

# Popular Temple Culture and Jatharas in Jangaon Region - A Case Study on Palakurthi Jathara

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The temple was the most importance Vedic (Hindu) religious form of Institution. The popular culture of Indus Valley Civilization comprising 'Mother Goddess' and worship of Nature combined later with Vedic Gods and Goddesses to form composite culture though the founders of the Aryan Civilization. The Vedic had differences their respective cultures were protected to form composite culture in the later periods. As the centuries rolled the rituals as part these two cultures assumed the shape of religion. The reason for the influence can be found in the spirituality inherent in the vedas and their practice in the daily life. Out of the sustained practice emerged different rituals, festivals, Jatharas and beliefs etc. 'Jathara' is one of the aspects of the 'organization of religion. The government has institutionalized them in the form of patronage, construction of temples, appointment of priest's and administrators the response from the devotees has been accordingly. The Jangaon region is the centre state for various socio-cultural and religious fairs and festivals of temple culture. Palakurthi village being part of the region in heirs that legacy. culture of mass celebrations is that it benefits the political groups and corporate business strategies. Concept of worship is at some level in these jatharas, but celebration has become the important aspect for the mass people, as it acts as a diversion from their day to day mechanical life and work stress.

**Keywords:** Celebration, Culture, Devotees, Festival, Influence, Orthodox, People, Religion.

## 1. Introduction

The study is an attempt to explore the importance of Temple culture and the status of various Jatharas in Jangaon region with a special emphasis on palakurthi jathara. The state has been encouraging this culture in terms of heritage and revenue in view of illiteracy and poor welfare of mass people.

According to Karl Marx “People were the creators of history, not only that they were creators of popular culture”. The temple was the most important Vedic (Hindu) religious form of Institution<sup>1</sup>. From the inscriptions we gather following terms Devalayamu, Degulamam, Suragaramu Thirumuttam, Prasadamu, Ragudi, Meda, Devastanam, Alukumu, Stanamu, and Koyil, etc., were used as synonyms for ‘Temples’. The building of temples in India was the natural corollary of the image worship which was again the result of man’s desire to give definite form to the deity, the God almighty. And the building of the temple, for the idols or symbols of various deities became popular in India due to the people’s desire to get religious merit for themselves, and for their dear ones.

The temple system aggregated the cultural aspects such as music, literature, art, fashion, dance, film, television and radio that are consumed primarily by non-Elite groups such as the working and lower classes (as were as substantial segments of the middle class). It has attracted the attention of sociologists first in members of the Frankfurt school for example, argued that popular culture is trivial, homogenized, and commercialized and dulls people’s minds, making them passive and easier to control. A related argument is that because this culture is controlled primarily by elites (through ownership of the mass media, for example) it tends to reflect their interests. The trivialization and sexual objectification of women in film for example, has been criticized by many feminists as serving the interest of male viewers and male dominance<sup>2</sup>.

And others, in particular British societies engaged in cultural studies, argue just the opposite, that popular culture is often a vehicle for rebellion against the culture of dominant groups. From this perspective, popular culture is not a steady bland diet handed down from above in order to dull and pacify subordinate groups and reflect and promote elite interests. Instead, it is an arena full of diversity, conflict and struggle over the content of culture, and thereby, the shape of social life.

The popular culture of Indus Valley Civilization comprising ‘Mother Goddess’ and worship of Nature combined later with Vedic gods and goddesses to form composite culture through the founders of the Aryan Civilization. The Vedic had differences their respective cultures were protected to form composite culture in the later periods. As the centuries rolled the rituals as part of these two cultures assumed the shape of religion. Further, with evolution of the human society in India, the latter has witnessed the growth of religions like, 1. Vedic religion (or Hinduism) 2. Jainism and 3. Buddhist of the above three religions, Vedic religion, influenced the Indian society immensely and has been continuously doing so. The reason for the influence can be found in the spirituality inherent in the Vedas and their practice in the daily life. Out of the sustained practice emerged different rituals, festivals, Jatharas and beliefs etc.

The onset of Modern Government provided needed impetus to these festivals, fairs and Jatharas thus allowing them to be alive. Further the government has institutionalized them in the form of patronage, construction of temples, appointment of priests and administrators the response from the devotees has been accordingly. The inter-play of the institutionalization and the response of the devotees have strengthened the hold of religion. ‘Jathara’ is one of the aspects of the ‘organization of religion. In order to understand the Jathara and its significance it is pertinent to know the meaning of the ‘Jathara’.

Definition of Jathara : People worshipping their own deities, Gods on several auspicious days of the year of the several aspects of spirituality, Jathara is one among them in Jangaon region

of the Telangana state. It continues to be so till date. ‘To know is continuous significance in the Jangaon region a study of “palakurthi Jathara” is examined as an example<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. PALAKURTHI JATHARA

Palakurki or Palakurthi village is located 60 km from the old district head quarters of Warangal, and 30 km away from the newly formed district headquarters of Jangaon. The famous ‘HariHara’ pilgrim centre, is situated on kshiragiri hillocks’, popularly these hills are considered to be perennial source for the flow of milk, thus the hills were named. Every year Jathara is held in the months of February and March in the name of the disciple of palakurthi Somanna and during the rest of the year, devotees come to offer prayers and perform rituals. ‘Shiva Rathri’ festival has a special significance for their temple. On this day palakurthi Somanth’s birth day and Someshwara Lakshmi Narasimha’s marriage ceremony is celebrated by the devotees with religious favour, devotees come from the neighboring states Karnataka, Maharastra, addition to the Telangana. The state endowments ministry has been supporting in economic and administrative teams regularly as to meet the demands of the pilgrims.

The Jangaon region is the centre state for various socio-cultural and religious fairs and festivals of temple culture. Palakurthi village being part of the region in heirs that legacy. It has assumed significance as it houses Shiva Kshetram.Somanth is said to be lived in during 1160-1240 A.D. according to Bandaru Thammayya’,who authored “Palakurki Somanatha Kavi”<sup>4</sup>. In the same work he mentions that Somanatha has born into an ‘orthodox Brahmin family. As he was born on the hills of Someshwara Swamy he was named as Somanatha by his parents Sreeyadevi and Vishurami Devudu. Somanatha later evolved into different names, for example Somanna, Somakka, Somanath, Someshwar, Somla, Soman, Somhalaxmi, Somanarsaiah, Somulu, Somashekhar, and Somendar, Somabrahman etc<sup>5</sup>.

In this way many of other Jatharas and new trends have been taken birth in this region. Some of those important Jatharas like below

### POPULAR TEMPLES AND JATHARAS IN JANGAON REGION

Sl.No.	Place	Name of the God	Jathara Duration	Number of Visting Devotees
1	Palakurthi	Sri Someshwara Laxmi Narasimha Swamy	Particularly (9)days, generally year long	150000
2	Valmidi	Sri Valmiki Maharshi, Sri Seetharama Chandra Swamy	10 days (Srirama Navami)	25000
3	Bammera	Sri Pothanamatyia Sri Seetharamachandra Swamy	3 days	5000
4	Chinna Maduru	Sri Venugopala Swamy	3 days	5000
5	Kadavendi	Sri Venkondayya Laxmi Narasimha Swamy	15 days from Holi & Ugadi	50000
6	Jeedikallu	Sri Seetharama Chandra Swamy (Veerachala hillock)	Particularly on Kartika Pournami and Srirama Navami, generally year long.	250000
7	Komaravelli	Sri Mallikharjuna Swamy	Maha Shivarathri year long	500000

8	Kodavaturu	Sri Siddeshwara Swamy	Maha Sivarathri 9 days & year long	150000
9	Bekkallu	Sri Ramalingeshwara Swamy	Mahasivarathri 9 days & year long	10000
10	Chilpuru	Sri Venkateshwara Swamy (Bugulu)	Year long	100000
11	Lingampalli	Sammakka Saralamma Tribal koya Goddesses	3 days in the month of February	50000
12	Devaruppula	Sri Uppula Mallikharjuna Swamy	5 days	5000
13	Nawabpet	Sri Kodanda Ramaswamy	7 days Srirama Navami	20000
14	Ellarayani Thorruru (Palakurthi)	Peddammadevi Goddess	5days	10000
15	Madhapuram	Sri Sevalal Maharaj of Tribal Lambadas God	3 days	20000
16	Vanaparthi	Sri Beerappaswamy	3 days	10000
17	Ammapuram	Sri Venugopalaswamy	3 days	5000
18	Govardhanagiri	Sri Venugopal swamy Sri Seetharamachandra swamy	3 days	10000
19	Ghanpur (station)	Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy	3 days	10000
20	Nelapogula	Hazrathsayyad Abbas shahvali	3 days	10000



Picture depicting JATHARA

Along with the above mentioned popular temples and Jatharas of the region, some other new

trends were started and have been following by the people in this decade. For example, Durgamma jatharas, Bodrai installation celebrations, Sammakka-Saralamma Jathara and lambadas Sevalal Maharaj celebrations have been celebrating by the common people all around the state. These new trends are affecting the village (rural) society and its culture in many dimensions.

### 3. Conclusion

Historically, socio-economic, political and cultural order has been governed by religion. The religion sustains itself by reproducing and recreating itself in various spheres of social life in the society. Religion has many physical forms and practices and of its varied forms. Jathara, a festival in Telangana intertwined with the cultural life of the people. People seek sort relief and diversion from day-to-day routine and mechanical life, a reason is that they having the capacity of expense i.e., betterment cost of living. Modern period and media are creating interests towards tours and entertainment. It has been increasing by the mass effect. Culture of celebrating parties on the occasions is supporting the point. An important factor is that the culture of mass celebrations is that it benefits the political groups and corporate business strategies. Concept of worship is at some level, but celebration has become the important aspect. As said in the above, religion has been taking many forms and changing them itself from time to time to capture the mind sets of the people and to continue its domination over the society. If it is separated from the people's own interests, the culture of the people will remain as the honourable, remarkable and reasonable practice as a Jathara or a festival.

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  4. Dontike Biksham (Devotee)
  5. Shankaramanchi Shyam Prasad (writer)
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