Religious rituals and rites are observed either to make the life of the individual run smooth, or to mark an important stage or event in an individual's life. These rites, which are also known as 'Life Cycle rituals', are named rites of passage. The rites observed by the Harijans are very similar to those of other Hindu castes. According to the Hindu Dharma Sútras, a householder has to perform many rituals. But, normally, he observes only those which are essential during a life crisis. These rituals normally start when the child is in Womb and end with death ceremonies.

A rite is called Karana, Karya and Karna. These words signify the magico-religious reason behind these rituals. Etymologically, these words mean the reason, the act and the rite respectively.

I. THE RITES OF PASSAGE

1. Choli Ceremony:

The Choli ceremony is observed when a woman becomes pregnant for the first time. This rite is
commonly known as *Srimantha Karya* and observed in the 5th or 7th month of pregnancy either at the natal or conjugal home. On that day, a grand feast is given to the caste people, kin and friends. Customarily, the cost of the feast is borne by the parents of the woman. They also present a thick green sari and green bangles for the occasion, along with betel nuts, betel leaves, bananas, lemons, vermilion, dates, turmeric and new cloth for the children at home.

On the day of the rite, the pregnant woman takes the ceremonial oil-bath and puts on the new dress and bangles. She is made to sit on a bed on which designs are drawn using rice-grains. Sometimes, her husband also sits on the bed, on her right side. The visiting as well as the women of the locality sit around them and sing ceremonial songs suited to the occasion. Five married women whose husbands are alive wave the sacred lamp (*Arati*) round her. Locally, this is known as *Mangalarati*. After this ritual, the guests give presents to the pregnant woman. Later, with the expectant mother and the women folk visit the local temple. Betel nuts and betel leaves are given to the guests as they disperse.

2. Birth Rites

For the first five days after birth, a child must
not wear any clothes, as these five days are profane days. On the fifth day, a ceremony called Aidashe is celebrated. On this day, a string is tied around the waist of the child. Only after this ceremony are the clothes put on the child.

The child, mother and the local midwife (sūlagittī) take a ritual bath. Oil-lamps made of wheat-flour and now filled with oil and wick, are lighted on the spot where the child was born. After the ceremony, the flour used in making the oil-lamps is given to the children of the family and the locality to be eaten. The main deity worshipped on this day is Shettika. Five kinds of corn are boiled and offered to the deity and, later, after the worship, these are given to the children to eat. The things that are to be used for the child, such as clothes and toys, are also worshipped.

On this day, an amulet is tied to the child by the local midwife. This is made of five metals and is intended to protect the child from evil influences. On this occasion, a green cloth, which is later used for making clothes for the child, is also worshipped. A cotton thread of some length is burnt, holding it to an oil-lamp, and its mild flames are touched to the soles of the child, to protect it against evil influences. On another ceremonial
day, called Aideshe, neem leaves are kept in an earthen vessel filled with water and placed outside or on the threshold. Whosoever enters the house takes the water from that pot and sprinkles it on their feet, and it is deemed that evil spirits are so prevented from entering the house.

A sheep is sacrificed to the goddess Shettika and a feast given to the caste people. It is supposed that, on this day, the goddess of fate, Shettika, writes the fate of the child. So, that night, a pen and an inkpot are placed by the side of the child's bed. Neem-leaf juice and the contents of an egg are mixed and smeared on the body of the child and the mother. It is believed that this kills bodily pains. On this occasion, caste people take food, money and drinks from the child's parents. The guests bring presents to the child and its mother. On the occasion, the local midwife is also given bangles and other presents.

3. Naming Ceremony (Namakarana):

The naming ceremony for a male child takes place on the 12th day of his birth, and on the 13th day for a female child. All the women of the neighbourhood are invited to this ceremony. The guests bring grain with them and place it under the cradle.
The cradle is decorated with flowers and coloured papers. The baby is named by a woman specially invited for this ceremony, preferably the child's maternal or paternal aunt. Customarily, the maternal uncle's wife is requested to do this job. The rite starts with passing the baby from hand to hand across the cradle by the womenfolk. While passing the child, the women who stand on one side of the cradle say 'Sādev', and the other group answers this by saying, 'Mādev'. Then the child is put back into the cradle. The aunt names the child and makes a Kuttuku-Kurr- sound into its ears. As she does this, the other women standing nearby give her blows on her back. Five kinds of corn (Panchadhānya) are boiled (Guggari) and distributed to the guests. The caste people are given a grand feast on this occasion.

4. Tonsure Ceremony:

The cutting of a child's hair for the first time is an auspicious and ceremonial event. This ritual is observed in odd months and years, such as 3, 5, 7 and so on. The pair of scissors used on this occasion is washed and worshipped. The maternal uncle, or the husband of the paternal aunt (Sodara Māva), cuts a betel-leaf first and then the child's hair. Usually, this ceremony takes place in a shrine, before the deity to whom a vow is made.
Generally, the Harijans of Dharwar go to the Yallamme temple of Parasagad, about 20 miles away from Dharwar, to celebrate this ceremony.

5. Initiation ceremony:

Traditionally, wearing of the sacred thread, a common initiation ceremony of caste Hindus, is restricted to the higher castes who are known as Dwijas; Sudras and Harijans have no right to wear the sacred thread. However, a few Harijans have started wearing the sacred thread, and those who have come into the Veerashaiva fold wear the Lingam. On that day the Lingam is ceremonially presented and a rite known as Linga Dhārena is performed.

6. Puberty Rites:

The first appearance of menstruation is a significant event in the life of a girl. During her period, the girl is supposed to be polluted, and she has to observe certain taboos. She should not touch others and enter the kitchen and shrine in the house. Depending on the financial status of the family, the ritual is observed for 5, 9 or 13 days. On these days, the womenfolk of the neighbourhood gather in the house of the girl daily in the evening, give her a bath and put on her ornaments and a colourful dress. A few families also decorate the
house and the place where the girl is made to sit. Singing of songs after waving the sacred lamp is the daily programme. On the last day, the girl wears a new green sari, and friends and neighbours perform the final Arati and presents her with gifts. That marks the end of the rite.

7. Marriage Ceremony:

Birth and marriage are rites of 'unification'. Next to birth, marriage is the most important rite in an individual's life. It not only brings social status to a person, but also gives opportunities for an individual to perform household rituals. This is an elaborate one among Harijans; so, let us discuss its different rituals and study their significance.

(a) Nischaya:

The marriage ceremony begins with the marriage settlement ritual, locally known as Nischaya Kārya. On the occasion, sugar, betel nuts and betel leaves are distributed to the castemen. A list of items agreed upon by both parties, such as dowry, ornaments etc., is prepared in their presence of the caste and community elders. Every condition that is agreed upon by the two parties is mentioned. In the majority of cases, the
A marriage agreement is made orally. Both parties give gifts and fees to the priests and the traditional leaders of the locality.

During the Nischaya ceremony, the bridegroom's party gives a new sari and a few ornaments to the bride-to-be. According to custom, a sari is a must. The ceremony is simple. The bride is made to sit before the gathering, wearing the new ornaments and sari. The sacred lamp is waved about her and sacred rice is sprinkled on her. Sometimes, the bridegroom is also made to sit, on the right side of the bride. It is customary for gifts be made to the bridegroom by the bride's party. After distributing sugar, betel nuts and betel leaves brought by the bridegroom's parents, which is followed by the community feast, the ritual comes to an end.

(b) Vīlava or Tāmbula Shevāna:

Of all the ceremonies performed at the time of marriage, Vīlava is important. The Vīlava ceremony brings both the bridal parties much closer and the marriage relations almost becomes sure. On this occasion, too, the bride and bridegroom are seated on a blanket on which designs are made with rice. Womenfolk sit around and sing songs. The sacred lamp is waved for the bride and groom.
by five married women whose husbands are alive (Muttaidesyaru). Betel nuts and betel leaves are distributed to the people gathered for the occasion. On this occasion, the priests, the caste councilmen (Pancharu) and elderly persons of the caste are given a present known as Babu. After betel leaves and betel nuts are distributed to the guests, and not—have eating of the feast, the ritual comes to a close.

(c) Airani:

This ritual links the Harijans with the potters. Four small and one big earthen vessels are brought ceremonially from the potter to the place of marriage. These pots are painted white and red in the customary manner. This ritual is an imitation of the Pancha Kalasha ceremony of Lingayats. These four pots are kept at four points, making a square, with a ball of thread connecting them. The big pot is put in the middle. The bride and groom sit inside this square, and a sacred bath is given to them. This is the Airani ceremony (Nandimath, 1942: 69).

(d) Smearing with Turmeric:

The bride and groom are smeared with turmeric powder mixed in cocoanut or castor oil. Then a ceremonial
public bath is given to them. They are given new clothes to wear and Kankana - a turmeric root and a betel leaf tied to a piece of new cotton thread and later tied to the right wrist of the bride and groom. Symbolically, this means that the bride and groom are made ready for the marriage ceremony, which starts immediately afterwards. So, this may be, for practical purposes, taken as the actual beginning of the marriage.

(e) Akahataropana:

This is the central rite of the marriage ceremony. The bride and groom are made to sit in the middle of the square formed by the Pancha Kalasha. The priest utters the marriage spells and asks the groom to tie the sacred string (Tāli, or Mangalahāttra), in which, black beads and gold pieces are arranged, round the bride's neck. At the end of the spells, the people gathered for the occasion shower coloured rice (Aksata) on the couple. With these two acts the marriage rite is completed. The Harijans do not observe the custom of Saptapadi and, in the absence of this, the tying of the Tāli is taken as the valid ritual of the marriage.
There are two kinds of Nagali Bhooma. One is called big Nagoli Bhooma and the other, little Nagoli Bhooma. The big Nagoli Bhooma is observed at the time of the Akshatarpana. For this, both the groom's and the bride's parties place a Bhooma consisting of rice, betel-nuts, betel-leaves, boiled rice and jaggery. The groom's party keeps these in a basket, and the bride's party in a broad plate. These are, again, covered with pieces of new cloth. A portion of this is exchanged by the two parties, and the remaining Bhooma is distributed to the gathering.

The little Nagali Bhooma is also known as 'ascending and descending the Nayana'. There are, again, two distinct rites celebrated at the time of the little Nagoli Bhooma. 'Ascending the Nayana' is observed before the marriage rites. For this rite, cakes, jaggery and boiled rice are placed on the family shrine. Coconut or groundnut-oil is poured drop by drop, on the idol with a betel-leaf. At this stage women sing the song "Nayana Erisuva Bannire, Devara Erisuva, Nayana Erisuva Bannire" (Come let us ascend Nayana, come let us ascend the god). While the rite is being performed, the bride and the groom are made to sit facing the idol.
The 'Descending of Nayana' rite is celebrated after the marriage ceremony. For this rite, the bride and the groom sit facing the idol of the family god. Women with husband alive (Muttaidis) sing the song, 'Nayana Ilisuva Bannire, Devara Ilisuva Bannire, Nayana Ilisuva Bannire' etc., (Come let us descend Nayana, come let us descend god, come let us descend Nayana). As they sing, oil is put on the image of the god by the bridal couple with a betel leaf. The Nagoli Bhooma is also observed before a branch of the banyan tree, which is brought ceremonially and placed on the left side of the threshold of the house.

(g) Ashādha Kārya:

Ashādha Kārya is celebrated on the day the bride is taken away to her husband's place for the consummation of the marriage. If the bride has already attained puberty and ready for consummation, only this ceremony is performed in continuation of the marriage ritual. If the bride is too young for sexual union owing to valid reasons, then this ritual is postponed until she becomes ready for this rite. For this ceremony, the groom brings her a new sari and jaggery, rice and cakes for her family. A feast is given to castemen. Until this ceremony is observed, the marriage cannot be consummated.
8. Death Rites:

Death is not a sorrowful occasion for a Harijan. The corpse is given a bath, dressed in a festive dress and seated in the central hall of the house back to the wall and facing East or North. Perfumes are sprinkled on the body to overcome the smell of decay. Sticks of sandalwood and incense are also lighted. A Lingayat or a Brahmin priest is invited to officiate at the ritual.

The second rite is performed when the body is brought to the burial ground. The corpse is put on a bier. There are different types of them, locally called Kanavi, Shidagi, Vimana, Tefu etc. Poor people use the Kanavi—a large cloth in which the corpse is wrapped up. The Shidagi is made of wood and looks like a big chair. If it is decorated lavishly, it becomes a Vimana. Further, if it is taken on a bullock-cart, is called Teru. These types of bier are used according to the capacity and status of the family and the dead person in society. The procession is led by a band of musicians, the Bhajana Mela and Halage Mela; mourning relatives and well-wishers marched behind the corpse.

The third rite is observed at the graveyard,
as grave, 6' x 3', is dug beforehand. The type of grave goes with the status of the deceased. For example, a small cave, called Kiruguni, is made in the wall of the grave to keep the corpse of a person with a status. Others are buried in the pit. The priest recites the last ritual spells after the corpse is put into the cave. The corpse of an unmarried person is buried in a sleeping position. Harijans who can afford to pay the cremation cost, may cremate the corpse instead of burying it. They do not follow any one custom, which is determined by the financial position of the family.

9. **Rites after Death Ceremony: (Shrāddha)**

Shrāddha rites are observed on the 3rd or the 5th day of the death. The third day is called the day to "pour the milk on the grave", or "removing the burden of the people who carried the corpse." During this ritual, the clothes of the dead are worshipped. On the Shrāddha day, the remains of the dead are brought from the cremation-ground and immersed in water. Milk is poured on the grave in case of those buried.

On the day of Shrāddha, the favourite dishes of the dead person are served to castemen at a feast. By this ritual, it is believed that the dead gets a place
in Heaven, instead of wandering on earth in the form of a ghost. Till the rite is celebrated the favourite dishes are kept on the roof of the house for the departed soul in order to appease the dead. The crow that eats the food so kept is considered to have been an ancestor in the form of a crow. Afterwards, every year, this day is observed as an ancestral worship festival. The Shraddha rite is also locally known as 'taking the dead inside'. It is believed that the dead person is taken back into the family in the form of an ancestor.

The significance of giving a meal to castemen during the Shraddha is the belief that the mouths of the people poisoned by defilement, is washed by a communal feast. The desired food kept on the roof is mainly of three types. So the act is also known as "giving three types of food". (Muru kulu koduvadu). Afterwards, symbolic effigies of the very important members are made in silver and kept in the family shrine for daily worship. If the dead person is cremated, the bones and ashes are collected and are thrown into sacred rivers. This day is called 'mingling the dead with the gods', or the 'Sutaka, or Dinakarma day of the dead'. 
II. PIACULAR RITES

According to Durkheim (1957:389), piacular rites are performed to denote both sorrow and joy. The days of fast, feast, worship and bath have been woven into the ritual life of the Harijans, to exhibit their sorrow and joy. Besides, the rites of passage, each day, month and year, are full of rituals to be observed by individuals, castemen and the community or village. Every individual, as a religious person, has to observe the prescribed days of fast, feast, worship and bath.

Certain days are said to be auspicious for a fast. A few week-days are considered days of certain gods. For example, Sunday is supposed to be the day of Kēdāralinga; Monday, of the devotees of Shiva; Tuesday and Friday are the days of the goddess Shakti; Saturday, the day of Hanuman. Besides these, all festival days are supposed to be auspicious for a fast. The devotees of a particular god or goddess fast on the week-day and festival days connected with them. Festival days are also feast days. The piacular rites are not only observed during festivals, but also at the time of religious ceremonies, in which feasts are very common.

Very few Harijans bathe daily. However, on the
days of fasts, feasts and worship, one has to take a bath. In order to observe certain rituals, it is essential to be in a state of ritual purity. The bath removes pollution of all kinds. But it is only the religious-minded people among the Harijans that observe this strictly.

A religious person, according to an elderly informant, should start the day with worship of gods and goddesses. A common man, if he cannot worship daily, should worship at least on the days of fasts, feasts and festivals. Participation in communal, caste and group festivals, like fairs and sacrifices, provides an opportunity for an individual to worship in a group. Besides, one may worship his particular or favourite deity privately at home. Or, he may worship it in local temples or at centres of pilgrimage.

Rites connected with purity and pollution:

One of the features of certain religions is their notion regarding pollution and purity. Religion divides everything into two sections: sacred and profane. These two concepts give rise to the idea of pollution and purity. Pollution is profane and purity is sacred. Harijans, though regarded as a profane group by caste
Hindus, observe the rules of purity and pollution among themselves and also while mixing with other lower castes. Like any other Hindu, a Harijan considers that one will be polluted by a shave or haircut, and has to take a bath to become ritually pure.

Women during their monthly periods are considered polluted, and this period is observed for five days. On these days they have to take bath daily. The first menstruation is also polluting, and, since it changes the status of a girl, it is also observed as a rite to mark this change. Death also brings pollution to the family, and segregates it from others. If the death has taken place during the ascendancy of an inauspicious star or when a crow enters a house, it must be vacated for three months. In order to remove this pollution, the house is whitewashed and the floor is smeared with cow-dung. Though leatherwork is their traditional occupation, Harijans are defiled by it and have to take a bath after work, to become pure. Scavengers, after removing the night-soil, take bath in order to become ritually pure. After answering a call of nature, one has to wash one's hands, legs and face in order to become pure.

If a person dies in the inner part of the house,
called as Belagi, it is supposed to be most inauspicious, and the whole house is polluted. In such cases, the house is vacated for six months in order to remove the pollution. The touch of profane things also brings pollution, and such pollution can only be removed by the contact of sacred things. In order to worship, sacrifice and observe religious rituals, one has to be in the state of ritual purity. Bath, burning and washing are the main means of bringing purity to a polluted person, place or object.

At the time of ritual ceremonies, two kinds of food is prepared. One is known as Chokka Bhojana, and the other Mānsa Bhojana, meaning vegetarian and non-vegetarian food respectively. Only persons who are known as Shuddaru (ritually pure) are allowed to observe ritual ceremonies, and not Mularu. Suddaru means those who have all their limbs in good order, and Mularu are those who are physically handicapped. Women whose husbands are alive are known as Muttaideru and enjoy a very high status in ritual ceremonies. Prostitutes and their progeny are not allowed to participate in ritual ceremonies.

Besides these rituals, we have festivals, worship and other religious and magical rites among Harijans,
such as are described in later chapters.

FESTIVALS

According to Oscar Lewis (1958:198), "Any analysis of Indian festivals, whether it be historical or functional, should be based upon descriptions of the ceremonial cycle...." The festivals celebrated by the Harijans throughout a year result in a cycle. It is observed that festivals are based on certain beliefs connected with certain deities, activities and special occasions. There are about thirty-three festivals celebrated by Harijans and bind different groups together. They also connect Harijans with the rest of the Hindu society. A few who observe Muslim festivals have intimate connections with Muslims. Festivals serve as occasions to collect castemen. People of the same sect come together during the festivals of their gods. Further, people belonging to the same clan or lineage come together at the time of festivals and worship of clan deities. Festivals such as Alikeri, the worship of Bhutanatha, the procession of oxen, fairs, pilgrimages in groups, caste and communal worship etc. bring them together. The fasts, taboos and worship of a common deity bring about emotional and spiritual solidarity.
Food is exchanged among relatives, friends, neighbours and castemen on festivals like Deepawali and Nāgāpanchami. During these festivals, Harijans also get special food from people belonging to the higher castes. This way, exchange of food brings about closer connections among different people, families and castes. The unity among Harijans can also be seen in the food they prepare on festival days. It is customary to prepare a particular dish for a particular festival, and strict observance of this by all brings about unity of feeling among them.

The various rituals, practices and customs observed during the festivals express the blood bond or kinship relations among people. Sisters ritually honour their brothers on Ugādi Pādyā and Deepawali day. During festivals like Nāgāpanchami, married daughters of the house are brought back to their natal home to participate in the festival. This fosters unity among siblings, parents and children. The taking of names of family gods (Kula Dēvata) and ancestors at the time of Nāgadēva-worship indicates involvement of past and present generations and the followers of one or more deities. So, festivals, though celebrated at familial level, include, at least symbolically, a wider group such as kin and ritual.
The JoKumar and Holi festivals foster connections with other higher castes in the form of roles performed by the Harijans. Other practices like exchanging of Banni leaves, during Dasara and exchange of Kuasurellu on Sankrant bring about intimate relations among people belonging to different castes. Such customs as begging and throwing rice on Ganesh during the visit to different families also bring closer ties. For example, the devotees of Yallamma have to visit at least five houses begging at the time of Kara Hunnive. The festivals bring about tensions as well as cohesion in the group. Different religious groups having prejudices and hatred towards each other, conflicts over their rights and privileges, and this brings tension during the Holé and Moharem festivals among different groups of Harijans of Dharwar.

The rites and festivals have a close connection with the occupations they follow. For example, the Kulsavārs, who were once warriors, observe Deepawali with great pomp by making their children worship the Topakhana; the Ramaskis worship swords on Mahānavami day; the Madigas and Dhūrs worship the Matangi Katte, which is used for tanning leather; the Machigārs, being agriculturists, worship the Bull-god and Hattaya. The Lalabegis worship Lalabeg Katta, which is connected with their occupation—scavengery.
These festivals also establish relationships between God and man on one hand, and between man and man, on the other. One the festival day, the deity in whose honour the festival is observed is specially worshipped. Thus, these festivals are both supernatural and social in their character. The festival cycle is as follows:

Table 13
Festival Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Festival</th>
<th>Hindu Months</th>
<th>Christian Months</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ugādi Padya</td>
<td>Chaitra</td>
<td>March-April</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Davanada Hunnive</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Agi Hunnive</td>
<td>Vaishākha</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kara Hunnive</td>
<td>Jśthā</td>
<td>May-June</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mannettina Amavashya</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ashādha Ekādashi</td>
<td>Ashādha</td>
<td>June-July</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nāgara Amavāshya</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Naga Chaturthi</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Naga Panchami</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Shravana Mondays</td>
<td>Shrāvana</td>
<td>July-August</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Sampat Fridays</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Shravana Saturdays</td>
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<td>Sr. No.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Anantana Hunnive</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Māla Puja</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Jokumārana Habba</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Mahānavami</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Ghata Sthapana</td>
<td>Ashwiya Sept.-October</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Shigi Hunnive</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Deepawali</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Laxmi Puja</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Saraswati Puja</td>
<td>Kārtika Oct.-November</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Gouri Hunnive</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Allikeri</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Mallayyana Puja</td>
<td>Margashira Nov.-December</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Hostila Hunnive</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Yalla Amavāshya</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Banda Hunnive</td>
<td>Pushya Dec.-January</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Makara Sankramana</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Bharata Hunnive</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Shivaratri</td>
<td>Māghe</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Hōli</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Ugadi Amavāshya</td>
<td>Phalgunā Feb.-March</td>
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The Hindu festival calendar is divided into twelve lunar months. Further, every month is split into two divisions — Shukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha, i.e., the bright half and the dark half. The bright half starts with the New Moon and the dark half starts with the Full Moon. New Moon and Full Moon days are festive occasions. Each Paksha has two weeks and each week in turn has seven days. Further, Full Moon and New Moon days, days of festivals, days of eclipse of Moon and Sun are supposed to be magical in their character, auspicious and supernaturally powerful.

The festivals celebrated by Harijans can be grouped into two categories: cosmological and sociological. For instance, Ugadi, Deepawali, Makara Sankrant and Holi are known for their cosmological importance. The festivals can also be classified on the basis of sex and age groups. For example, Nāgarasāndami, Shigē and Mahēnāvami are festivals of women; Sankrānti and Hūli are festivals of men. Ganesha Chaturthi and Sarāswati Puja on Mahēnāvami day are festivals of children. Let us now discuss these festivals one by one in relation to their observance.

Ugādi Pādya:

This festival is celebrated as the Hindu New Year day.
That day, early in the morning, the floor of the house is washed with cowdung. Neem bunches are tied to the door lintel, and neem leaves mixed in water for the ritual bath. Sisters wave sacred lamps for their brothers as they sit in a row before the family gods. After this rite, sacred neem flowers are mixed in sugar and given to eat as a symbol of sorrow and joy to be faced by them in the year to come.

_Ugadi Padya_ is specially considered a sacred day by Harijans, and all auspicious activities, such as changing house, laying the foundation of a new house, settlement of a marriage, etc., are celebrated on this day. If a girl married before puberty attains the age during this period, her marriage is consummated on this day.

_Davanada Hunnive:_

The Full Moon day in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March–April) is named after the flower Davana. The Davana plant is fragrant and is specially offered to the gods at the time of worship, on this Full Moon day. So the day is called 'Davanada Hunnive'. This Full Moon day is also called _Muttaidi Hunnive_. On this day, some go to the Yallamma shrine at Saundatti, to worship and
offer bangles to the deity. Sacred lace (Tāli) is also tied to the goddess. If it is not possible to go to the shrine, She is worshipped at home. Generally, a feast is arranged in Harijana families.

Agj Hunnive:

This Full Moon day, which falls in the month of Vaishyākha (April-May), is observed in a very simple manner. Normally, sweet cakes are prepared and offered to the family deity. This is an important festival for agriculturists. The newly sown crops begin to come up in the form of seedlings (Agj) and the name of the festival itself means that 'festival of seedlings.'

Kkra Hunnive:

On this Full Moon day (May-June) a sheep is sacrificed to the goddess at home for a dinner to the castemen. The major deity worshipped on this day is Yallamma. Some people also visit the shrine of Yallamma to worship the goddess. On return, back a rite called "sending back the deity—Parashurama" is observed. The womenfolk and the head of the family go round begging, at least to five houses. This is the custom among devotees of Yallamma, who are locally known as Yallammangottavaru.
The people who follow agriculture as their occupation also worship the bull god — Basava, on this day.

Mannettina Amavashya:

On this festival day, images of oxen are prepared in clay (Manu) and worshipped, so the day is called Mannettina Amavashya. The clay is generally brought on a Monday, as it is an auspicious day for followers of the Bull god. A few families mould the image of a goddess known as Gullavva, on the first Tuesday of this month. Tuesday is auspicious for the followers of this goddess, who is specially worshipped on this festival, collectively, by the Harijans of the locality. Though a feast is prepared in every house, it is offered to the goddess (Naivedya) at the time of worship collectively, in a public place. This festival is important for grown-up girls.

Ashadha Ekadashi:

This festival is observed in the month of Ashadha (June-July), on the 11th day. The devotees of Vithal of Pandarpura observe a fast on this day. Next day, a feast is shared with the castemen. A few people go on a pilgrimage to the shrine at Pandarpura to worship the god
Vithal. On their return from the shrine, within three days they observe a rite known as "sending back Pundalik" to Pandarpura. Pundalika is a mythological hero well known to Hindus for his devotion towards his parents.

Festival of Nāgadeva (Serpent-god):

This festival is observed in the month of Shrāvana (July-August) and is mainly a women's festival. Newly married daughters are brought back for this festival to their natal home. Also newly married girls are sent for the first time to their husband's place during this festival, since they have to pour milk on the image of the serpent-god. The fourth day after Nāgara Amavāsyā is known as Naga Chaturthi. On this day, the serpent-god is worshipped in all homes. The image of the serpent-god, made in clay, is placed in the family shrine. A garland of cotton is made and put on the serpent-god. A coconut is broken and milk is poured into one of the shells. From there the milk is poured on the serpent-god by all the members of the family, who, as they pour, utter the names of their family deity and ancestors.

The special food prepared for the occasion is exchanged among relatives and neighbours. The fifth day after the New Moon is called Naga Panchami. On this day,
toasts are prepared and offered by the women along with milk to the serpent-god. If there has been a marriage in the family that year, this festival should be observed continuously for three years. If they fail to observe this festival in the first year of their marriage, then the family has to abstain from observing the festival continuously for three years. The festival provides much scope for recreation and merrymaking. All age and sex groups indulge in playing games. Playing on the swing is an important part of this festival. Similarly, all members of the family put on new clothes specially bought for the occasion.

The sixth day is called Karembly. This day is considered auspicious, and marriages and such other important contracts and opening ceremonies are undertaken on this day. The seventh day is called Varusha Todaku. It is believed that whatever happens on this day is bound to happen throughout the year. So, Harijans become very conscious about their behaviour and actions during this day. They do not quarrel, nor abuse others nor utter bad words and perform only good and auspicious deeds.

Shrāvana:

During the entire month of Shrāvana (July-August), no non-vegetarian food is eaten, as this month is supposed
to be sacred and auspicious for Harijans. Reading of sacred literature is organised (Purāna and Kirtthana) at home as well as in public places. The Mondays of this month are observed as festival days. Shiva and Basava are worshipped on these days by going to their temples in a procession with Bhajana Melas. The last Monday is the most important festival day of Shravana month. Similarly, Fridays and Saturdays are observed as festival days in the name of Laxmi and Hanuman respectively.

Benakana Amavashya:

On this occasion, the elephant-headed god, Ganapati or Ganesha, is brought home on the 4th day of the New Moon, known as Ganesh Chaturthi. For five days this god is worshipped and offered food. The second day after Ganesh Panchami, the image of a mouse, the vehicle of Ganapati, is worshipped. This day is known as the Mouse worship (Ili pūja) day. Usually, non-vegetarian food is offered to the image of the mouse. By doing this, it is believed, the wrath of the mouse is averted. On the other hand, the image of Lord Ganesha is worshipped daily until it is immersed in water. The decorated shrine and oil lamps are kept during all these days. Burning crackers is a common feature. The image of Ganapati is generally placed in the central hall of the house, which
is decorated with coloured papers, flowers and green leaves. It is customary for the devotees to go from house to house, at least five houses, and throw rice grains on the god’s images.

On the ninth day, known as Navami, Lord Ganapati is worshipped and immersed in a tank or well. For this, the idol is brought out in a procession accompanied with Bhajan Mela and firing crackers. A few who follow the custom of retaining the image of Ganapati longer may do so till Mahanavami festival, in the month of Aswija (September-October).

It is forbidden to see the moon as long as the Ganapati is kept at home. If any person violates this, it is believed that he will be cursed by the god. People say that nobody is free from this, including Shri Krishna, who did nothing and is still known as a thief because he failed to observe this taboo.

Festival of Jokumara:

This festival is observed in the month of Bhādrapad (August-September). Jokumar takes his birth on the day after the immersion of Ganesh in the Patel’s family. He is brought to the house of a Chalvādis on the
full moon day called Anantana Humnive. Here the Jökumar is touched with a pestle, declared dead and thrown into a well, a tank or a river. The washermen observe the death rituals of Jökumara and observe a pollution period of three days by not washing clothes in that water.

According to a folk story told by one of my informants, Jökumar was in love with a girl belong to a Harijan caste and was killed by them for his illicit relations with her. An imitation of his birth and death is observed in the form of the Jokumara festival. According to this story, Jokumara lives only for nine days and during this period he is kept in the house of a person belong to the Sunēgar (lime-maker) caste. From there the womenfolk take the idol of Jökumar in a basket from house to house, collecting grain and other things. Jökumara is said to be fond of butter; so, at every house they visit, butter is put into his mouth. Jökumara is believed to be the deity of rain and fertility. To get rain and fertility, he is worshipped. This tradition of Jökumara worship is nothing but part of the great tradition of the worship of Kumara, son of Lord Shiva (Śīrānd Purana, 1909).

Mahānavami:

For this festival, the house is given a white-
wash and then ritually cleaned. All the articles in the house are purified. The first day of the Āswin month (September-October) is known as Ghatasthapana day. On this day, nine oil lamps are lighted before the gods and burn continuously for nine days. Different types of grain are sown in different earthen vessels and watered for ten days. On the tenth day, the seedlings are worn by girls in their hair.

On the ninth day, a form of worship known as Khandepuja, (worshipping of weapons) is observed. Also, all the tools used in their profession are worshipped. One person, who is selected for the ten days, taking only one meal a day (oppattu). This ritual is traced to a story in the Mahabharatha. It is said that on this day the Pandavas got their weapons back from the goddess Banni Mahankali. So weapons are worshipped in memory of that event, near a Banni tree.

On the tenth day, the community as a whole sacrifices a sheep to the deity, Banni Mahākali, and its head is placed before the goddess and worshipped. A feast is given to the castemen of the locality after Shimolanghana. For Shimolanghana, the deity of the community is taken in a procession to the Banni tree to
be worshipped at the border of the settlement in the evening. Banni leaves are exchanged by friends and relatives, the young touching the feet of their elders and receiving their blessings. Banni leaves are a symbol for gold, and both parties say, "Let us be as pure as gold".

This is also the period when the holy script about the goddess Shakti is recited and listened to publicly for ten days. For this, the recitors of holy scripts (Kirtankaras) are invited and meetings are organised. This festival has also a connection with the Ramayana and Shaktism. According to the Ramayana, this festival is celebrated in honour of Rama for killing the demon Ravana. Shakti worshippers observe this festival in honour of the goddess Shakti for killing the demons.

Shige Hunnive:

The full moon day is named after a goddess known as Shige. A few devotees go to Savadatti to worship the goddess Yallamma. After a month, another full moon day known as Gouri Hunnive in the month of Kartika (October-November) is observed and the goddess Gouri is worshipped. This one-month period is considered auspicious.
Deepavali:

One day before the Deepavali new moon day, a festival called Naraka Chaturdashi is observed. It is said that on this day the god Vishnu killed the demon Naraka, and this festival is observed in memory of that event (Vishnu Purana, 1961). On the new moon day ancestors are worshipped. Shri Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, is also worshipped on that day. A feast is given to the caste people. The wealth in the house is worshipped along with the image of Laxmi. It is a custom to decorate the image of Laxmi with gold ornaments, flowers and new clothes. On the first day after the new moon day of Kārtika month (October-November), Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom, is worshipped. School-going children in the family worship the goddess in the form of their slates and books. On the same day, the idols of the Pancha Pāndavas are made out of cow dung, decorated with flowers and placed near the front threshold of the house. They are worshipped for three days and, on the third day, are kept on the roof of the house.

The entire month of Kārtika (October-November), is observed by keeping oil lamps lit in front of the houses and temples. In this month, it is customary to have paper baskets with oil or electric lamps inside, hung
in front of every house. A few families, who have taken a vow, offer oil to light oil lamps in the temples; this is known as lighting Kārtika (Kārtika Hachuvadu).

**Allikeri:**

Allikeri is a type of picnic festival observed in the month of Kārtika. On this day, men, women and children, with their food, go to a place outside the town. The place chosen is convenient for taking food collectively. Before the meal, Allamaprabhu is worshipped. In addition, five stones, supposed to be gods, are worshipped. The song sung on this occasion in Kannada can be translated as follows:

Let us go to the forest feast:  
Will you come with us?  
If not, will you be here?  
The various dishes are with us.

Will you worship the god Allamaprabhu?  
Have you forgotten him?  
Let us go to forest feast:  
Will you come with us?
After the meal, a few games are played. The party returns home late in the evening. This picnic festival is used as an occasion to bring unity among the castemen.

Mallayyana Puja:

The devotees of the god Mallayya observe this festival in the month of Margashira (November-December), on the fourth or fifth day after the new moon. Food prepared out of wheat and bajra is eaten as a feast. Temple priests of the god Mallayya, known as Gorappa, are invited to the house and offered food and money. They come singing words in honour of Mallayya, such as Elu Koti, Elu Koti (seven crores, seven crores) and continue to sing during the worship. There is a folk story about these words, as follows:

The God Venkatramana took a loan of seven crores from Mallayya, and could not return it within the agreed time. He called on Venkatramana and demanded the return of his money. But the borrower could not pay it back. So he went away saying, Govinda, Govinda, meaning your money is gone. But Mallayya stayed on, repeatedly demanding his seven crores. Finally, it was agreed that Venkataramana should part with a portion of his territory and offerings.
So, to know who is who, the devotees of Venkataramana say Gōvinda and the followers of Mallayya - Elu Koti, Elu Koti, when they come for alms. As a rule, these two groups are supposed to borrow from their own patrons. But today, all this is mixed up and they come begging for alms without any discrimination. The worshippers of Mallayya belong to the Saiva sect; and the worshippers of Venkataramana belong to the Vaishnava sect. Harijan families belonging to the Saiva sect and have Mallayya as their family deity, observe this festival. Those who belong to the Vaishnava sect observe Gokulashtami and Ramanavami. According to custom, one is not supposed to observe the other's festivals and collect alms from devotees of the other sect.

Hostila Hunnive:

It is believed that, on this full moon day of Mārgashira month (November-December), Kārtyavirya killed the saint Jamadagni, husband of Yallamma and made her a widow. On this day, in memory of this event the female devotees of Yallamma, such as the Basavis and Jogātis, break their glass-bangles to symbolize widowhood. The bangles from the hands of the idol of Yallamma are also removed. They go without bangles till Davanada Hunnive, when it is believed that Jamadagni came back to life and Yallamma
became a muttaide. This full-moon day is also known as Muttaid Hunnive. From this full-moon day the devotees of Yallamma start wearing bangles on their hands to signify the return to life of their husband (Muttaide).

On this festival day Yallamma is worshipped at home as well as in the Yallamma shrine at Savadatti. That day, when the Jogatis or devotees of Yallamma, visit individual houses, they are given food, usually a sweet dish, which they take away in their basket called Padalagi. This act is also known as 'filling the basket' (Padalagi Tumbuvadu).

Ellu Amavashya:

On this new-moon day, a female deity is worshipped. The special food prepared for this festival is Dosa. Coloured sweet pills called Kusurellu are made out of sugar and sesame (Til). Therefore, this new moon day is called 'Ellu Amavashya'. These tils are exchanged with friends and relatives; and youngsters bow to their elders and take their blessings. As they exchange tils, they wish each other, "Let us be intimate like Sesamum and Jaggery."
Makara Sankranti:

This festival is observed in the month of January, when the sun turns to the North from his travel South. On this festival day, it is customary to take a bath in the pond near Someshwara, near Dharwar, where the sacred river Shalmala has its source. Hunting (Byāti) is symbolically observed on that day by going out to hunt rabbits and deer. As an auspicious deed, a few people worship Bhutanatha at the temple of Someshwara. Coloured til is exchanged among friends and relatives.

Bhārata Hunnive:

One month before this full-moon day, another full-moon day, known as Banada Hunnive, is observed as a festival in the month of Pushya (December-January). This festival is observed in honour of the forest. But this is not an important festival nowadays. Usually, a favourite deity, such as Yallamma, is worshipped on this day.

The biggest and the last fair of Yallamma is held in the Yallamma shrine on the full-moon day of Bhārata Hunnime, in the month of Māgha (January-February). Most devotees visit the shrine with special food to offer to the deity. A few go in a group in carts, accompanied by
Bhajana groups and Halage Mela, together with the Jogatis and Basavis of their locality.

Shivaratri:

This festival is observed in the month of Māgha (January-February). On Ekadashi day (Eleventh day), or on the 21st day of the Māgha month, devotees observe a fast in the name of Lord Shiva, when only fruits and dates are eaten. At the end of the fast, a sweet dish called Huggi (known as Shiva Huggi) is prepared.

Holi:

This festival is observed in the month of Phālguna (February-March), the last month of the Hindu calendar. The god of love, Kamadeva, is worshipped on this day. The festival starts with the placing of the idols of Kama on the Holi full-moon day. He is ceremonially burnt in public on the day after the full moon. Harijans collectively keep an image of Kamadeva in the locality and worship him together. To burn Kamadeva ceremonially, the fire is brought from a Chalwādi or Mādiga family, whose right for the duty is customarily fixed. This is a ritual ceremony. With great triumph, this fire is brought in a procession from the family. Saris and other gifts are given to Basavis, who have the privilege of
giving fire to parties who come to take it. It is also customary for the Basavis to dance and sing sexy and vulgar songs connected with the festival, along with men. At the end, coloured water (Okali) is thrown at one another.

There is a mythical story behind this festival. Kamadeva attempted to disturb Lord Shiva who was in meditation. Disturbed Shiva became very angry and, opening his third eye, burnt Kamadeva (Siva Purana, 1905). Harijan informants give a different version of this myth. According to them, Rati, wife of Kamadeva, belonged to a Harijan caste, and Kamadeva was in love with her. Her people requested Shiva to punish Kamadeva. So, Shiva, pleased with their request, burnt Kamadeva with the fire generated from his third eye. Since it was the Harijans who made Shiva kill Kamadeva, the giving of fire to burn Kamadeva during this festival became their privilege.

Other Factors in Festivals:

In the month of Jeshtha (May–June), the Bull-god is worshipped, as agricultural work begins in this month. Deepavali is known for its economic significance. The goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is worshipped during the month of Kārtika. This is also the beginning of the Hindu new
year. Mahanawami is known for its mythological connection. The national, local and secular festivals reveal their political connection. The observance of Muslim festivals show the influence of other religions. It is observed that women are more particular in observing the festivals, and they have better knowledge than men regarding the ritual details of the various festivals.

The poor economic status of the Harijans is a great obstacle in observing the various festivals. If, owing to poverty, if anybody fails to observe a festival, he is socially condemned, although some of these festivals require a lot of money to conduct the elaborate rituals. The rich may observe festivals in all detail, but the poor must minimise the expenses, if not avoid them altogether. The different games played, the ceremonies celebrated, the entertainments undertaken, the processions taken out, the hunting expeditions, form of worship, pilgrimages and rituals observed during these festivals have influenced the ways of Harijans. This is owing to the influence of Hindus and Veerashaivas, who live close to them.
The mode, character and type of these festivals are changing slowly. For example, the Kari festival, which was observed in the past by the Machigārs, who are agriculturists, has now been stopped since it was stolen by the nearby villagers, and, as a custom, the festival was also stopped. Harijans have also given up celebrating the festivals of the Muslims which they observed in the past. During the charaga festival, in the past the communal sacrifice of a buffalo was observed, but now it has been banned by the Government. It has been said that about five hundred years ago the Lalabegis offered even human beings as sacrifice. Now Harijans in general have taken up festivals observed by the Veerashaivas and Brahmins. The celebration of Basava and Tulshi are some of the festivals which have been taken up recently by the Harijans. Today, Sanskritisation is going on rapidly, while the influence of Islam and animism are gradually decreasing.

*Kari Hari: Kannada-English dictionary Rev. Kittel (1894: 374) to tear; i.e., do away with unpropitiousness, an act that, on a certain day (Kar Humnive), is represented by throwing an iron ball that is attached to a rope over a Torana and thus bringing down the Torana, when the ornamented bullocks of the place that previously had passed under the Torana, are playfully driven about. Also see Gurumurthy, (1971: 34).

**Charaga: Kannada-English Kittel dictionary (1894: 596): an offering to Demavva, for which Holeyas kill one or more he-buffaloes, cut up the flesh and throw the pieces about on the fields of the village or town to which they belong. Also see Gurumurthy, (1971: 34).