

## **Roots of Hindusim: Local and Popular Culture**

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### **Abstract**

In this great country with tentacles that strike far out, back into the mists of time, with all the deities, gods and godlets, it is but to be expected that there would be many a strange, unknown rituals, customs gods and goddess or cults. India and its all embracing genius contemptuous shades need to be explored, written about and represented as a force of continuity and binding tie.

It is a strange fact that neither Brahmanism nor Hinduism has ever founded a church, as the West and Islam understand it, or instituted any central authority and endeavored to produce any creed, formulated a ritual or produce any recognized rule of righteousness. Moreover, there are expected to be various unknown cultures and cults the roots of modern culture though unexplored.

Without going into the debate of 'what is Hindu culture or Hinduism?' In theory Hinduism is the worship of an ineffable being in a Trinity. This is the theory by which the Brahmin or other Hindu theologian endeavors to explain Hinduism. In practice, the parameters of Hinduism are more than this. The difference is in theoretical and practical parameter visible at two levels namely urban/popular/national and rural or local level.

Local Hinduism is the root of popular culture of Hinduism in which it is not the religious aspect of being a Hindu is at priority but also the ritualistic aspect. To be a Hindu, or at any rate a nominal one, it is still but necessary to conform to the usual customs and ways to Hindus.

**Keywords:** Local Culture, Popular Culture, Sthala Puranas, Gramadevtas, cults, Hindu deities

### **OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Hinduism consists of numerous beliefs and practices and has given rise to different socio-religious institutions. At present Hinduism is a diverse conglomeration of doctrines, cults and ways of living. To enter the Hindu pantheon of Gods, Goddesses

and other powerful being for the first time is much like an Indian bride marrying into a large extended family. Similarly, there is a large family of deities with whom a Hindu interacts regularly in domestic, worship deities s/he may seek out in local temple, visit deities s/he may encounter only periodically or maybe even a single time- on a pilgrimage, during festivals and/or as a result of illness or a new vow taken for a specific cause- and still others s/he may know narratively but whom s/he does not encounter ritually and traditionally. The families of deities with whom Hindus interact may be created through literal or figurative kinship or they may be created particular on regional bases and/or are related through pilgrimage vows; others families are created through domestic or temple worship.

As Redfield tells us, in peasant society one see a relatively stable and very roughly adjustment between local and national life. A developed larger social system in which there are two cultures within one cultures, one social system composed of upper and other of lower halves. Hence the culture of a peasant community cannot be autonomous. To maintain itself it requires communication with the local community of thought originating outside it. The peasant village is witness to the long course of interaction between the community and centers of civilization. Peasant culture has an evident history and the history is not local. It is a history of the civilization of which the village is a local expression. In a civilization there is a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition of the largely unreflective many. The great tradition is cultivated in schools and temples, the little tradition work it out and keep itself going in the lives of the unlettered in the village communities.

Another emendation to the great little traditions formulation has been suggested by Mandelbaum in terms of the functional division of the Sanskritic and local pantheons. J.F. Staal, a Sanskritic maintains that it is fallacious to equate the Sanskritic and the great cultural traditions. He says the oldest and apparently most pivotal forms of the great traditions are often of a few types that may be described as non-sanskritic. Mandelaum argues that the high Sanskritic gods are almost invariably found to be benevolent and keep the world in order and bestow supernatural merits, while lesser gods grant specific boons pertaining to everyday existence but are inclined to be malevolent if displeased or defiled. The forum, which he calls the transcendental complex, has long term welfare as its religious aim, system maintained as function described in Sanskritic texts. The latter, which he calls the pragmatic complex, has personal or local exigencies as its religious form and individual welfare.

Shiva, Vishnu and Devi appear throughout India and the Hindu diaspora, although they may take local names and have local narratives. In contrast, Gramadevatas are tied to particular geographic places, the land itself and very rarely immigrated with

diasporic communities. Gramadevatas traditionally dwell on village boundaries in open air shrines or under trees or in a field. However urban neighborhoods have grown up around many of them, open air shrines have become more fully established shrines or permanent temples.

Gramadevatas are often portrayed in academic writings as living in discrete narrative and traditional world from those of puranic deities. This distinction of being a separate entity from the mainstream should be reassessed on the bases of Sthala Puranas, Folklore, and legends. The relation of inter-dependence and continues interaction of Sanskritic and non-sanskritic Indian deities should be re-examined added with an anthropological dimension.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The local and popular, both the cultures of Indian heritage share their share of effects on society. In an explored way they act as a binding heritage, thought is limited to outskirts of country sides much alike modern religious culture.

On the other hand urban people of great traditions, are seems to weaken the thread of continuity with loosing the connection with our old heritage preserved in form of Gramadevatas, folklores, local temples etc. and rural or little traditions are being shelved or limited to one generation. Hinduism at local level consists of numerous beliefs and practices and has given rise to different socio-religious-cultural institutions at national level. The link of continuity and inclusive nature of Hinduism needs to be retraced.

### **CONCLUSION**

Hinduism is not only about Trinity or Vedic Gods, Hinduism, its inclusion of various socio-culture aspects, customs, inclusion of Godlets of other culture etc., found at local level. A link between modernity and local culture needs to be established to bring out the true nature of Hinduism that is adaptive, evolving diverse but as India Culture.

People of little traditions need to be connected with great traditions and vice-a-versa. The communication of continuity, development, adaptive nature and its diverse colors needs to be represented at national level as Indian Culture.

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