less holier than all Brahmins. They still worship some of the non-vegetarian deities along with the high gods and goddesses they have adopted after conversion to Saivite faith.

The Kamsalis composed of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, stonemasons, and temple builders, claim to be directly descended from the deity Viswakarma, the divine architect and artificer. They worship Viswakarma almost every day before they start working with their material equipment.

The Kummaries worship Lord Siva and Parvati because the latter were their first clientele and those who made the first payment for their wares. The thirsty Parvati for
Siva to provide water to quench her thirst. Siva ran to the Kummāris family collected a pitcher and carried water to fulfill the need of Parvati. In taken of the pitcher provided to him, Lord Siva gave a gold coin. since then the potters started living upon pottery as the primary means of livelihood.

The Chakali and Mangali worship Siva as their caste deities. According to them, they were first serving goddess Parvati and her family. Then she took pity on the human beings and asked her servants to help their fallow human beings. Since then they are serving the different castes and eking out their livelihood. The stone on which they beat the clothes is a representation of bandadevara for whom sacrifices are made on the eve of Ugadi.

All the non-Brahmin caste mentioned supra believe in a number of ghosts, imps and goblins all going under the blanket term namely bhutams. According to their beliefs, they are fierce beings as eaters of flesh. They are the creations of Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva when they were incensed and arranged. All these spirits according to them, are mischievous malignant and caretakerous haunting cemeteries, and devouring human beings. Many diseases and misfortunes are attributed to these spirits.
There are a few little traditional deities whom all these caste people worship. These deities include Poleramma, Gangamma, Ankalamma, and Saptamatrikas. Animal and bird sacrifices are offered to these deities. On specific days in a week, like Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday people offer vegetable substances to these deities and seeking their help in the welfare of their homes.

The daily routines of these different caste groups certain of uniformity in their daily activity pattern. In general, the morning is spent in personal and professional ritual performances, the afternoon in retirement and the evening either in the religious recitations or visits to temples and shrines or relatives or both. Under the inspiration of textual ideals and the religious readings of their priests and families, of priests they make occasional pilgrimages to Rameswaram, Tirupati, Kalahasti, Kanchipuram, Kasi, Puri, Gaya, Srisailam and undergo sacred baths in the rivers at these places.

All these caste groups perform not more than thirty festivals in a year, which is far less a figure compared to those followed by the Brahmans and Vaisyas. Their ceremonialism manifested in the observance of daily worship, festivals, pilgrimages, recitations, sacred baths, and religious vows is comparatively less complicated and involves less
expenditure than that of the Brahmins and Vaisyas. The Brahmins and Vaisyas do not worship the little traditional deities although they worship some of the natural objects. On the other hand, the non-Brahmin castes of agriculturists, weavers, fishers and so on worship some little traditional deities because the environment they cope with is largely different from the environment dealt with by the Brahmins and Vaisyas. The dialect of the agricultural, weavers, fishers, oil-merchant, potter, artisan and other castes under consideration is a dialect which is difficult from the dialect of the Brahmins and Vaisyas. The differences between the two dialects shows how the latter includes a vocabulary and grammatical form of address of terms denoting respect and hospitality, a vocabulary that frequently denotes the great traditional deities, intellectual traditions and philosophical symbols. The Vaisyas stand in marked contrast with those of the other castes. More men and women among the non-Brahmin castes are illiterates in contrast with all the men and women among the Brahmins and Vaisyas who are literates. The priest of Brahmins and Vaisyas are Brahmins but the priests of non-Brahmins high middle rank castes are Brahmins. The Brahmins and Vaisyas ceremonies is often expressed in the distant pilgrimages they make, in their attendance at religious fairs, and in their receiving of gifts from their clientele namely the non-Brahmin high and middle rank castes. Among the high and middle
rank non-Brahmin caste groups, the influence of great traditional elements is more than that of the little traditional elements.

Even in matters of devotional activities, they show patterns of semblance and difference with the upper class religious groups. Devotional groups among the lower upper class are either homogenous or heterogeneous groups; each includes members of a particular caste or members of different castes. Most of them are composed of a number of different castes. The ideal of equality in these religious activities is acclaimed. After the completion of singing the devotional songs there is no hard and fast rule that a person of a higher caste like Reddi, Razu, Balija or Kamma alone has to after the flame of prosperity to the deity in whose name the songs were sung. This is not so in the case of the devotional group of Brahmins, a Brahmin alone performs the rituals in honour of the deity. In the case of the Vaisyas devotional group, either a Vaisya or a Brahmin priest who is invited for the purpose performs the rituals in honour of the deity. The songs sung by the devotional groups of Brahmins and Vaisyas include many composed in Sanskrit or high literary Telugu by Brahmin specialists but those sung by the devotional groups of the lower upper class members mostly include those composed in high literary Telugu by non-Brahmin specialists. Like the rich Brahmins and Vaisyas, rich Reddis, rich Kamma, and Balijas
satisfy their religious conscience by financing religious readings or ceremonies which they do not have the time to perform or to attend themselves.

Lower class religious activities:

The lower class religious category of social groups includes the unclean castes of jogi, Jogala, and Pitchiguntla, the tribal groups of Yerukala and Yanadi and Sugali and the untouchable castes of Mala and Madiga. Their religious beliefs and practices belong mostly to the folk categories, hence they bear little semblance to the more formal religious observances of the upper and the lower upper classes.

Their pantheon includes a number of little traditional deities and a panoply of spirits besides a few great traditional deities unlike the castes in the upper class religious category who are high ranking non-vegetarians, the castes included in the lower class religious category are low ranking non-vegetarians. All eat pork and the untouchables eat even take beef. As low ranking pork and beef eating castes they tend to worship many of the meat eating and sometimes terrifying mother-goddess (ammathalli). These goddesses, said to be forms of Parvati, the consort of Lord Siva, are assigned the task of chastising humanity when 'sin is up'. They do so by bringing epidemic diseases such as small
pox, cholera, and eye diseases. The mother goddesses and kān̄ikaḷamma. The unclean castes of Jogi and Pitchiguntla worship not only all these mother goddesses, but also the great traditional deities of Siva, Parvati, Vishnu, and Lakshmi, Lord Venkateswara. The Yanadi worship Chenchamma, a tribal girl whom Lord Narasimha married when he was roaming aimlessly after killing the demon king of Hiranyaksha. This is a clear case of sanskritization. The Yerukala worship goddess Padmavathi they owe their sustenance to her who married Lord Venkateswara. The Sugalis are the great devotees of Lord Venkateswara after making their pilgrimages to the temple of Venkateswara at Tirupati. The Madigas never aarundhati, the wife of sage Vasishtha whom they consider as the daughter of a Madiga. Enchanted by her good conduct and character, sage Vasishtha married her. The Mala say that they are born out of the menstrual lineage of goddess Parvati, hence they have became untouchables. Even though they are 'dear to goddess Parvati' they are not dear to the society.'

Their festivals are few. Festivals conducted in honour of the mother-goddesses involves the sacrifice of buffaloes, sheep, goat and fowls. They have a special folklore justifying their association with animal sacrifices. Their life-cycle ceremonies are not costly ventures. They make pilgrimages to other places as close as the next villages or a little away as Tirupati, Kalahasti, and Gandi all situated within a radius of one hundred
and fifty miles. Except the Malas and Madigas, all other caste groups among have not formed into devotion groups. The Malas and Madigas have their separate devotional groups. A democratization of Hindu ritualism is taking place via the radio and cinema. Thus the lower castes are no longer prohibited from having contact with the great tradition of Hinduism.

Thus, the beliefs and practices of the lower class religious people in the city of Cuddapah is distinct from those of the lower upper and the upper class religious categories of caste populations. The lower class religious categories of caste populations. The lower class religious categories has woven its ritual complex mostly around little traditional deities and to a little extent around a few great traditional deities. It lacks acquaintance with many of the ideal norms, hence it relies upon verbal interpretations of these by the upper class priests, by the agricultural, weaver and other castes. It has its own priests who are illiterates and do not understand the formal style of the upper class priests. Unlike the lower-upper class, the lower class cannot directly communicate with the upper class priests. The lower class priests are completely cut off from direct communication with upper class priests and elite learning. What little knowledge they possess about great traditional deities is at best a distorted
form of it. In style and content, their folklore is different from those of the formal textual adaptations of the lower-upper and the upper classes of caste groups.

MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND OTHERS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Religious activities of Muslims:

Among the Muslims, the Sunnis and Shias stand in rough comparison with the Brahmins and Vaisyas amongst the Hindus. Like the Brahmins and Vaisyas among the Hindus, the Sunnis and Shias among the Muslims comprise the upper class of Islamic religious category. The Sunnis are more traditional-bound the Shias; the former are priests and the latter are businessmen.

The Sunnis, as strict followers of textual and intellectual traditions, are very much in doctrinated into the sacred writings. They fulfill the ideal norms and tend to set the pace for the rest of the Muslims. In accordance with the religious doctrines, they follow the faith (imaun) and practice (deen) in their totality. The principal tenets of the faith (imaun) are that there is only one god and he is Allah, that Mohammed is His last and greatest prophet and that there is a paradise (bheest) for the faithful and a hell (dozak) for the ungodly. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are recognized as prophets who introduced in succession new laws and revelations till all were finally superseded by those of Mohammed. The
practice (deen) is of five kinds: to learn the confession of faith (kalima) which says "there is no god but god, and Mohammed is His prophet" and to repeat it; to pray (namaz) five times a day, to fast (roza) in the month of Ramzan (maheena); to give five per cent of income to charity (zakaut) if wealthy, and to go on a pilgrimage (haj) to Mecca, if wealthy.

The Sunnis scrupulously follow the three principal articles of the faith (imaun) and the five kinds of practice (deen). They read, understand and interpret the sacred texts which comprise the repositories of the ideal beliefs and practices. Their tongue contains many standardized Arabic words. They pray five times at appointed hours: in the morning, preferably after drawn but before sunrise in the early afternoon, in the late afternoon, immediately after sunset and finally at night preferably before retiring so that it becomes the last act of the day. Each prayer has its specified number of acts of devotion (rakaat), requiring standing, bowing down, prostration and sitting in a prescribed manner and in a designated order. The preparation for prayer includes several steps for outward purification. In this regard partial and general ablution or bathing on Fridays and on some other special occasions. The Shias usually make prayer three times a day, early morning, early afternoon and late afternoon. However, like Sunnis, they observe partial and general ablution as mandatory
for preparation for daily prayers and Friday and occasional prayers respectively.

The Sunnis as well as the Shias have common divinities: Allah as the God, angels of God (ferishta), prophets of God (ambiya) and apostles (rusul) or messengers (mursalaum) of God. In addition to these common divinities, they never their respective sectarian founders: four among the Sunnis and twelve among the Shias. Both have differential sectarian beliefs and practices. Nonetheless, the Shias respect the Sunnis because the latter are the priests of the former and depend on their services in all social and religious matters. There is thus direct communication between the Sunnis and the Shias and as such many textual traditions are adopted by the Shias.

As priests, the Sunnis carry on several spiritual activities; they recite the sacred writings; interpret the sacred texts, deliver sermons to worshipers, perform special rites for families at marriages, death and so on, and engage in prayer or contemplation. Several of them live in seclusion in the Masjids. The Shias being followers of secular activities always respect the priests. The priests, as devout Muslims, use their rosaries (mumkahs) ever at hand while walking or sitting and say the name of Allah as they move each bead. A few among the Shias use rosaries and two of them have put rosaries set in
gold round their necks. Among both the Sunnis and Shias, the men perpetuate the ideal religious norms while the women, especially the older ones many of whom have no formal education and intellectual basis of religious beliefs are zealous in fulfilling the religious norms. Such women rely upon the verbal interpretations of the men and priests.

The Sunnis, unlike the Shias spend more time, more labour and more finances on the fulfillment of the exact religious requirements set forth in the sacred writings. However, a few could make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the most sacred city of Muslims because they are poor to meet the heavy costs of such a journey. On the other hand, many of the Shias who are rich have made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Both the Sunnis and Shias show diversity in dietary restrictions. To a Sunni it is forbidden to consume intoxicating beverages, canion, blood, pork, and meat from animals not killed in a prescribed fashion and over which any other name than that of Allah has been pronounced at the time to of slaughtering. All these rituals reinforce belief in the traditions are not as intellectual as those in the Shias. Both the Labbas and the Dudekulas still maintain some of their pre-conversion traditions. The Dudekulas and the Labbas as well as the Sunnis and Shias believe in a number of spirits (jinns).
Religious activities of Christians:

As already explained at the time of examining the social and occupational ecology, the Christians still practice their pre-conversion religious beliefs and practices. The Reddis among them form a separate class in contrast with others who are mostly the converts from the Malas and Madigas.

Among the Reddis and others, there are Catholics and Protestants, there are Baptists and Pentecost followers. On every Sunday they visit their respective churches. They offer prayers before taking food and at the time of going to bed.

They faithfully repeat the ten commandments of God. They celebrate the Christian festivals of Good Friday, Christmas and New Year Day. yet, they celebrate many of the Hindu festivals, worship many of the Hindu gods and goddesses of great and little traditional character. Several of them are literates and are familiar with the textual tenets. However, pre-conversion background has not yet faded from the religious picture of all these Christians. The illiterate masses among the Christians simply follow the literate Christians in matters of religious beliefs and practices.
Religious activities of Marwadis and others:

The Marwadis comprise a merchant group: Their religious activities are similar to those of the Vaisyas amongst the Hindus. They are more prosperous than the Vaisyas. They denote huge sums of to temples, hospitals and schools to gain the good will of the divinities. Like the Vaisyas, they too follow several intellectual traditions besides satisfying their religious or ceremonies which they cannot perform by or attend themselves.

The Marwadis are the followers of Mahavira, the founder of Jainism. As followers of Mahavira and Jainism, they discount the Brahmin traditions as the most important paths to salvation. However, there is a gap between what they believe and what they practise. They virtually follow many Brahminic textual traditions, celebrate many Hindu festivals and attend the religious discourses of Hindus. They even finance the Hindu religious readings and ceremonies to be made on their half. They celebrate Mahavir Jayanti or the birth day of Mahavir with great grandeur. They regularly attend their temple constructed recently.

The Malayalis are Hindus and Muslims and the Tamilians and Christians. The religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus amongst them are similar to those of the Hindus amongst the Telugus. Their specific religious traditions of the corresponding castes like Brahmins, Reddis, Mudaliars, and
untouchable castes. They visit local temples and shrines and offer their prayers to the deities on all important occasions and festival days. They too celebrate some of their festivals in the city of Cuddapah.

The Muslims among the Malayalis are Moplahs from Kerala. They mix up with the local Muslims and attend the mosques every day and on special days, they celebrate their festivals along with local Muslims. Their religious beliefs and practices are similar to those of the Labbas.

The Christians among the Tamilians belong to Protestant and Catholic faith. They attend local churches and celebrate all Christian festivals along with the local Christians.

**LIFE-CYCLE RITUALS**

Life cycle rituals among the Hindus:

The Hindus regard the life cycle rituals as part and parcel of the duty and morality of each caste group. Performance of these rituals alone can make an individual develop according to the religious idioms of a caste group.

The Brahmins and Vaisyas comprising the upper religious class undergo thirteen sacraments (samskaras) as important stages of their life cycle rituals. The first sacrament is
Garbha dana or the sacrament as a result of which wife becomes pregnant. The couple unite at an auspicious moment fixed by the Brahmin priest. Such a union assures, according to local belief, good offspring. The second one is Purusavana. It is performed in the third or fourth month after pregnancy for getting a story and handsome child. The third one is Sreemantanam. It is performed in the fourth month of pregnancy to get a good offspring. The fourth one is Jatakarama or birth-day ceremony. The horoscope of the child is compiled and its life events are predicted. The fourth one is Namakaranam or naming ceremony. A name according to the horoscope is given to the child. This name may have some ancestral names and names of lineage deities as appendages. The sixth sacrament is called Nishkramana. In this the child is taken out of the house for the first time and is made to have a glance at the sun. This is done in the fourth month of the child. The seventh sacrament is Anna Praasana or the first-feeding ceremony performed during the sixth month of the child. The child becomes fit to take food.

The eight one is choodakarma or the tonsure ceremony. This is done in between the first and third year of the child. The ninth one is Karnabheda or ear peircing ceremony. It is performed to enable the child to wear ornments. The tenth one is Vidyaramtha or starting of education. It is considered necessary to start the education of the child. The eleventh one
is Upanayanam or the initiation ceremony. In this a Brahmin wears a sacred thread to indicate his second birth. He becomes a twice-born (dvija) one. The twelfth one is Vivaham or marriage, though the sacrament of marriage, the individual enters the family life. The final sacrament is Antyeshti. It is performed after the death of a person. In this, the dead body of the person is burnt in accordance with prescribed methods and ways. All these sacraments conform to the great traditions of the sacred texts.

Among the Brahmins as well as the vaisyas, the puberty ceremony of a girl is equated with the initiation ceremony of a boy. On reaching puberty, a girl is isolated for about seven days or till the menstrual flow lasts, then rituals of purification are performed and finally the girl is brought into the normal fold. Just as the sacred thread ceremony or initiation ceremony entitles a boy to enter the sacrament of marriage.

In the lower-upper class the same rituals appear with different names and with some difference in their context. All in the lower-upper class perform the sacrament of garbhadanam. Purusavnam is absent among them. However, they perform Sreemantham which is followed by Jataka karma and Namakaranam. Nishkramanam in these castes goes by the name Nidracheyatam or change of sleeping place of the child. Anna Prasana, is
performed by all. Choodakarma gasby the name Kesakhandana and Kārnabheda goes by the name Chevulu kuttadam. Vidyarambham goes by the name Aksharabhyaṣam. All artisan and oil-merchant caste members besides those of Jangam and Satani undergo upanayanam ceremony. This ceremony is absent among the Reddis, Balijas, Kammas, Razua, and Mudaliars. All perform the next sacrament of Vivha under the same title. The final one namely Antyeshti is performed under the title of Antyakriya.

The lower religious class performs all the above mentioned rituals with reference to the lower upper religious class. However, unlike some in the lower-upper class none in the lower class performs the Upaṇayanam ceremony. Likewise many in the lower class do not perform Aksharabhyaṃ. Furthermore the absence of great traditional elements to a considerable degree in the life cycle rituals of the lower class is in contradiction with the heavy presence of great traditional elements in the lifecycle rituals of the lower upper class. Aksharabhyaṃ is important for both men and women in the upper class, but to men not to women in the lower-upper class and to none in the lower class. In all castes, regardless of their religious class status the puberty, marriage, and nuptials contains elaborate symbolism dedicated to the promotion of the bride's fertility.
Life cycle rituals among the other groups:

Among the Muslims, the life cycle rituals include birth ceremony, naming ceremony, cradling, transuring, circumcision (sunniti), marriage (nikha), and death ceremonies. All these rituals are performed regardless of sectarian differences. However, among the Dudekulas and Labbas several pre-conversion caste elements persist in all their present life cycle rituals.

Among the Christians also, the life cycle rituals are similar to those of their pre-conversion days. The naming and marriage ceremonies show some similarities amongst all but all other ceremonies show differences according to the divergence of the pre-conversion caste customs.

The Malayalis and the Tamilians perform the life cycle rituals as per their pre-migration customs.

Functions of life cycle rituals:

The life cycle rituals or rites of passage in Hindu, Muslims, Christians and others in the city of Cuddapah served different functions. They symbolically mark the transition of life of an individual from one social status to another, acting as a public announcement that someone is not what they were before the ritual. They acquaint people with the roles
they are to perform in their new status and motivating them to perform them well. As the identity of an individual changes he or she is treated in accord with the new identity.

Some status passages are considered more significant than others, both for the person who goes from one identity to another and for those who make up his social world. This, the cradling ceremony is considered less significant status passage than the marriage ceremony. The ceremonies of puberty, marriage and death are often the most elaborate Funerary rites indicate that death is a rite of passage. Rituals of the first stage in which grief is demonstrated by family, lineage, and friends mark loss of the social person. Rituals indicating the second stage are concerned with the soul of the dead and the corpse itself which is believed to be dangerous. Ritual marking the third stage, the deceased is richly incorporated into its own status, perhaps as an angel in heaven or as reunited with ancestors.

Life cycle rituals serve to reinforce the values on which the castes, caste-like groups are founded and restore the equilibrium of the social order. They enable each population to deal appropriately with the changes that occur in its own social world. Thus there are individual are carried out wherever a status passage occurs within the caste or caste-like populations in the city of Cuddapah.
Number and diversity of festivals:

Table-2 shows the different festivals celebrated by the Hindus, Muslims, and Christians the local month during which they are celebrated and the importance of these festivals. The festival maxima occurs in the month of January-February. This is the season when crops are ready to June, more than thirteen festivals are performed. This is an off season for agriculturists, considerable leisure time for farm labourers a period of busy with their looms a period of plenty for fishermen to catch fish in the tank waters that have almost dried up, and an auspicious season for weddings, as well as making pilgrimages.

The winter tries to show its maximum severity in January and records by the middle of February giving place to the summer. During May and June summer is severe and it is a period of vacation in schools, colleges, offices, and certain government offices. Most of the temples in the city also organize several religious activities in the form of story nations (harikathas) and song recitations (bhajanas).

Functions of festivals:

Table-4 gives some idea about the functions of different Hindus, Christians and others festivals. Festivals are of great
Table 2
Distribution of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian Festivals in A Year their Time and Their Importance to the Inhabitants of Guddapah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Festival</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Importance of the Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bhogi</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Farewell to winter; entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shankranthi</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Thanks giving, interfaith, non violence in agriculture; festival of peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Panuvula Pandaga</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Festival for the welfare of the cattle; an agricultural festival; entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kanuma Pandaga</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Worshipping the women who died in happy married life; entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Yadrali Pandaga</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Festival of play and gay; more entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mukkoti Ekadaai</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Holy bath to earn merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Venkateswara Oolasvam</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Festival in honour of the God of the city; Community welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Polaramma Jatra</td>
<td>Feb-March</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>Community welfare; fulfillment of vows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rathampetami</td>
<td>Feb-March</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>For earning personal merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Silvativri</td>
<td>Feb-March</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Festival of Siva; might; reinforcement of Religious norms and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ugadi</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>New Year's Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. GANGAMMA JATRA</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Community welfare; fulfillment of vows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Skanda shaatari</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Birth of Skanda; Victory of Good over evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Nanmanjji Jyanati</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Birth of Hermaphrodite; Goodness of Loyalty to Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Brea Rams Navani</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>2-11 days</td>
<td>Birth of Ramsa; Incorporation of Vishnu; celebration of good for the destruction of evil; reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Tumbarunjhyati</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Birth of Nama; Incorporation of Vishnu; celebration of good for the destruction of evil; reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Holakalaporni</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Sprouting of crops; appeal to the gods for the onset of monsoon; an agricultural festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Vyasaaporni</td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Birth of Vyasa; reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Cowri vrata</td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Religious Vow; worship of Cowri by unmarried girls appeal to the goddess to make available a suitable match and happy married life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Nagula Groviti</td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Snake worship; fertility rite performed by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Varalakshmi vrata</td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Religious Vow; worship of boar-grazing Lakshmi; for wealth, prosperity and happy married life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Festival Name</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sravana Pournima</td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>Religious vow for longevity of womanhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Thidiya Namalu</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>Religious vow for happy married life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Vinayaka Chavithi</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>Worship of god of obstruction for removal at obstacle in the coming year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Karthika Maha</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>Birth of Lord Krishna; incarnation of Lord Vishnu; victory of good over evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Vijayadashami</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>Worship of Durga; worship of the triad at important shrines in victory of good over evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mahalaya Amavani</td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>Religious vow for the welfare of the individual and family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dussehra</td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>Worship of Lord Krishna; victory of good over evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Buddha Purnima</td>
<td>Nov-Dec</td>
<td>Religious vow: Lighting of lamps symbolizing the arrival of Kartik month, a month of full bloom; prosperity of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Datta Jayanti</td>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>Birth of Lord Datta; incarnation of the Trinity; reinforcement of religious norms and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Vatara Asvini</td>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>Religious vow for the prosperity of woman; reinforcement of vows and norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>All the 26 Ekadashi in a year</td>
<td>Jan-Dec</td>
<td>Sectarian observances; reinforcement of religious vows and norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Navratri</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Mahaveer Jayanti</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>Birth of Mahaveer; reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
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<td>Malayali</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Onam</td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>New year day for Malayali</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ayyappa Utsavam</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>Religious vow; reinforcement of religious norms and vows</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tamilian</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Chittirai</td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>New Year Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Pongal</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>Same as Bhogi, Gokhrai, Kannu and Yedadi Pendasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Hazrat Ali Imam Din</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>Dawning of good</td>
</tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Ramzan</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>During Ramzan month worship in the form of fasts reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Safar</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>Recovery of Profit from illness women come out of seclusion and geto picnics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Bekkrid</td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>Reinforcement of religious norms and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Moharram</td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>New Year Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>New Year Day</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>New Year Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>New Year Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Birth of Christ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
significance in the life of city inhabitants. They are calendrical rites associated with events that recur in the city in question: annually, seasonally and monthly. Every month there are certain festivals like Ekadasi which the Brahmans and the Vaisyas observe. Like many festivals occur in specific seasons: spring, winter, and rainy seasons; agriculturally off season ad and leisure time period. Bhogi indicates farewell to winter. Big fires are made to warm the bodies of men and women and thereby indicate that the winter season has reached its peak and it is going to withdraw soon. Ugadi indicates not only New Year but also the arrival of spring (vasanta kalam). Molkalapoorinama symbolizes the commencement of monsoon. All these festivals besides sankranti that symbolize a harvest Pasuvula pandaga that highlights the connection between prosperity of cattle and prosperity of cattle and prosperity of farmers, Vijaya dasami symbolizing the important of material equipment in carrying out different occupations. There are also festivals concerned with social aspects: marriage of girls, seclusion of women and married life of women; fertility of women, and general prosperity of women. Symbolising all these aspects are the festivals concerning with religious vows and others. Many form of dramas, ballads, puppet shows and street corner plays. Thus the agro-economic cycle, which is partially dependent on the climatic regime, considerable time periods for the conduct
of religious activities, and the relief from hard work are related to the occurrence of maximum number of festivals between January and June in the year.

Another interesting feature is the predominant numbers of festivals of the Hindus over those of Muslims and Christians. Amongst the Hindus, the upper-class celebrates all these festivals the lower upper classes almost thirty festivals and the lower class only to three festivals, namely Poleramma Jatra, Gangamma Jatra and Nagula Chaviti. Further, the festivals in honour of great traditional deities are far more in number than these conducted in honour of little traditional deities. Just as most of the great traditional festivals occur between January and June, the two most dominant little traditional festivals occur in the same period.

In the same way, most of the festivals of Muslims and Christians occur between January and June. Regardless of their sectarian affiliations all Muslims and Christians observe these festivals. On the other hand, among the Hindus, certain festivals have sectarian bias. The Ekadasi came under this category. Most of the festivals meant for Hindu women occur between June and September. The single festival meant for Muslim women occurs in the local north between April and May. Christians have no festivals meant for their women. Even among the Hindus, a large number of festivals meant for women is
concerned with upper class and lower class women and a just
festival naming Nagulachavithi which is also the concern of
the upper to lower class women is concerned with the lower class
women festivals are concerned with community welfare. The
Venkateswaraswami Utasavam, Gangamma Jatra, Poleramma Jatza fall
under this class of festivals. Many of the festivals indicate the
birth of divine personages like Rama, krishna, Narasimha,
Skanda, Hanuman and Datta.

Many of the festivals celebrated in the city of Cuddapah are
also celebrated in many villages, towns and cities in India.
Sivarathri, Hanuman Jayanti, Narasimha jayanti Vyasapoornima,
Varalakshmi Vratas, and Deepavali are celebrated in almost all
parts of India. Likewise everywhere Muslims celebrate Ramzan,
Bakrid, Mohurrum and Christians celebrate Good Friday and
Christians. But the content of these festivals vary from place
to place, region to region, one caste group to another caste
group in India.

Some festivals such as Gangamma jatra and Poleramma jatza
have regional importance. They are found celebrated all over
Andhra. The only festival with local significance is the
Venkateswaraswami Utasavam It is celebrated in honour of the
city's patron god namely Lord Venkateswara. The city god is
considered the protector of the city. His position in the
local pantheon is analogous to that held by the city's supreme
officer in this world. Lord Venkateswara is worshipped by the whole city populace for the latter welfare.

Apart from the festival honouring the city's god, there is a year-round panorama of festivals celebrated in honour of several great traditional deities and a few little traditional deities of these festivals some like Poleramma Jatra, Gangamma Jatra, Ugadi, Ramanavami and Deepavali a variety of entertainments. The entertainments include cultural performances like religious dances, dances performed as an act of devotion, games or sports held in the honour of gods. So, it is in the case of Christians and New Year Day. Friday, Christmas and New Year Day and the Marwadis festival of Mahaveerajayanti, and the Malayalis festivals of Onam and Ayyappa.

Nonetheless, there are some Hindu festivals during which the women are on fast. Among the Muslims, Ramzan is a month-long festival devoted to worship in the form of fasting. During this whole period, no one is allowed to eat, smoke, or drink between sunrise and sunset. Only small children, old people and the infirm are exempted from such fasting. The month of fasting culminates in enthusiastic feasting and merriment.

Whatever are the distinction of these festival, they all serve different purposes. Validation and reinforcement of religious norms and values is one of the most obvious
functions of the festivals. The very ritual procedures and performances associated with festivals like Sivarathri, Sri Rama Navami, Vijayadasami, Deepavali, Mahaveer Jayanti, Ayyappa Utasavam, Ramzan, Bakrid and Good Friday, allude to —group values in conventional statements remaining the people of the commitments. The great procession during the festival reveal the significance of the religious organization and remained people of the role of gods. Likewise, the authority of the local leaders representing the city, is reinforced through their association with religions. The various cultural performances arranged on these occasions give expressions to the importance of righteousness (dharma), duty (karma), pious life, observance of social norms and values. Thus festivals validate people's customs and values.

The festivals provide reassurance and feelings of security in the face of the psychological disturbances of everyday life. People are faced with sickness non-availability of a suitable mate, childlessness, death, hunger and many other physical sensations. Moreover, they worry about the possibility and probability of those things for themselves and those they love, and physical discomfort is translated thereby into psychological discomfort namely anxiety fear. They fail to get a mate; their spouses fail to conceive; they fail in the pursuit of their desires. The various religious vows comfort then in that they feel that they are doing something to
overcome their problems, and the praying persons who have put their problems in the hands of divinities feel comforted and renewed. Many festivals like Gowri Vrata, Varalakshmi Vratas, Sravana poornima, Suddula Pandaga Mukoti Ekadasi and Ugadi.

Some of the festivals reassure one by providing a sense of having conformed to the requirements of powers beyond, with a consequent feeling that all will be well. To cite an instance, Ugadi marks the beginning of the year, and the rains. Each rain (kaartis) lasts for about two weeks, according to the phases of the moon, and is supposed to have specific properties. During one rain, hard thundershowers may be expected; during another a drizzle. Normally, the rains come on time and what falls is just right for the growing rice crop. Religious worship at Ugadi and throughout the agricultural season is directed at purification of the worshipers and appeasement of the deities in the hope that memory of the worshipers' many sins will be forgotten and that there will be righteousness (dharma) and good rains.

Festivals also provide reassurance in the sense that they are ready made solutions to problems that are poorly understood and difficult to solve. In the face of danger and uncertainty it is comforting to cross oneself, utter a standardized prayer (stotrams), recite sacred hymns and poems (slokas and padyamas)
listen to holy stories and narrations (harikathas) or sing a song (bhajan) with the group.

Festivals lend cohesion to the city community. For example, Venkateswaraswami Utasavam, Vinayaka chaviti, Deepavali, Sivarathri, Vijayadasami, Poleramma Jatra, Gangamma Jatra enable the populace to participate in city-wide activities. The Brahmins and all other cleans castes are active participants in the total situation while the untouchable remain as alms receives and jubilant spectators. Simply the enjoyment of doing things together provide the participant with a sense of belonging. The festivals permit the people to relax temporarily some of the rigid structures upon relationships between the sexes and between the traditional classes. Men and women, high and low castes, intellectuals and lay men mix up. Festival celebrations have there the function of unifying the groups.

Just as the festivals create and maintain social solidarity, they also create and maintain divisions. In a city population sub-divided into multiple social groups on the basis of religion, there may be conflict. There are Hindus and Muslims in Cuddapah. Many times conflict arose between these two major religious groups.
There are also social divisions among the Hindus, Muslims and Christians: Saivites and Vaishnavites among the Brahmins, Beris and Komatis among the Vaisyas, Shias and Sunnis among the Muslims, Protestants and Catholics among the Christians. These religious divisions are institutionalized. There are separate festivals meant for Saivaites and Vaishnavites; even among the Vaishnavites there are separate festivals for the Vaikhanasas, Sri Vaishnavas, and Madhawas. As the religious divisions are institutionalized, the festivals not only demonstrate group solidarity but also perpetuate group diversity. However, festivals require a comparative absence of divergence, conflict and enmity. Since full participation in a ritual performance is in some measure an act of voluntary good will, the sine quo non of a successful festival is a kind of universal good will. Any festival meant for the whole city community can be spoiled by refusal to participate in the festival comes to a halt until the elders, who are always present at important festivals, solicit the participation of the parties concerned. This happened in Cuddapah in 1972 when two important leaders heading opposite camps never turned up at the Venkateswara Swami festival when the arrangements were in full swing. The trustees, the priests and even the informal leaders had to approach both the leaders and request them to participate in the festival and make it a success. The need for peace in the celebrations was so great that the two enemies
cooperated with way appearance of amity. The festival forced them to exhibit peaceful behaviour. As both the parties demonstrated amity, they were reluctant to be the first to commit a subsequent breach. Within a year these sworn enemies could become good friends. The reputation of the city brightens up if it celebrates its festivals without creating any scene of disputes. Another factor that keeps conflict within bounds is the belief that disaster to the community will surely follow if a festival is not performed regularly.

Finally, festivals provide entertainment for the city population. Especially on the festival days of Pasuvula pandaga, Kanuma pandaga, Yanadi pandaga, Sri Rama Navami, Krishnashtami, Vijayadasami, Deepavali, and Venkateswara Utasavam several cultural performances in the form of Harikathas (narration of diverse stories), Bhajans (singing of devotional songs), Kustees (wrestling matches), drama competitions, music competitions dance programmes, puppet shows, religious discourses, gathering of poets and mimicry shows. Rich landlords, businessmen, and merchant groups within the city make large donations for conducting the festivals and arranging cultural performances during festival times. In addition, middle class households also contribute cash. All alike contribute cooperation. Weeks of preparation required for the festival make the elders, priests and temple trustees busy. Therefore every large scale festival is arranged with great care and
adequate funds. Cultural performances besides sports and games held at festivals provide entertainment and new wonders in the arts of the populations in and around the city of Cuddapah. For the very poor, these provide opportunities to witness dramas, to hear music, to see dances, and to enjoy other divisions. The city environment is not completely divorced from the traditional religious sphere or from the sphere of customary arts.

The festivals also have important economic functions. Markets and fairs spring up in the open spaces around the temples because large gatherings of people for the festival help interchange between buyer and seller. The festival days are also the local holidays. Festival holidays are also the chief market days. The artisans bring their artistic products for sale. The businessmen and the merchants keep their shops full of commodities. New items acquired are displayed just outside the shop to attract the customers. Rich and middle class people make contributions to the festival fund in the hope of gaining the good will of the divinities and thereby acquiring more prosperity. On all festival days rich landlords, merchants, groups and caste associations feed people as a means of earning merit. But in ecological terms it is also a means of supporting the landless labour class. The same effect is secured by the custom of providing charity to all who come to
the door or who stretch their palms at the festival places. Charity, whether made available at festivals or at the house door, serves economic as well as religious purposes.

Festivals have important effects in regulating kinship bonds between consanguinal and affinal relatives. There is a custom of inviting the relatives namely brothers, sisters, maternal uncles, paternal aunts, daughters, sons-in-law and so forth to all important festival celebrations such as Ugadi, Sankranti, Venkateswara Swami Utasavam, Gangamma Jatra, Poleramma Jatra, Vijayadasami, and Deepavali. Every house has its own invites. According to local thought, festivals are pointless if the guests fail to show up. Specific gifts to be given to the young people are offered during such visits. Choicest foods are prepared for themselves and for the guests. Maternal and paternal relatives renew their contacts in an atmosphere of ritual celebrations. Existing bonds get strengthened. Festival occasions thus serve as major vehicles for strengthening the existing kinship bonds and for reinforcing the relationships between the city and its hinterland villages and towns.

Festival occasions provide a context for city rural relationships and for regional homogeneity. Drama competitions, wrestling matches, music programmes and so on involve teams of artists and specialists from different villages, towns and
cities within a radius of about 200 miles. Teams of sportsmen come from different places within the region to participate in the matches. Large populations from many places in the hinterland reach the city to receive free food and alms. Hard times have a tendency to dry up the sources of charity, yet people with a strong desire to accumulate meritorious deeds, totally do not ignore their charities; they offer less than what they usually used to offer on all such occasions. During festival celebrations large contingents of police personal are kept in the city. Policemen and officials try to suppress or reduce the possible conflicts. Thus the festivals provide a context for the city-rural, city-urban relationships within Rayalaseema, one of the regions of Andhra Pradesh.

Finally, the festivals also disseminate information about the proper conduct of ritual activities. They socialize the individuals into belief and commitment to a particular social universe. The purpose of festivals is to make offerings to the deities in exchange for supernatural support of human activities. Properly conducted festivals, according to local belief, have a compelling effect on deities. They also provide a framework for the performance of god deeds. They serve to structure the points of disagreement and provide a common ground which all of the participants accept as valid for the entire city community.
MAGICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Nature of magical activities:

In the city of Cuddapah, magical beliefs and practices exist in all classes, the upper, the lower-upper and the lower classes of religious populations, amongst the Hindus and Muslims and among the Christians and their sub-divisions. Theoretically, religion refers to those beliefs and actions which are concerned with ultimate matters, whereas magic is more empirical, being directed to the solution of every day, mundane, problems. Religion is concerned with sacred and magic with profane. Analytically, magic and religion are separable entities. However, in the real world, they merge or overlap with each other. Actually, magical rites are frequently given justification in the sacred writings of all religious groups of Cuddapah.

Types of magical activities:

The magical practices of the inhabitants of Cuddapah may be classified into several categories: preventive, predictive, productive and destructive. Productive or preventive magic is employed to protect the people, crops and cattle against natural elements, occult powers and spirits. In this regard specific rituals are performed to call upon supernatural beings and to control forces that appear to be unpredictable, such
as these in the natural environment upon which humans depend for survival.

Predictive magic is employed to foresee the future or more usually to determine the proper course of future action. Reading the dreams, horoscopes and lines in the palm, divinating the availability of water at specific places and geomancing comprise important examples of predictive magical activities.

Productive magic includes magic of rain-making, fertility magic, magic of successful or abundant harvesting, and magic associated with successful trade or business.

Destructive magic is employed to reduce the tempo of a spouse or to destroy a person, his cattle, his crop or his whole family.

All people, regardless of their caste and creed, employ different types of magic depending upon their necessity. Whereas many varieties of protective and productive magic are performed by the private individuals themselves or by specialists, all varieties of destructive magic are performed only by the specialists.

Protective magical activities:

Protective magic is employed to guard an individual against the harm to be done by natural or supernatural factors and
forces. Infants are considered more vulnerable to the attacks of evil powers and spirits. During infancy various spirit deterrents like different talismans, charms and amulets are tied around the neck or to the waist thread of an infant.

Protective magic is also used to guard the infants from certain occult powers like evil-eye (dishti) and evil-mouth (peeda-noru). People believe that certain people have evil-eye and evil-mouth. They are the people who are jealous of other's health, beauty and prosperity. Especially children become the most easily susceptible victims of their evil-eye and mouth. A child may refuse to eat food, may refuse to suckle at breast victims of evil-eye. To avert them from that danger, home remedies are adopted. The services of specialists are procured to cure serious cases. One of the home remedies is to put dot on the forehead of the child to avert the evil-eye. Another one is to collect fallen hair, a few chillies and some salt, keep it in the hand, and then wave the hand round the head of the baby to remove the effects of evil-eye. Still another method is to take a big potsherd, fill it with a mixture of lime, turmeric powder and water, and then wave it round the individual to ward off the evil effects.

People having evil-mouth usually make laudatory remarks about the food-habits, good health and activeness of a child. Such laudatory words convey the evil-force from their mouth
against the babies or elders. To ward off the evil effects of such forces, people resort to home remedies as they were done in the case of averting the effects of evil-eye.

Even elders also use a number of protective measures to guard themselves against occult energies and supernatural powers. To safeguard oneself against such powers, people wear amulets and talismans made by magicians. Amulets consist of small pieces of inscribed metal plate, inscribed leaf rolls well protected by an insulation of thread, or inscribed copper sheet placed in a small metal case or leather case. They are either worn around the neck on a cord or tied to the waist-string.

People do not eat food in darkness because in darkness spirits also start devouring the food along with human beings and sometimes even enter their bodies. For this reason, people stop eating food when lights are off. When there is measles in the city, individual households try to prevent it by inserting small branches of margosa into the eves of the house. The margosa boughs act as spirit-replants.

Magic is also employed to protect crops and cattle which are also susceptible to evil-eye and evil-mouth and spirit attacks. People resort to home remedies and special measure to ward off
the effects of evil-eye and evil-mouth against crops and cattle. To protect cattle, threads of hair are tied round their horns, legs and necks. To protect crop, old pots decorated with white and black dots, human skulls of cattle on poles are placed upright in the fields. They are the same as scarecrows.

To avert crop failure, disease, and other misfortunes, people seek the help of magicians to conduct certain rituals. Because pests and epidemics endanger the crops and human beings, rituals are designed to prevent or halt such disasters. Spirit attacks and spirit possessions in the form of convulsions, hysteria or vomiting of blood appear, the specialists are requested to cure the victims from the illness.

In addition to such preventive measures, there are also a number of taboos meant for protecting men and women from various dangers. Infants are not brought into darkness because of their susceptibility to the attacks of evil-spirits. Children have open fear of devils. Their parents instruct them not to remain long near burial grounds or near abandoned houses because they tell them that devils reside in such places of supernatural elements in different ways. When they make nuisance in the houses, their eldest threaten them with bogeys, shouts or supernatural punishments.

Girls in their periods are considered easy victims of spirit-attacks. So, they are prevented from moving alone in
darkness. Pregnant women are not permitted to leave their houses during eclipses of the sun or moon. There are a few men and women who were born with deformed lips or hare-lips after their mothers were caught in eclipses. Foods producing heat in the system are taboo to pregnant women for violation of this taboo causes abortion. Miscarriages are sometimes attributed to violation of taboos or spirit-attacks. Depending on her caste membership or membership in a religious group, a pregnant woman is denied several foods after delivery.

People have taboos against intercourse when a woman is pregnant or nursing a child. The post-partum sex taboo is observed for at least a year or more after the woman gave birth. The taboo is by no means falled to the strict letter, since children are nursed for three years or more, some men admit having intercourse with lactating wife. People keep implements brooms, and winnowing fans close to the lying in women to keep the spirits away from them. They frighten away spirits by some powders, fire, light, charms, incantations and high sounds. Appeasing the spirits with sacrifices of fowls or some offerings is the common method of warding off them.

Productive magical practices:

Magic is also used for benevolent or non-mischievous functions. Rainfall, soil, seasons, temperatures and other
aspects of the environment that affect the raising of crops are crucial to the fulfillment of the city's sacred purposes. When rains fail, farmers as well as businessmen and other classes of people have to face hard times. For this reason, the inhabitants try to get rains by performing rain-making rituals. Among the several methods of rain-making rituals, the most common are 'arranging the marriages of frogs', 'arranging the marriages of donkeys', emptying hundreds and thousands of pitches full of water on the temple icons of Siva till the water poured completely rises far above the icons, burning the special magical substances and placating the rain gods by means of special sacrificial rituals. For the abundance or a rich harvest of the crops, farmers conduct magical rites at their fields. Worship of the heap of the harvested grain in the threshing floor itself involves several magico-religious practices that symbolize more and more productivity of the field year after year.

There is also magic relating to the production of human crop. In an environment subject to numerous endemic and epidemic diseases and in which malnutrition undernutrition and chronic ill-health are all too common, the production of at least one male child per household is no easy matter. Fertility is highly valued. A barren couple is pitied. Where repeated pregnancies fail to produce live births, or which conception fails to occur, various remedies are attempted. A couple may try to
improve their fertility by worshipping the 'snake stones' (naga vigrahalu) located on special platforms where a margosa tree and a pipal tree grow together. If this fails another productive method is practiced in which the snake mound is circumambulated. Again, 'tree worship' is made in which the couple offer prayers to the pipal and margo trees growing together and circumambulated the trees. Even if this fails pilgrimages to distant shrines are attempted. A number of religious vows are also undertaken. Frequently it is assumed by both the married couple and the city gossips, especially the latter, that infertility is the result of sins committed by the husband or wife in this life or a previous one.

Merchants, businessmen and farmers employ productive magic to reap a rich harvest of returns from their respective endeavors. Special plates on which contain code syllabus and secret formulae are tied to the door post of their shops and houses respectively. Businessmen wear special rings, talismans and charms that help successful trade and commercial transactions. Men use herbal substances of magical value to make their women more receptive to sexual advances. Similarly roots of specific magical plants, hairs of bear, camel and elephant and nails of tiger are obtained from priests, magicians, divinators and fortune tellers and they are given up to be healthy adults. People use productive magic in the sphere of
human relationships such as sexual love, litigation, trade, examination and employment. Herbs, roots charms, love, philters and talismans for producing or increasing in the intended person a feeling of sympathy, serenity, cheerfulness, kindness, favour or attraction towards oneself.

Destructive magical practices:

Destructive magic in the form of sorcery is employed with the help of specialists in the field of magic. Since such a magic is anti-social, it is kept in great secrecy. Sorcery (chetabadi) is got worked out against men, cattle, and crops. The procedure is to bury some magical substances in a corner of the compound of the house, corner of a field of the enemy or in spot where cattle are usually tethered, to induce disease or death to human beings, cattle and crops.

When people come to know about the sorcery, they get in counteracted by an expert magician. The magician renders the sorcery innocuous by destroying its potency or reversing the direction of the sorcery to harm the original perpetrator instead of its intended victim. Only two cases of this type of sorcery are recorded during the field-work. Both the cases occurred among the Balijas.
An important field of human relationships where sorcery is employed is love and sex. Special magical substances are procured from magicians to administer them to the spouses in order to obtain a feeling of sympathy from the spouse. This happens when the female spouse suspects that her husband is short-tempered and does not listen to her. The magical substances (marlu mandu) keep under control the tempers of the husband and influence him to be sympathetic to the wife. Administration of such magical materials makes the person weak if it is not detected early; sometimes in the long run it proves lethal to the victim. There are also cures for such a kind of sorcery.

There is also another kind of love-magic which harms the individual concerned if it is not cured early. A man or woman uses love potions or some herbal substances to win the favour or attraction of a woman or man. The magical materials are mixed with food and given to the intended person. Once a person consumes it, he or she favours the other person who administered the magical substances. Such magical substances if remain in the body for ever, they create harm to the individual, hence, antidotes to such medicines are given in course of time as secretly as the medicines were administered.
predictive magical practices:

Predictive magic is employed quite frequently by Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike, for determining the proper course of future action through analysis of various objects and events so as to discover their meaning. An astrologers calendrical knowledge and predictions are vital to the city's most basic adaptations, agriculture, business, employment, and regulation of specific populations. On every Ugadi or New Year Day, an astrologer reads predictions about the ecology of the coming year from an almanac (panchagam), for all his clients. Such a knowledge is necessary for a farmer, a businessmen, an employee, an industrialist, and all others because they can foresee their future and determine the proper course of future action they have to adopt.

Astrological predictions are considered essential on several occasions. In social realm, astrological compatibility of the bride and groom is predicted before the match is finalized. Auspicious moments are computed for conducting and completing the wedding ceremonies. Farmers approach an astrologer to fix up an auspicious moment for the first ploughing and seek the advice of the astrologers on crops to be raised in their fields the crops that yield good harvest or fetch high prices that year. The merchants or businessmen like Vaisyas and Marwadis consult astrologers before undertaking a
new venture or concluding a business transaction. They seek the advice of the astrologers before they start on a journey connected with their business.

There are well known geomancers, water diviners divinators of missing children, thieves, stolen property, ailments and diseases. Farmers weavers, artisans, businessmen and all other categories of people hire the services of geomancers to determine the suitability of a particular site for constructing a huge, a shop, a business establishment or an industry and determining the proportionousness of establishing a particular kind of economic activity in an area.

Water-diviners are consulted to locate the areas where underground water can be tapped for the benefit of the farmer and the constructor of a new house. There are diviners who read the meaning of dreams and advise on the precautionary measures to be adopted to overcome the ill-effects of bad dreams. On matters of unexpected or prolonged illness, detecting the real culprits, identifying the thieves, locating the stolen property, recovering from illness, getting a job, giving a suitable name to the children, fixing proper time for marriage and death ceremonies families and individuals consult the different types of diviners.
Predictive magic is also practiced by people themselves without the intervention of specialists. The ordinary person predicts events according to predetermined norms. People gauge their actions according to certain lucky or unlucky days or months. They undertake journeys only on specific days in a week which are considered proportions. Thus people employ predictive magic to help themselves accommodate to the day-to-day struggle for existence in the environment of Cuddapah.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CITY AND OTHER PLACES

The city and other villages:

On all important festivals, the city inhabitants invite their relatives and host them so long as the festivals last. Thousands of people from villages located within a radius of one hundred miles from the city come to witness the festivals of Venkateswaraswami Utasavam, Poleramma Jatra, and Gangamma Jatra.

The Muslims conduct large congregations (urs) at their shrines (dharghas) on the birthdays of the saints concerned. Especially, the congregations arranged at Hazarat Arifullah Hussaini and at Hazarat Syed Ali Murad Shah Qadri attract each not less than twenty thousand people both the Hindus and the Muslims from the villages around Cuddapah.
The Christians celebrations are made on a grand scale. The festival attracts thousands of spectators from the neighbouring villages of the city. The cultural programmes arranged in this connections draws large crowds from several rural areas within the District.

Just as people from other villages visit the city, the inhabitants of the city visit other places for conducting some rituals or witnessing the festivals there. During April-May, the people of Cuddapah go to Penchalakona, a village in Nellore District, either to fulfill their vows or see the festival there. On every Saturday, the city inhabitants visit Gandi, a small village near Cuddapah, and take a holy dip in the sacred pond there with the firm belief that such an act cures their bodily and mental ailments. Quite often, people from Cuddapah visit Vontimitta village, worship the deity Kondaramaswami there to earn individual merit. All the pilgrims going to Tirupati via Cuddapah do not generally fail to visit the temple of Venkateswara at Cuddapah.

The city and other urban centers:

The city population also has its ties with other urban centres. The Hindus from Cuddapah go on pilgrimage to Tirupati, Srisailam, Srikalahasti, Rameswaram, Kancheepuram, Mantralayam, Dhramsthalam, Kanyakumari, and Vijayawada in South India and
to Gaya, Kaasi, Puri, Pandaripur, Haridwar, and Badari in North India. The modern communication and transport facilities have facilitated such trips to distant sacred places.

The Muslims of Cuddapah attend the congregations (urs) of Hazarat Qadri Wali of Nagoor in Tanjore District of Tamilnad, Hazarat Rahamatullah of Rahamtabad at Nellore in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh and Hazarat Shah Wali of Yellatri in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh. The more devoted among them attend to the death anniversaries of the saints of Gulbarga in Karnataka, Ajmer in Rajasthan and the city of Delhi. The Christians do take special journeys to Goa, Kerala, and Tamilnad to see the relics of the holy saints there and pay their homage to the pious Christians in all those places.