Religion is still one of the most vital factors, responsible for guiding the fate of the settlement of Dindur Tana (in Dharwad district). The residents of the Tana have a strong belief in the existence of deities and spirits. They believe that there are spirits behind all evils and miseries that befall them. The researcher has adopted a few definitions regarding religion which are mentioned below.

Religion is a universal and pervasive institution in human society. Of all the manifestations of man's intellectual and social life, religion stands most elusive of all the beliefs, thought, and action. Religion is found at all levels of culture, primitive or civilised. In India we do not find any primitive society without religious beliefs and practices. All religions consist of a mental attitude regarding the supernatural.

Radeliff Brown defines religion as having originated just as a means for social survival, i.e., out of a sense of dependence on it. It is the fear of supernatural control and punishment that brings about adherence to a norm of behaviour which is essential for social survival.

Religion is entwined with culture and is inter-related with social institutions and maintains the social relationships that prevail in society. Religion contributes towards social integration and group solidarity and strengthens social control. Religion shows the reality of ideas, modes of living, ways of thinking and patterns of acceptance. This is why Mair (1972, 210) says that religion is a system of belief as well as a system of relationship and action, which is directed towards entities the existence of which is not open to observation. Different authors have different views about religion, but it is a common fact that it concerns supernatural order of beings, forces, entities, behaviour, welfare and connected with the individual and private, collective and social life demanding duty, participation and interaction to socio-cultural life as a process for further diffusion. Religion is the mirror of the society. Religion regulates the social order and authority. Further, it regulates the social activities for peaceful living in the society.
That is why, religion is accepted as a belief and practice*. (Quote* in Sarthak Sengupta, 1994: 222). In primitive societies religion often merges into magic, but the worship of supernatural forces. Magic deals with means to control them to gain certain ends. Early religion also overlaps with mythology as a body of stories about gods and events that reflect beliefs and practices of a people.

In the modern time, life and religion sometimes merge into philosophy but again there are essential differences. Religion deals with salvation, philosophy with understanding. Mysore Census Report 1891 notes that the religion of Lambanis is "Vishnuvats, and their principal object of worship is Krishna, Banashankari. The goddess of forests is also worshipped and they pay homage to Basava on grounds dissimilar to those professed by the Lingayats. Basava is revered by the Lambanis because Krishna had tended cattle on his incarnation."

**God and Goddess**

Let us try to understand some gods and goddess of the Lambanis which are as follows:

**Sevalal (Seva Bhaya):** Generally Sevabhaya is one of the most important respectable gods of the Lambanis. Sevalal is the chief god of the Lambanis. He was born in Gutti near Mangalore, Bheema Naik and Dharamani Bai were his parents. In every Tanda, Sevabhaya shrine is a central institution. Here they hold their council meetings and perform Bhajana in Sevabhaya temple. Every activity of the Lambanis is held in front of the Sevabhaya temple. Sevalal is a saint. Bheema Naik and Dharamani Bai did not have children for a long time and they were blessed with a child by the grace of goddess Mariyamma because Mariyamma treated Sevabhaya as her priest. But Sevalal did not agree to this. Mariyamma gave trouble to Sevabhaya. The cattle in the house and also the grains were burnt. He lived the life of poverty. Again and again Mariyamma gave trouble to Sevabhaya. That is why Sevalal feared death. Several persons agreed to become the priest of Mariyamma.

In addition, they have family gods, to which they show special reverence. The god of Tirupati, whom they know by the name of Balaji, stands as a family deity for many of them. Many families keep the images of Balaji in their houses and worship them periodically. On the Shivaratri day, they all fast till the evening. Their other gods are Tulaja Devi, Banashankari,
Tulaja Devi is believed to be a pious Lambani woman who deified by immolating herself as a Sati on the funeral pyre of a person to whom she had been engaged to be married.⁴

Generally, almost all the Lambanis of Dharwad District, have built temples for Sevalal and Mariyamma. In front of the temple are hoisted flags. One is red and the other one is white. The white one is for Sevalal and the red is for Mariyamma.

The Lambanis of the Dinar Tanda celebrate all the Hindu festivals. They give much importance to the festivals. The important festivals celebrated by the Lambanis of Dinar Tanda are as follows:

1. Ugadi
2. Gouri Festival (Theej Borayero)
3. Dasara
4. Deepavali
5. Holi

1. **Ugadi**

Ugadi is one of the Hindu festivals. Lambanis also

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celebrate this festival in every Tanda in the Dharwad district. Generally, the tribe celebrates this festival on the first day of the Hindu month, March or April. On the day of the festival, they decorate their houses, whitewash them, adorn the entrance of the houses and decorate them with mango leaves. On the day of Ugadi, they invite their relatives from different Tandas and sweets are prepared. They never eat non-vegetarian food and drink liquor on this day. The tribe believes that the direction of the moon rising predicts the new year to come. Bhajana also is arranged at night in their houses. They very much enjoy the Bhajana. It is a festival of joy and happiness, affection and goodwill. These people naturally like pleasant things to happen to them on this day, so that they may be happy throughout the year. A few days before the festival, the walls are whitewashed with calcium (Chunna). On this particular day, all members of the family get up early in the morning and clean the house, decorate the floor by using cowdung. All the members in the family take a purificatory bath and wear new clothes. Mango leaves are tied to the front of the doors. This festival has a special significance for the Lambani cultivator. He inaugurates the annual cultivation by ploughing five or nine rounds in his field either on the Ugadi day or the day said to be as auspicious. The plough and the bulls are worshipped after applying turmeric powder and vermilion and a coconut is broken in the field.
Thcej Borayero (Goddess Gowri Festival)

Thcej Borayero is the Lambanis' main festival. We can find this festival in every Tanḍa. It is the sacred act of sowing the grains of wheat in bamboo baskets filled with earth and manure. The grains sprout and grow. Thcej is a festival of women. The festival falls during the month of August or September. But in this Tanḍa the festival is held in March or April. The chief (Naik) of the Tanḍa has to permit the performance of the festivals. The festival is held about ten days. Especially, the young unmarried girls after taking bath wear clothes and carry new baskets filled with earth, manure and wheat. Groups of women go to the head (Naik) of the Tanḍa. The chief's wife selects a few unmarried girls and hands over the baskets to them. But these girls follow certain traditions. They have to eat tabooed items like foot without salt, turmeric and garlic. Women in their period of menstruation should not touch the baskets. This pious vow is to bless the grains of wheat to sprout well without turning yellow. Friends and their relatives are invited to participate in this festival. The baskets are kept in the temple. Every day the girls bring water from the well in the morning and evening. Sweets are offered to the Gods.
Theeji Thodero

The participants offer money according to their mite, with baskets on their heads. The girls sing and dance. After the ceremony is over, wheat plants are put in front of the Panchas. Then the Panchas give permission to pluck and offer to gods. This ceremony is called "Theeji Thodero" and the participating girls are offered ₹5 to ₹10 each. The festival closes with carrying the baskets to the tank or to the canal near the Tanda by throwing them into the water. When the festival closes, women come back to the temple and they have tea or a few women have liquor.

This is a common festival of Lambanis in all the Tanandas. They give very much importance to this festival. Every Lambani celebrates this festival.

Dasara

This is also one of the main Hindu festivals. The Lambanis of Dindur Tanda also celebrate this festival and so also every Tanda in the Dharwad district. The Lambanis of Dindur Tanda, for this festival, collect money and materials like jawar, ragi, wheat, rice, etc. and purchase sheep for sacrifice by the men of the Tanda. Poor people also contribute to the festival. Dasara is a
Festival. When the worship starts all people of the Tanda, including invitees and young and old men and women, gather at the temple, and deities are worshipped. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed sheep or goat. When the ritual ends, the sacred food is distributed. First the chief of the Tanda Naik gets a bone piece. Karabhari and Davo get two shares each. Invitees from each Tanda also get a bone piece. The group dance of the Lambani men and women during the Nasara is a beautiful one. They use some musical instruments like jange, nagaara, etc., and the music goes till the worship is over. In this festival each day is worshipped a particular deity, like, Duragamma, Maramma, Banashankari, Kali, Shakti, Saraswati, etc.

**Deepavali**

This is popularly known as the festival of lights. It is called Diwali by Lambanis in the area. It is also called Narakachaturdasi and is celebrated in the month of October with religious fervour and gaiety. It is one of the very important festivals of not only the caste Hindus but also of the Lambanis. In this Tanda, the chief of the Tanda calls on the elders to discuss the mode of observing the festival. These people voluntarily contribute for the purpose of observing the festival. They buy more than one sheep. They sacrifice the sheep before
the temple at sunset. The mutton of the sacrificed sheep will be distributed among assembled people. The Naik, Karabhari, and Davo, get bone pieces. Only the cooked food is distributed. This tradition is called "Saloyi". The assembled people return to their houses with their share of meat. After this, they celebrate 'Kaliamavas'. At the night the Laxmi Pooja is performed.

Dhabaker Dero (Worship of Ancestral Spirits)

The next day of the Laxmi (Worship) they worship the spirits. Before they perform this spirit worship they clean the house with cow-dung. And also whitewash their house. The holy fire is invoked, sandal wood pieces are thrown into the holy fire ("Homa"), rice, Payasa, ghee and other dishes are offered to propitiate god and in obeisance to the ancestral spirit. As holy fire burns small balls of the offering are dropped into the fire with prayers to the ancestral spirit. Coconuts are broken and offerings are made to ancestral spirits and the mother goddess. Prayers are offered for the welfare of the whole community. Thus their God Meetubhukya and Goddess of the festival are appeased with prayer and offerings.  

Holi

In the month of March, Holi is celebrated. The Lambanis observe the Holi festival, for the celebration of which money is collected in towns and villages. On the Holi day, the headman and his wife fast, and worship images of mud representing Kama (the Indian Cupid) and his wife Rati. On the following day, cooked food is offered to the images, which are then burnt. Men and women sing and dance in separate groups, around the burning fire. On the third day, they again sing and dance, and dress themselves in gay attire. The men snatch the food which has been prepared by the women, and run away amid protests against women, who sometimes chastise them. The Holi festival is observed by the Lambanis of Dinur Tanva. Men and women go in groups to their neighbouring villages. They sing and dance in front of shops and residences and they collect money and materials for expenses of the festival. This custom of singing and collecting money is not to be taken as begging. But it is only pooling contribution. This custom is also found among the French women who are also Aryans. The celebration of the Holi itself has changed. Nowadays the young men and the children throw red powder at each other and also squirt coloured water at anyone who comes their way just as is done in Hindu

villages and towns. The younger people do not even know that this is an innovation, but old men confirmed the researcher's impression that it is a new practice in so far as Lambanis are concerned.

"HOLI NA DAVALI DOYEE SAGI DHENADO, HANABHAYEEK, HOLIN AYE DHAMARARA PAMANI, HOLINA MANGIER DANDYARO DHUMDAR, VAJI YEMA MANGIRA KHASIKHALA BOKADO, VAJIYEMO MANGIRA GUNJAPAPAD CHARANA, GERIYANA KARYERE RURO SANAGARANA, GERIYANA KARYER RURO SANAGARANA. HANABHAI DAVALINA KARYIN TAMANUMA GODANO, DAVALINA MANGIRA ZALATO DIVALO, PANCHANA KANYATI GODANO PUJAI, VAJI YEMA MANGIRA KHASI SALA BOKADO."

Meaning of the Statement

The recital of the song of praise on the occasion of the Holi.

Summary

Holi and Deepavali are sisters. Listen, O, sisters, Holi welcomes consignment to fire. On the occasion of the consecration to fire Kama. The children born during the year are made to salute. After Lord Kama is consecrated to fire, a sheep or goat
is sacrificed. A dish of wheat flour and Purees are prepared on the occasion of the Holi. Two participants in the consecration to the fire of Kama are treated as guests. The cattle are worshipped in their stable on the occasion of the Deepavali and young ladies lamps on this occasion and on the 'Kari' day a sheep or goat is sacrificed.

Holi is a festival of Rag (Songs) and Rang (Colour) and Holi songs are specially sung only during a period ranging from Basant Panchami to Holi. The Lambani of Dindur Tanda sing holi songs in their own dialects.

Although, in principle, from the Day of Holi till the Holi pyre is set on fire, playing with colour is prohibited. Yet in fact, during the morning hours the children and young persons play among themselves with coloured water and mud. Normally, coloured water is carried and thrown either with buckets or pitchers or with bamboo syringes.

After the Holi pyre is set on fire at about 5-30 in the morning the villagers sing a few Holi songs and come back to their respective houses singing and dancing. The Holi proper, starts at about 8 a.m. Young boys after spraying colour on their
Bhobhis (brothers' wives) assemble at a few places in batches. Whenever any new batch meets another batch on the way, each batch throws coloured water and mud on the other. This exchange of colour continues late till 2.00 p.m. respectively.

**Pregnancy Ceremony**

In fact, it is the custom formerly, that when a Lambani woman was married and sent to her husband's house, she seldom or never returned to her father's house. But of late, they have adopted the practice of sending the woman to the parents' house for the first delivery. During the wife's pregnancy, the husband observes the usual abstinence, such as not killing an animal or carrying a corpse. 7

After the woman is pregnant for seven months she is sent to her parents' house. At present ceremonial gifts would be given to her. When the pregnant woman departs from the house of her parents, some of the people and also the educated people give some gifts to the pregnant woman. The same custom is observed when she leaves her parents to come to her in-laws. The first delivery of her first child should take place in the house of her

parents. If not, nothing bars her from giving birth to her first child in the house of her husband or parents-in-law.

**Birth Ceremony**

We find the birth ceremony in every Hindu community. But this differs from one society to another.

In the olden times, when the Lambanis wandered from one place to another place, they preserved their tradition and customs. During the journey, if a woman delivered a male child, they beat the drum, to let know the birth of a child. If a woman gave birth to a female child, the drum would not be beaten. On the birth of a child, if it is a male, the father has to distribute molasses and dry coconuts to his castemen. The mother and the child are bathed once or twice a day.

**Dalava Dhokayero**

This ceremony is held after three days of the birth of a child. This ceremony is called "Dalava Dhokayero". A small pit is dug in front of the house. In the pit is kept cow-dung and fire. On the woman's head, embroidered "Simbi" will kept. And she goes near the pit and touches the holy water in the pit with the edge of her left toe seven times. She touches with the left
leg three times and with right leg four times and the cow dung, 
fire and the lamps are thrown into the pit and are buried.

An auspicious song sung by the elderly woman as follows:

VENATA HASTHI HASATHI EYES
ROTHI ROTHI JAYES
LAYPO LAVANA LAYNPARAJAYES
SUVO SUTHALI LASYE
VENATA HALAN PHALAN HAKANES
SANA DHERO LAYN JAYES
VENATA SUTI PAROLEM PARJAYES
SUN SUTALI SVOLAYNA AYES

Meaning

The meaning of the song runs thus: Let the child live long. Let the child's life be blessed; let no evil diseases touch the child. This is how the elderly women pray to the Goddess Ghatimata. When this prayer ends, sweet is prepared, jaggery and ghee distributed to all the assembled. Then the "Muttaide" (the elderly respectable woman) carrying the cupolas (water pots) on her head scattering rice grain, enters the house.
**Naming Ceremony**

This ceremony is popular in all the communities. But now-a-days the educated Lambanis perform this ceremony. A child will be dressed in new clothes before being put in the cradle. The tradition is that the child's father's sister must be present. In case she cannot come, the nearest kin will be present. Only after she puts the child in the cradle, christens it by a particular name, the kith and kin, the parents and the women present call the child by that name five times. Then after the ceremony, relatives and guests give gifts to the child. After the naming ceremony is completed, all guests and relatives are treated with sweet feast.

**Javal Vatarero (Hair cutting ceremony)**

This ceremony takes place in a grand manner. It is believed that the ceremony will bring good future to the child. The child's hair after the first tonsure is offered to the family deities like Mataral, Tulaja, Halajee, Satisatti, etc. This ceremony is also called "Balalatta Vatarero". On this occasion, a sheep is sacrificed to appease their family deity. The ceremony of the maiden offering of the male child's hair to the god adored by the Lambanis is called "Javal Vatarero". 
On this ceremony their house is cleaned with cow-dung, with light and perfumes they adore the god and then the child is brought to the place of worship. Here the maternal uncle's role is important. The maternal uncle takes a pair of scissors and symbolically cuts the hair from the child's head three times. The maternal uncle is offered new clothes or 5 to 25 rupees. The hair so removed is dropped on the mother's lap. On the occasion some women sing the song which is as follows:

**MARI TULAJA BHAVANI SAYIVEJO**

**BALARO THONA LATTA CHADAYE MAVALI**

**BALARI THU SAYI VEJOYE YA**

**SAMUDARA HOLOYAMA BALA PADAJAYE**

**JAGADAMBA WONTU THARALENYE**

**HARAGHADI HARADEMA, SUTHER SAPANEMA**

**JAGHER MANEMA MAVALI RENUYE**

**BALARO KAYA VAJALO DEVI KARANYE**

**LATALENA VARSHARE OMARA YADI**

**THEMYUE**

**JADI JADOLAMA, KHOKHARA KANYEMA MATHAYA**

**AMADI ANGOLEMA MAVALI SAYI VEJOYE**

**MARI THULAJA YADIYE SAIVEJO**
Meaning

Oh mother Tulajabhanav, protect us; accept the humble offering of hair; protect the child; when the child is about to be drowned in the turbulent sea, make him float. Oh mother, be with the child when he thinks of you and when he dreams in sleep. Make him live long in the forest and in the temples, in moments of yearning in life. When the problems haunt him, save him with pious prayers. With these verses, the ceremony will come to an end.