Throughout the ages it has been man's belief that by performing religious rites and by observing certain rituals he could obtain apart from spiritual benefits worldly blessings like health, longevity of life, children, wealth and other material well-being, etc. He has also believed that the natural forces could be appeased by performing some rites and benefits, e.g., rain, good crops and prosperity of cattle, etc. It is also his belief that appeasing the beneficent deities or supernaturals the malignant forces can be driven away.

Earlier anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown (1955), Firth (1957), Evans-Pritchard (1962), Srinivas (1965), etc., have studied the belief system of different cultural groups, both tribal and peasants. Religion is an important and even an essential part of the social machinery, as are morality and law, part of the complex system by which human beings are enabled to live together in an orderly arrangement of social relations. There are many who maintain that it is only Religion, that can provide the foundation to an orderly social life.
Radcliffe-Brown (1965), Srinivasa (1965), etc., have stated that there is a close relation between religion and society. Religion also varies in correspondence with the manner in which the society is constituted. Religion not only forms an essential part of the society, but also the form of religion and the social structure correspond with one another. Western pragmatic outlook, scientific attitude, practical mindedness, modern education, urban influence have changed the attitude of people today and villagers are no exception to this. Educated and urban people are also slowly losing faith in blind beliefs and practical utility of magic. They assess everything on practical utility and observe it on the basis of scientific facts. There is more hope that the modern outlook of literate women will naturally help to eradicate the traditional attitude in a woman and change their outlook on life and value system. This study helps us to understand and compare the attitude of literate and illiterate women towards belief, magic and ritual activities, etc. which are still prevailing in Basavapura.

During the earlier days men excluded women from religious services almost everywhere, because they regarded women as unclean, mainly on account of their periodical menstruation and also because she came from another clan
and village. During the menstrual periods the woman had been an object of the greatest dread. Aryans regarded woman as an untouchable during her monthly period. But surprisingly in the Vedic period women enjoyed all the religious rights and privileges which men enjoyed. Later Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism did not welcome women into religious fold. Under Jainism woman can never get salvation except by first being reborn as a man. Buddhism, however, declared that womanhood was no bar to salvation and they were urged to become nuns instead of entering into matrimony. But Christianity and Viśaśālvism openly welcomed woman to adopt and follow religious principles without any restrictions.

In Kamatak, during the 12th century, women attained a very high status in the religious circles of Viśaśālvism. Personalities as Akkasaḥadevi, Heelastika, Gagambika, etc., sat along with men in religious discourses and discussed freely. Many learned women preached the principles of the new religion. Basavapura which comes under this area has much of its influence from Viśaśālvism in its religious aspects.

Basavapura is basically an agricultural village. It is also still in the grip of folk religious beliefs.
Each agricultural activity centres around some type of a ritual to satisfy deities or spirits. On occasions like this the villagers celebrate certain rites before starting any agricultural activity like ploughing, sowing, harvesting, etc. First the mother earth and then the bullocks and the plough, etc., are worshipped. The threshing ground, the storage pit are also regarded as objects of worship.

Besides these rituals the villagers celebrate the passage rites to individuals at different stages of life like birth, marriage, death, etc., and also to denote the separation or unification of the individual from one group to another. The cyclic rituals are the festivals and ancestral rituals which are celebrated and observed every year with some belief and expectations.

Festivals:

The Hindu ritual calendar of Basavapura is divided into twelve lunar months (See Chart No. 1). Further, every month is split into two divisions - Shukla pancha and Krishna pancha, i.e., the bright half and the dark half. The bright half starts with the New Moon Day and the dark half starts with the Full Moon Day. New Moon and Full Moon days are ritually important occasions. Each pancha has two weeks and each week in turn has seven days. Further, Full
Moon and New Moon days, days of festivals, days of solar and lunar eclipse are supposed to have ritual value.

Festivals of Basavapura are grouped into two categories: Cosmological and Sociological. For instance, Ugadi, Deepavali, Makar Sankrānti and Holi are known for Cosmological importance. Sociological festivals are: Mahānavami, car festival, Basava Jayanthi, Kāra Munnice, Kārttika, etc. The festivals can also be classified on the basis of sex and age groups. For example, Māgara Panchami, Mahānavami are festivals of women; Sankrānti and Holi are festivals of men. Ganesh Chaturthi and Saraswathi Puja on Mahānavami day are festivals of children (c.f. Kadetorad, 1975:122). All these festivals have preparatory and post festival period. They also have ritual and feast parts. Inviting friends and relatives to partake in the festival activity is customary. Specially the married daughters are invited for the festivals. From this point festivals play an important role in the life and living of women.
**CHART NO. 2**

**FESTIVAL CALENDAR OF PAGARAPGA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festivals</th>
<th>Hindi Month</th>
<th>English Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ugadi-padya</td>
<td>Chitra</td>
<td>March-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Naga Panchami</td>
<td>Shravanra</td>
<td>July-August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shravana</td>
<td>Shravanra</td>
<td>July-August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mahanavami</td>
<td>Asvija</td>
<td>Sept-October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pūpāvali</td>
<td>Asvija</td>
<td>Sept-October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gowri-Ganesha Festival</td>
<td>Kārtika</td>
<td>Oct-November</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3: VILLAGE LEVEL FESTIVALS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Hindi Month</th>
<th>English Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Haravva festival</td>
<td>Pushya</td>
<td>January-February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Haravva Festival</td>
<td>Pushya</td>
<td>January-February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Basava Jayanthi</td>
<td>Vaishāka</td>
<td>April-May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kāra Runnime</td>
<td>Jēṣtha</td>
<td>May-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kārtōka</td>
<td>Kārtika</td>
<td>October-November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nakevaramajātra</td>
<td>Margashira</td>
<td>November-December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Usadi Padya:**

The festival is celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April) for three days, and marks the beginning of the New Year for the Hindus. The women-folk of the family give a ritual wash to the house using lime and cow-dung solution. Bunches of neem and mango leaves are tied to the door lintel. For the festival, all the members of the family apply oil to the entire body and take a ritual bath in hot water; in it neem leaves are put. That day they specially worship the family deity. On the day sisters wave sacred lamps to their brothers and receive gifts from them. A mixture of neem flowers and sweet is eaten as a symbol of sorrow and joy to be faced by them in the forthcoming days. On this day members of the artisan caste are invited and given food, betel nut and leaves. The family priest, in addition to these, is also given a few coins. All the family members wear new dress for the festival and the daughters of the family who are specially invited for the festival, are also presented with new dress.

**Navara Panchami:**

This festival is observed in the months of July-August (Shravana) and it is a festival of women. Traditionally...
married daughters of the family are specially invited for this festival. On this day the serpent God, Ṛṣaṣṭrapa, is worshipped in the form of the stone or clay image. Later they also go to the shrines of Cobra God. The image here is decorated with garlands of cotton which are painted with black and yellow colours. Milk is poured on it by all the members of the family. The festival occasion being auspicious, it is used for settling marriages, consummation of marriages and other celebrations. It is believed by the women-folk that whatever good happens to them on that day will continue to happen throughout the year. So they abstain from doing bad and evil things and indulge in praying, worshipping and offering food to priests, poor and artisan castes. However, these days the situation is changing and the educated and those who are in the fold of modernity, do not observe these things regularly.

** Shrāvana:

The Shrāvana festival is observed in the month of July-August (Śrāvana). During this festival traditional minded women eat one meal a day and observe a half day fast for full one month. A few families arrange for recitation of Bhajans and purāṇas at their homes, daily in the evening, for weeks. Locally Mondays are observed as festival days.
During Shrāvana, particularly on Mondays, women-folk visit Basavaешwara temple in the village. Last Monday (Koneya Shrāvana) of the month, which is considered the most important festival day, the family priest is invited and given food, betel leaves and betel nut and a few coins.

Dēpavali:

The Dēpavali festival is observed in the months of October and November (Kartika). According to the Brahmānic belief the festival is observed as a mark of victory of Lord Vishnu over the demon Kāraṇa (Vishnu Purana:1961). On this day Goddess Laxmi, the symbol of wealth, is specially worshipped. Children who go to school also worship Saraswathi, the goddess of knowledge. The entire month is observed by keeping lit oil lamps in front of the house and temples. A few families keep oil or electric lamps inside decorated baskets and hang them in front of the house. It is customary for the women-folk of the village to visit the temple of the village deity and offer oil to the sacred lamps there.

Shivarāthri:

The festival of Shivarāthri is observed in the months of January - February (Magha), in honour of Lord
Shiva. On the last day of the month (21st day), the devotees abstain from eating worldly food and spend the day on fruits and nuts and observe a fast in honour of Lord Shiva. They also keep awake the whole night and spend the time reciting holy names or reading holy scripts. Next day a sweet dish is prepared to mark the end of the festival. The festival has special significance to the Lingayats, a shivate group.

VILLAGE LEVEL FESTIVALS

Apart from the familial and caste level festivals, the people of Basavapura celebrate a number of village level festivals. To celebrate these the village as a whole contribute in the form of corn, cash and labour. They also involve by observing ritual purity and pollution and naturally the benefits obtained by celebrating the festival or rite will be shared by all the families in the village. So they are known as the village level festivals. In Basavapura a few festivals are celebrated as village level festivals. They are the festivals of Kāllava, village deity (car festival), Basava Jayanthi and Āravva festival.
Festival of Kaliyavva:

The rites connected with the festival are celebrated at the entrance to the village - Īra bagalu. Women-folk from all agricultural families bring the festival food of cooked rice, jawar, and jaggery in decorated plates and offer it to the deity. Married women whose husbands are alive (Muthideyaru), perform puja to the fertility deity and to the seeds to be sown that year, with the belief Kaliavva increase the fertility (c.f. Gurumurthy, 1970d). At the end the food and food grains which are offered, are given to artisan and service castes. The priest who supervises the rite is given a few coins, betel leaves and betel nuts.

Car festival of village deity:

The car festival of the village deity, Sasavanna, is celebrated in the months of April-May (Vaisāka). The climax of the festival is the pulling of the holy car in which the procession image of the deity (Utsava Mūrthy), is kept and taken around the village. For this the main roads are cleaned and also sprinkled with water to make them ritually clean (Netrumadi). Other deities of the village like Lord Mahēswara and Vērabhadra, also accompany the main deity. When the holy car comes near their house
the villagers perform puja to the deity and offer coconut, fruits and garland. This festival is celebrated with the belief that the village deity protects the village from evil spirits which bring diseases and bad luck to men, animals and crops.

Bacava Jayanthi:

This festival is celebrated in the months of April-May (Vaishāka) in honour of the bull god - Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Maheshwara. That day it is taboo to use bullocks for any type of work. In the morning, they are given a special bath and their horns are painted in bright colours. The women-folk perform puja and offer them the sweet dish, Kitchadi. In the evening a procession of well fed and decorated bullocks is taken around the village, accompanied with band music.

Festival of Marava:

Marava is the caste deity of the Mādars and a festival is celebrated in her honour in the months of April-May (Vaishāka). The festival mainly concerns the cultivators and the Mādars. Leaders belonging to Mādar caste take active part and start collecting funds for the festival in the form of cash and corn from the villagers. The temple of the
deity which is in their locality, is cleaned by the womenfolk of the caste and decorated with mango and banana leaves. Those days coloured papers and lamps are used for decoration. On the festival day, early in the morning, the well fed buffalo dedicated to the deity, and the sheep, are brought to the temple in a procession. They are worshipped with Kumkum and turmeric powder. The person who is customarily chosen to chop-off the head of these animals, also performs puja to the buffalo. As the temple priest begins to chant spells, he cuts the neck of the animals one after the other. The blood of the principal sacrificial animal - the dedicated buffalo, is immediately collected in a vessel and mixed with specially cooked rice. This is locally known as charaga, a ritual material and immediately sprinkled around the temple and also along the ritual boundary of the village. This rite is locally known as charaga ḍhūyashay. Later the image of the deity is taken along the main streets of the village in a procession. Since it is the festival of low castes and blood is offered and most of the participants are drunk with alcoholic drinks, no women especially of high castes, participate in the celebration. They usually stay indoors and watch it through the windows. Offerings to the deity such as flowers, Kumkum and fruits are sent when the procession comes near their house through their men-folk.
Meanwhile the meat of the sacrificial animals is cooked and all the people including the visiting ones, eat together. Maravva is believed to be the deity of evil beings and the festival is celebrated to satisfy her. In return to their help and services the village leaders and the temple priest are offered with betel leaves and nut and also coins.

MAGICO-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Magic is connected with religious observances, in which men seek to control the supernatural powers. Another, which is far more intimately linked to religion, is found in ritual and ceremony, both of which are directed towards the supplication and appeasement of supernatural beings. Magic compels supernatural aids whereas ritual and ceremony operate on the assumption that divine beings, like men, can be moved to pity, appealed to for justice, pleased by sacrifices and offerings, and, if they are malevolently disposed, propitiated and even bought by gratifying their desires and appetites (c.f. Ralph, Bulls 1965:394).
The belief in magic rests on two fundamental principles that: (1) that like produces like, effect resembling cause; (2) that things which have once been in contact continue ever afterwards to act on each other. Tradition-minded villagers have great faith in the magicians and they believe that a magician can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it in advance; from the other that whatever he does to a material object will automatically affect the person with whom it was once in contact. Fraser (1936:1) says "one of the principles of this (magic) is that any effect may be produced by imitating it."

In homeopathic magic a magician who wants to harm another person prepares dolls in cotton or clay and runs a needle or a knife into its head or heart, believing that whenever the needle or the knife is pierced the image, his or her foe, will at the same instant be seized with sharp pain. This belief is deep rooted among the village folk, especially among the low castes of Basavapura.

The practice of enchantment by means of images is familiar to wazard of the village. The informant explained that a drop of blood, some clippings of his hair or varnes of his nails, a rag of the garment which he had worn,
sufficed to give a sorceror power over him. These relics of his person the magician kneaded into a lump of wax, which he moulded into the likeness and dressed after the fashion of his intended victim who was then at the mercy of his tormentor. The image then exposed to fire, the person whom it represented straight way fell into a burning fever, if it were stabbed with a knife he felt the pain of the wound. This imitative magic has been employed with benevolent intention of helping others.

The Basavapura villagers also believe that it is possible to get the person whom they love with the help of magic. For this the magician makes a doll or image of the person and prick the heart of the image and insert magical powders into the hole. Meanwhile he addresses the effigy by the name of the person suggesting it to accept his or her love.

It is a common practice to use amulets for cure and recently it has changed. During our field work it was recorded that a woman belonging to Hādar caste, arranged to tie a amulet to the right arm of her one year old child to cure dysentery. But when the child was not cured for ten days the mother got worried and later she was advised by a neighbour, who had faith in modern medicine, to take the
child to the hospital. Accordingly she took the child to the hospital in Bavangere and the child was cured. The mother, whom we interviewed, told that after this incident she lost her faith in magical cure and instead developed faith in the modern medicine.

Amulets are also worn to get protection against evil effects and to get security. During our field work we also came across a woman belong to Lingayat caste wearing an amulet made of silver and wooden beads. She told it was given to her by a Swami to whom she vowed to get cure for her nervousness, fear, etc. She was asked to wear it always and not to get it in touch with any polluting object. She said since then she is free from all those troubles.

The object of preserving the nek locally known as hile tale, from one year to another, is that the life giving presence of the spirit dwelling in it may promote the growth of the crops throughout the season, and when at the end of the year its virtue is supposed to be exhausted, it is replaced by a new one.

Belief in white and black magic is common. If a woman dries of her milk, crops fail, disease strikes, it is attributed to black magic. Villagers use a few emblems
which are inlaid or raised ornaments with designs or figures of persons, generally mythological and religious persons. The locket of this type brings luck to the wearer and the individuality of the person portrayed. So does the symbolic representation of the deity, whose aid is sought to bring back to the mind of the beholder the whole conception of the attributes and power of the being so represented. In Basavapura children and tradition minded men and women wear the locket which represents the local and other religious persons and also mythological persons or emblems of some wild animals like tiger, lion, elephant, serpent, etc. Muslims use symbols of Moon and Sun and the Hindus use different gods, animals and devices of shields, which represent evil spirits, magic and other supernatural powers.

To protect a newly constructed house from the haunting of ghost and other evil spirits, a huge shield (gorgon), which possess eyes unturned in horror, gleaming from the gloom, teeth bristling whitely in the open mouth. Hanging a painted cucumber or a coconut covered in a white cloth at the entrance or inside a house also serve the purpose.
Villagers believe that animal horns have some supernatural powers and protect them and crops against evil spirits and black magic. Horns of bullocks are used as charms in kitchen gardens, cattle sheds, on the top of the ceilings of homes. Horns of ram and goats are suspended at the entrance of the houses to scare away evils.

To protect infants from evil eye, amulets made in five metals, are tied to them or to the cradle. Betel leaves are burnt and holy water is sprinkled around cradle to protect the child against evil influences. To prevent the entry of evil spirits all those who enter a house where infants are there, are made to wash or dip their feet in water kept at the entrance of the house.

It is believed that a few places and objects provide shelter to evil spirits. Among them a lone and old trees, old houses, single rocks are commonly associated with this belief. Therefore, people, especially the children, expectant mothers, etc., are not allowed to go near them. Similarly a few periods in a day like dusk, mid-night, etc., are bad hours. New Moon days and days of eclipse, etc., are also associated with evil beings.
It is also believed that a few trees which are considered holy, should not be cut. Among them the Banyan and Bilva trees are sacred. Neem, Banyan and Arali trees are also associated with holy nature. Therefore, cutting or wounding of such trees is taboo. There is a belief that certain trees have the power to bring good effects like making child birth easy, bring fertility to women and so on. A barren woman is prescribed to take vows to a banyan tree and worship it early in the morning, after a ritual bath, to get children. When she goes for worship she is supposed to observe certain rules. She should go round the tree three time and perform puja to the image of a child made in wood and come home without neither talking to anybody nor looking back. Such observations will be for 21, 51, 71 and 91 days. The villagers whose belief is still at folk religious level, believe that this type of observation will certainly yield results.

The Basavapura people also have a number of blind beliefs. Among them taking vows, avoidance, abstemious are a few to mention. Barrenness is believed to be due to a curse or presence of evil influences in a person. To have children a barren woman is asked to go on a pilgrimage or perform certain rites.
The people of Bacoavapura also believe in a number of omens and are guided by them in all walks of life. Generally the omens are observed when a long and important journey is undertaken or an important matter is discussed. Appearance or crossing of a bird, an animal or even human beings is watched for omens. Similarly asking questions like where are you going, shall I also come with you, go after meals, etc., are bad omens. Further three omens once by male members and twice by women is bad. Crossing of cats from right to left, sound made by a lizard at a particular direction is considered a bad omen. A woman with plaited red hair, a widow, a new pot, a single Brahmin, droplets of rain, a bundle of firewood, an oil monger, a lame man, quarreling men, men in suffering, a leper, empty pots, bones, a bundle of dirty clothes, smoking fire, etc., are considered as bad omens. Good omens are pleasant conversation, to hear musical instruments, to meet a company of dancing girls, a few young women, an elephant, two Brahmins, four Ksititas, or a Sudra with a stick in his hand, fans, mirrors, diamonds, gold, fruit or flowers, braying of an ass from the east. It is a luck if a crow, parrot, a heron or a jackal passes from left to right.
The traditional minded, when undertake an important work or journey like the selection of a bride, etc., observe these. When get bad omens, they postpone the journey for a few minutes or if the omen is very bad, one may even cancel the journey.

**RITES OF PASSAGE**

An individual has to pass a series of phases from one age to another and from one stage to another. Among simple societies, such acts are enveloped in ceremonies, since to their mind no act is entirely free of the sacred. Every change in a person's life involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane. A woman's life is made up of succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings like birth, puberty, marriage, motherhood, death. For every one of these events there are ceremonies and the purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally defined. Srinivas (1965), Iekwaran (1966) and Kadetotad (1975) have described these rituals as Karana, Karya and Karma, which means the reason to act and the rite respectively.
Srimanta Karva:

This ceremony which is one of the most important events in the life of a woman, is observed when a woman becomes pregnant for the first time. Usually it is observed in the seventh month of pregnancy. The ceremony will be held either in the natal or conjugal home of the woman. Kinmen, friends and caste people are invited and given a grand feast. This ceremony is customarily the ceremony of women-folk and they sing songs and perform waving of sacred lamps to the expectant mother. Natal family members present her with a green sari, green bangles and green blouse piece, along with betel nuts and leaves, bananas, lemons, turmeric and vermilion.

For the Srimanta ceremony which will be held either in the morning or evening, the expectant mother takes a ceremonial bath and wears new dress, bangles and ornaments presented to her by her natal or conjugal families. The hall in which the ceremony is arranged, is specially decorated and at the centre a seat is specially made and decorated with designs drawn using rice-grains and jasmine and other flowers. The expectant mother is made to sit on it. In a few cases her husband is also made to sit with her, to her right. All the invitees, particularly women-
folk, sit around her and men-folk sit outside or in another room. Women-folk sing songs (folk and other songs) which are suited to the occasion. Five married women whose husbands are alive, wave the sacred lamps to her. After this the expectant mother gets the blessings of elders assembled there. Later the guests are treated for a feast and 'pan supari' is served. Later, the women-folk take the expectant mother to the temple of their favourite deity for a worship. After the worship, fruits and sweets are distributed to the children.

Birth rite:

Usually the first two deliveries take place in the natal home of a woman. She is brought here a few days or months earlier, depending upon the convenience of both families. Normally she never returns to her conjugal home after the Srimata rite.

Child birth is an important occasion to both the mother and child and also to the family. From pregnancy to child birth, the woman is treated in different ways and placed in a state of isolation and has to pass through different states like (1) separation, (2) transitional period with gradual removal of barriers, and (3) reintegration into ordinary life. According to Van
Deanep (1960) becoming a mother raises her moral and social position. Instead of being just a woman she is now a matron, instead of being a concubine she is an equal, a free woman.

Child birth defiles the house and the family members. Because, she is considered impure and dangerous or because her very pregnancy places her physiologically and socially in an abnormal condition. The pollution period differs from community to community. The Kurubas, the Nayar and the Mādars observe a birth pollution period of seven to nine days. On the eighth or tenth day the family priest is invited to perform a rite and purify the household. Among the Vīrasīvās birth pollution is not strictly observed; but lower castes observe a pollution period of nine or eleven days and middle castes observe for nine days only.

Purificatory rite, initiation and naming ceremony are normally celebrated together on the 3rd, 9th, 11th or 21st day, after the birth. On the initiation day the child and mother are given a ritual bath. The house and household objects are also washed and the main deity of the family is worshipped in presence of the family priest.
For the name to be given to the child the head of the family visits an astrologer who is a Jangama in Basavapura, with betel nut, leaves, and five coins. The latter chooses a name for the child on the basis of its birth time and the birth star. While giving a name to the child the family priest personally afficiates over the rites in case of ritually upper castes and only sanctifies holy water in case of other castes. In the latter case the caste priests like the Basayya, Gwarappa, Jogi or even an elder, sprinkles the holy water on the child, mother and the household objects and also give the name to the child.

Among Lingayats the ceremony is known as the Lingadharana, wearing of Lingam, the emblem of lord Shiva. Usually naming will be arranged in the third day under the supervision of the Jangama priest. First, the wash of the feet, Padodaka, is sprinkled on the house, household objects and all the members of the family. If the child is born in an inauspicious time, in order to remove the evil, a blanket (Kambali) and a piece of white cloth has to be presented to the Jangama, by the father of the new born. Cradle which is now decorated, and the family deity, are worshipped. Then the child is brought to the Jangama priest and he utters mantras and whispers name into its ears thrice. Then
the child is put into the cradle. The invitees, relatives, caste people and friends are given a grand feast. Besides these invitees, temple priest, the washerman and the midwife are also invited to the ceremony. The first two are traditional Sajana clients and their involvement is essential to remove the birth pollution. They are given cooked food, betel leaves and nut and a few coins.

Though the rite celebrated by the literates and illiterates is the same, the stress given to ritual aspect is different. The illiterate and low castes give rather more importance to religious rituals, purity and pollution. They also use this occasion to enhance their status and widen their contacts. On the contrary for the literate and urbanised group this is a simple rite and they observe very little importance to ritual purity and pollution. They use the occasion for social gains than ritual ones. Therefore, they give comparatively less or no ritual importance to birth rites. Even the names they give to the child are modern, like the names of movie stars and in most cases secular names as against the traditional ones.

Tonsure Ceremony:

The first hair dressing of the child is observed as a rite and ceremony, because it is for the first time
that the child is going to part with something from its body. The ritual is observed in its odd months, usually on a festival day, or the festival of the village deity or the family deity. It can take place in a shrine like Tirupathi, Dharma Mathala or Shreeshala before the deity to whom a vow is made.

For the rite the child is given a ritual bath. The barber who performs the rite, worships his tools and cuts a betel leaf first and then the child's hair. After cutting the hair the child is given a ritual bath and dressed in new cloth. If the families are better-off financially, they may present gold ornaments to the child. It is customary for the friends and relatives invited, to give gifts to the child in the form of cash and new cloth. For his services the barber is given a piece of new cloth, rice, jaggery, coconut and a few coins.

Initiation Ceremony

This ceremony is performed among Lingayats, Viswakarmas and Vishnavas. The initiation rite of the Lingayats is known as the Lingadhurana and both men and women are eligible for initiation under Lingayatism. For the rite the male candidate shaves his head and takes a
ritual bath and gets ready for the Maâkaa Sanskâra. He also wears only a sheet of cloth around his waist. Jângama priest utters mantras and instructs him the ways of worshipping God Shiva. A girl after ritual bath receives instructions from the priest and undergo initiation.

The Brahmanic groups like the Vishnav and Vaisnâkrama, do not initiate women and instead for her marriage serves the purpose. A boy who undergoes the rite shaves off his head and receives holy instructions from his teacher - priest. Henceforth he wears sacred thread on his body. He is also supposed to observe a few religious acts daily, without failure.

Puberty rites:

The event of first menstruation experience marks the transition of a girl from girlhood to young womanhood. It is a significant turning point both physiologically and socially in the life of a girl. This first menstruation event is celebrated as a rite of passage and celebrated on the onset of puberty. It is also the rite of intensification. During this period a girl is supposed to be polluted and she has to observe certain taboos. She is not allowed to enter the kitchen and family shrine and also touch any things in the house. She is taboosed to eat and sleep with other
members of the family. This pollution period is observed for 5, 9 or 13 days. But, today most of the families observe it for 3 to 5 days. On the last day the priest is invited to ritually purify the girl, family members and the house. That day the girl and all the members of the family take a ritual bath and the house is also given a ritual wash. The women-folk of the neighbourhood, relatives and invitees decorate the girl with ornaments and new dress. A special stage is put up and the girl is made to sit there as the women-folk sing folk and heroic songs suitable to the occasion. Finally the five married women wave the sacred lamp and also present her with gifts and new cloth.

Marriage ceremony:

Marriage is one of the most important events in the life of a woman and is important biologically, ritually and socially. After marriage she leaves her parents and moves on to her conjugal home — thus separating with one group and uniting with the conjugal kin. Marriage also transforms her from one social category to another and it involves a change of family, clan, village or residence. The change of residence is marked in the rites of separation, always primarily focussed on the territorial passage.
According to Van Gennep (1960:16) marriage is one of the rites of separation and transition with rites which insure either a preliminary incorporation into the new environment or a separation from an autonomous transition period. Marriage provides better security and as a rite of permanent incorporation of a girl into the new environment, which always results in union of individuals. Marriage among Basavapura villagers is an elaborate ceremony and involves different rituals and different caste and occupational groups.

Betrothal:

Marriage settlement signifies the starting point of marriage ceremony. The betrothal ceremony is locally known as Vilva prasta, Vilva karya and Bisakha karya. There are two types of Vilva - Senna Vilva and Dodda Vilva (c.f. Gurumurthy, 1976:123). During the former the bridegroom's parents, siblings and other close relatives visit the girl's residence with betel nut, leaves and flowers and present them to her as an indication of their willingness to accept her. The rite is made as simple as possible since it will be immediately followed by the marriage rite. If the marriage takes place a year or later, then the engagement or betrothal ceremony is celebrated in a grand manner, with all the pomp like a marriage. This is locally known as
Bodda Vilva: This ceremony indicates the establishment of a permanent social union and on this occasion, besides betel leaves, nut and flowers other items such as a sweet dish and fruits are distributed to relatives and family friends. To the bride-to-be a green sari, a blouse piece and a few ornaments are also presented. She is made to sit with the assembly wearing the new sari and ornaments. She is waved with sacred lamp and also presented with fruits and flowers. The groom-to-be is also presented with a pair of new clothes and a ring as an indication of marriage settlement. In a few cases the bridal couple-to-be are made to sit together like the bridal couple and a few rites are performed. After this rite normally the engagement will not break.

Mahurtham:

The next rite is the actual marriage rite. Marriage can take place at the house of the bride or groom or in a shrine. For marriage the party arrives a day earlier to the place of marriage. The family priest and the aathidevar arrange a series of minor rites which are socio-psychological in nature. As the auspicious minute arrives the bridal couple is arranged and brought for the main rite - Nāramahurtham. It is conducted in a specially constructed
A Vidrasiva marriage takes place in the presence of the founders of the faith, who are present in the form of Panchakalasa. The bride and groom are made to sit facing the panchakalasa (c.f. Handimath 1948) and the sacred lasso is tied around the neck of the bride. The girl who sat to the right of the groom now change her place and henceforth sit to her husband's left, indicating her new place in the society; next to that of her husband.

A few more rites are performed by the newly married couple, together. Finally the newly married couple is brought outside for the blessing of the assembly, in the form of showering of sacred rice. This is followed by a grand feast and distribution of betel leaves and betel nut, fruits or coconuts to all the invitees.

**Funeral:**

Death rituals are the last life cycle rituals performed on behalf of an individual. Death is both a rite of transition and incorporation. As Van Gennep (1960:146) says that death affects the formal complexity of rites of passage but not their internal structure. The family which loses a person permanently has to change its relations and status in the group or society and arrange for reintegration (c.f. Gurumurthy, 1976:129).
Immediately after the death the body is placed to the customary position. The news of death is sent to all kinsmen and the well wishes of the family, through messengers belonging to Nādar caste. As the expected kin arrive the corpse is arranged for the funeral rite. First, it is washed and dressed in the best dress. Lingayats invite Jangama priest to officiate over the rites. On the other hand the carpenter prepares the bier to carry the body and decorates it with mango leaves and flowers. The Nādars attend to the digging of the burial pit, according to the directions given by the Jangama priest. The type of the grave to be dug depends upon the status of the deceased.

The corpse of a married person is carried in a bier and in sitting position. He is also buried in the same position. Whereas unmarried persons are carried by only two persons and in sleeping position and also buried in that position.

If the dead person is married, his wife is also made to take a ritual bath and wear new saree brought by her natal home and sit next to her husband. Finally, she performs a last worship of her husband. This symbolises her final parting with him: a permanent separation. Before the body is placed in the pit a few rites are performed.
The turban, the symbol of family headship, is transferred from the corpse to the eldest son. After placing the body into the pit a few more final rites are performed. The bangles and the mandastra are taken out from his wife and placed on his lap. The ritual mark which signified her marital status is also removed from her forehead to indicate her widowhood. Then a final worship is made and assembly shower flowers and leave the place. Finally the pit is filled with soil.

It is an obligation on the part of families in the village to participate in the funeral of a fellow villager. Usually the eldest member of the family attends the funeral and help in the funeral activity. The different artisan castes like the carpenter, washerman, piperan, kedar, etc., attend to their customary duties. It is also customary to give all of them with gifts to commemorate the loss or separation. A number of post funeral rites are observed. Immediately after the body is lifted the house and the surrounding is cleaned and washed. On the third day after death a purificatory rite is performed to which members of every caste and kith and kin are invited. First the tomb of the person is worshipped. The priest removes pollution from the house and the members of the family. On the first day or any day after that which is convenient to
the family, the Shrādha or the Kallara Sampradāha, is celebrated. It is believed that by this day the soul of the departed reaches the heavens and to mark this a rite is observed.

On this occasion dishes which were favourite to the dead are prepared and served, to the invitees. Hindus observe this day as the 'Unification day' - when the parted soul is believed to go and join the ancestors in heaven (e.g. Kadotad, 1975:112).

In this way the different rites and rituals celebrated in Basavapura provide ample scope and opportunities to the women-folk for interaction. In fact a few family and caste level celebrations are exclusively feminine activities. However, the women have limited roles to play in village level rites and rituals.