

INTRODUCTION

Worship has its roots traced back to primitive times, when early human connects with the natural forces around them such as the Sun, Fire, Water, Mountains, Trees and many more. They started worship through simple rituals and offerings. The curiosity of the primitive people experienced through many ways including, the light from the Sun, the warmth of the fire and the life sustaining water, which stopped his thirst. All of these made them wonder and thus they began worshipping natural elements. They were sure that these natural elements sustain their life. As the time passed, these worships evolved varied forms according to the society structures. Many kinds and approaches of bhakti or devotion developed and the spiritual practices in sacred spaces like temples became common. The fundamental importance of worship always remained as a universal aspect of human life, as a path of expressing devotion, seeking guidance and attaining spiritual fulfilment. The significant development in the paths of worship marked with the evolution of Navavidhabhakti-the nine approaches towards the Supreme Almighty. These nine paths made the worship more inclusive and personalised, allowing the devotees to choose the path of worship suitable.

The main source of Navavidhabhakti is from Srimad Bhagavatam and the nine kinds of devotion are Sravanam, Keertanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam and Atmanivedanam. Among the Navavidhabhakti, Dasya bhakti holds significant place, which focus the servitude nature of worship, expressing humility and surrender to the Supreme Almighty. Dasya Bhakti is an inclusive approach of all the other eight bhaktis incorporated within it. Hence, Dasya bhakti is the prominent and comprehensive approach of prayer towards the God.

Dasya bhakti can be experienced in the lyrics of many types of Compositions. The most prominent type of composition in which, the Dasya bhakti towards the God is fully emphasised and beautifully incorporated is Haridasa Sahitya. Haridasa Sahitya is a sacred devotional literature composed by Haridasa saints, who followed Dvaita Vedanta philosophy. Dasya bhava towards the God, forms as one of the prominent approaches of expression found in these sacred poems, songs and verses. Through simple language, Haridasa Sahitya helped common people understand the spiritual teachings of Dvaita Vedanta.

Haridasa saints are poets who followed Dasya bhakti approach of devotion and they expressed the same through the lyrics of many of their compositions with humility and servitude towards the God. Dvaita Vedanta holds its practice as the 'Jeevatma' [devotee] as the individual soul, who is always dependant on Paramatma [the God]. Haridasas always connect with Dasya bhakti, as they follow Dvaita Vedanta. They see themselves as servants of the divine, dedicating their lives for serving their master [the Supreme Almighty]. They inspired countless followers to adopt the practice of humility and selfless service through their compositions.

This work mainly focus on the Compositions of the Haridasas-Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa.

Defining the problem

The Haridasa Sahityas are sacred poems based on Dvaita Vedanta philosophy composed by Haridasas. Dasya bhakti is one of the core characteristic features of Haridasa Sahitya. But Dasya bhakti and the Dasalakshanas included in the lyrics of their compositions are not focussed or retrieved as a core part, from the lyrics of Haridasa Sahitya. Most of the Haridasa Sahityas and its traditional values are unfamiliar to the people outside Karnataka as it is not propagated much, except Purandaradasa Compositions. Many of the Haridasa Sahityas are not yet composed in Carnatic ragas and talas and not musically analysed to highlight its beauty when performed in apt ragas and talas. Many of the tuned compositions are not available easily with notations.

To define the Problem the Dasya Bhakti essence and the Dasa lakshanas in the Compositions of select composers Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa are traced out from detailed lyrical analysis. The select compositions are also musically set in Carnatic ragas and talas and musically analysed to point out the musical beauties.

Study area

The study area is based on the living time of the selected Haridasas - Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa, from 14th to 18th century with selected three Compositions of each Composers which are taken for analysis. In total eighteen compositions are analysed.

Review of literature

S. No	Title	Scholar/ Author	Institution	Year
1	Vadiraja's Yuktimallika-A Critical study	Gururaj K Nippani	Department of Sanskrit, Karnatak University, Dharwad	1986
2	Different Moods of mystic devotion in ancient India	Samel Priti Parag	Department of History, University of Mumbai	2000
3	Concept of Navavidhabhakti and its significances in the Compositions of Saint Tyagaraja and His Highness Swathi Tirunal	Bijulal C H	Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Kerala	2009
4	A Study of songs of Purandardasa in the social historical and religious context of Vijayanagara Empire 1484 to 1564 AD	Divya T	Department of History, Pondicherry University	2011
5	Vijayanagara as a seat of Music	Arati N Rao	Department of Music University of Mysore	2013
6	Studies in the poetical works of Haridasa Sidhantavagisa	Biswas Rita	Department of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta	2016
7	Dasya-prema-The servant love for Krishna	Rasik Mohandas	Bhakta Bandhav Bhakta.org-Article	2020
8	Dasyam-Becoming the Lord's servant Dvaraladisadevidasi	Dvarakadisa devidasi	Back to God head Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement- Article	2023
9	Kannada Geya Prabandhas 13th to 18th Century Haridasas	Ragini A R	Department of Cultural studies and Performing arts, Jain University	2024

1. **Vadiraja's Yuktimalika-A Critical study** by Gururaj K Nippani, Department of Sanskrit, Karnatak University, Dharwad
 - Study is based on the Vyasakuta Vadiraja's work Yuktimalika
 - The critical exposition of Yuktimalika mentioned
 - Another works of Vadiraja has been listed
2. **Different Moods of mystic devotion in ancient India** by Samel Priti Parag
Department of History, University of Mumbai
 - Characteristics of Mystic devotion is explained
 - Bhakti is described along with classification
 - Bhakti as rasa or moods is explained
3. **Concept of Navavidhabhakti and its significances in the Compositions of Saint Tyagaraja and His Highness Swathi Tirunal** by Bijulal C H, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Kerala
 - Navavidhabhakti is defined
 - The impact of each bhakti in Tyagaraja and Swati Tirunal Compositions
4. **A Study of songs of Purandardasa in the social historical and religious context of Vijayanagara Empire 1484 to 1564 AD** by Divya T, Department of History, Pondicherry University
 - Bhakti cult in South India is explained
 - Dasa tradition is described
 - Purandaradasa songs and Vijayanagara imperial Ideology is detailed
5. **Vijayanagara as a seat of Music** by Arati N Rao, Department of Music
University of Mysore
 - Bhakti movement evolution is explained
 - Haridasas life sketch is described
 - Compositions in Vijayanagara period is studied
6. **Studies in the poetical works of M.M Haridasa Sidhantavagisa** by Biswas Rita. Department of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta
 - The Dramas of Haridasa Siddhanta Vagisha is explored
 - The Mahakavyam of Haridasa, Rukminiharanam is analysed

7. **Kannada Geya Prabandhas 13th to 18th Century Haridasas** by Ragini.A.R
Department of Cultural studies and Performing arts, Jain University
 - Geya Prabandhas of Haridasas has been explored
 - Haridasa tradition between 15th to 18th centuries in Karnataka
8. **Dasya-prema-The servant love for Krishna** by Rasik Mohandas-Article
 - Dasya and the speciality of Prema bhakti is analysed
 - The Dasya bhaktas of Vrindavana is focussed
9. **Dasyam-Becoming the Lord's servant** by Dvaraladisadevidasi-Article
 - Servant of the Servant concept is described
 - Examples of characters followed Dasyam is defined

Research Gap

- The Dasalakshanas depicted in the compositions of selected Composers has not yet been analyzed
- The teachings of Dasa Compositions to the society for a good path of living, remains unexplored.
- The Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa has not been studied as a lineage.
- Dasya bhava-the main characteristic feature of Haridasa Sahitya and the importance of Dasya bhakti in Haridasa compositions are not explored
- Except Purandaradasa Compositions, all the other Compositions are not met with proper tuning and notations are unavailable, especially outside Karnataka

Objectives

Title of the Thesis: **Exploring the Dasya Bhakti from the Selected Dasa Sahityas**

- To trace out the Dasa lakshanas by analyzing the lyrics of the Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa
- To expose Dasya Bhakti references from select Sacred Resources
- To highlight eighteen Dasalakshanas in detail, traced out from the Compositions to benefit to the society.
- To trace out the evolution of the Bhakti element through nature worship from historic period to the modern period

- To tune and notate the selected lyrics [sahitya] of the selected composers in suitable ragas and talas
- To highlight the musical aspects of the Compositions of selected Haridasa Composers
- To convey and propagate the compositions of selected Haridasas, to the students, musicians and people outside Karnataka.

Scope of the Study

- The study is based on Compositions [Haridasa Sahitya] composed by Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa
- The main scope of the study is to bring out the Dasya Bhakti essence in the compositions of the select six Composers.
- The purpose of the study is to emphasize the Dasalakshanas from the selected compositions of the six Composers.
- The study also aims to tune and notate select Compositions of the select Haridasas.
- Except Purandaradasa, the compositions of the other composers are unfamiliar to the people outside Karnataka. The study is intended to raise the awareness of Haridasa Sahitya composed by these composers to the people and to propagate these, through the performance and lectures of the Compositions

Thesis Statement

The selected Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, and Vijayadasa are notated, tuned, propagated and analyzed on the basis of lyrical as well as musical aspects.

Resources

Primary Sources

- Meeting with the subject experts specialised in Haridasa Sahitya
- Attending sessions and classes from Gurus in the field
- Observing lecture demonstrations and programs of experts in the field connected with the topic, uploaded in YouTube and watching live programs

Secondary Sources

- Books and references connected with the topic
- Articles and other Thesis works from Shodhganga and libraries

Methodology

Title of the Thesis: **Exploring the Dasya Bhakti from the selected Dasa Sahityas**

Types of Research methods adopted under this title are:

Historical Context

- Tracing the evolution of nature worship from primitive period
- Referring the evolution of Navavidhabhakti from Srimad Bhagavatam
- Finding the references of Dasya Bhakti from Sacred Resources

Biographical Research

- Describing the life sketch of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja. Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa, detailing their way of living by following Dvaita Vedanta
- Explaining the contributions and works of the mentioned six Composers

Observational method

- Identifying the Dasya Bhakti qualities through religious talks of experts
- Retrieving eighteen core Dasalakshanas from the selected Dasa Sahitya Compositions

Analytical framework

- Analysing the Dasya Bhakti essence incorporated in the lyrics of selected compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa
- Analysing the lyrics of the compositions and notating it to the suitable ragas and talas
- Analysing the selected Compositions musically, to trace out the Dhatu -Matu beauties of the Compositions.

Chapters

The Thesis is divided into five chapters **excluding Introduction and Conclusion**

Introduction

Chapter 1: **Modes of Bhakti from Select Sacred Resources**

Chapter 2: **Uniqueness and Essence of Dasya Bhakti**

Chapter 3: **Life History of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa**

Chapter 4: **Bringing out the Dasalakshanas [Characteristic Features of a Dasa], from the Compositions of selected six Dasakutas**

Chapter 5: **Dhatu-Matu [Music and Lyrics] Analysis of Selected Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa**

Conclusion

Chapter 1: Modes of Bhakti from Select Sacred Resources

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the evolution of worship started from the nature worship prevailed from the primitive period till the modern period, including the evolution of Navavidhabhakti

Describes the nature worship [Sun, Water, Fire, Mountains, Trees] prevailed in ancient period [earliest time, up to the 6th century AD]

- Nature worship in prehistory period [Before invention of writing]
- Worship during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]
- Worship in Medieval period [6th century to 18th century AD]
 - Worship during the early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]
 - Worship during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]
- Worship in Modern period [18th century to the present period]
- Evolution of Navavidhabhakti -nine kinds of devotion towards the Supreme Almighty.

The chapter also highlights the incorporation of other eight bhaktis within the seventh form -Dasya bhakti, highlighting its significance and prominence as a dominant and inclusive form of devotion.

Chapter 2: Uniqueness and Essence of Dasya Bhakti

The second chapter details the uniqueness and servitude mode of Dasya Bhakti and the core connection of Dasyam with the Haridasa Sahitya - Verses and Compositions by Haridasa saints.

- Detailed definition and servitude mode of approach of Dasya Bhakti is explained
- Highlighted and Illustrated Core thoughts of a Dasa, who follows Dasya Bhakti with two main examples from sacred texts.
- Explained the perspectives on Dasya Bhakti by selected Acharyas-Vedavyasa, Narada and Madhvacharya
- Described about Madvacharya and his Dvaita Vedanta teachings
- Correlated Dasya bhakti through Dvaita Vedanta
- Comprehended the soul of Dasya Bhakti through Haridasa Sahitya- the literature of Dasa Saints
- Defined the prominent role of Haridasas, as the pioneers of Haridasa Sahitya.

Chapter 3: Life History of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa

This chapter details the elaborated life sketch of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa.

- Described the birth, childhood and education of Sripadaraja and the way he chose the path of becoming a Vyasakuta. Highlights of his works and contributions are given as well.
- Detailed about Sripadaraja as the follower of Madvacharya's Dvaita Philosophy
- Pointed out Sripadaraja, as a pioneer of Haridasa Sahitya
- Elaborated on the life sketch of Vyasaraja including birth, childhood miracles, education and the situations of his life which paved way for becoming a Vyasakuta.

- Listed the main works and contributions of Vyasaraaja and about his relationship with Sripadaraja, as his Guru
- Explained Vadiraja's personal details like birth, childhood, education and his association with his Guru Vyasaraaja.
- Summarised the important works and contributions of Vadiraja
- Showcased the life journey of Vadiraja focussing his simple life style
- Detailed the life history of Purandaradasa as a disciple of Vyasaraaja and as a Dasakuta, promoting Haridasa Compositions to the people.
- Described the unique life story of Purandaradasa who sacrificed his wealth and material life and submitted his life to the God.
- Outlined major contributions of Purandaradasa to Haridasa Sahitya
- Explained the life story of Kanakadasa from his birth, childhood and Education. His transformation of life to a Dasakuta after a lot of struggles is explained as a teaching lesson.
- Highlighted the role of Kanakadasa as the disciple of Purandaradasa and his noted contributions and works are listed out.
- Elaborated the birth, childhood and education of Vijayadasa and his life as a disciple of Purandaradasa.
- Elucidated the list of Kanakadasa's other works and contributions.

**Chapter 4: Bringing out the Dasalakshanas [characteristic features of a Dasa],
from the Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja,
Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa**

This chapter is a detailed analysis of the selected Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa, to bring out the core Dasalakshanas depicted in the lyrics.

- Analysed three Haridasa Compositions of **Sripadaraja** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist and the elaborated concept of Pallavi and Charanas' are explained further.
- Description of the total concept, out of the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Different palettes of Dasya bhava traced out from selected lines are noted and given in a table.

- The core concept Dasalakshana, retrieved from the composition is pointed as the final finding
- Studied three Haridasa Compositions of **Vyasaraja** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist.
- Detailed concept of Pallavi and Charanas' are given as a follow up.
- Explanation of Dasya concept portrayed through the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Noted the different shades of Dasya bhava, traced out from selected lines are given in a table.
- The core concept Dasalakshana of the composition is pointed as the final finding
- Analysed three Haridasa Compositions of **Vadiraja** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist and the elaborated concept of Pallavi and Charanas' are explained further.
- Description of the total concept out of the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Expressions of Dasya bhava traced out from selected lines are noted and given in a table.
- The core concept Dasalakshana of the composition is pointed as the final finding
- Studied three Haridasa Compositions of **Purandaradasa** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist.
- Comprehensive thought of Pallavi and Charanas' are given as a follow up.
- Explanation of Dasya concept portrayed through the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Noted the different shades of Dasya bhava traced out from selected lines are given in a table.
- The core concept Dasalakshana of the composition is pointed as the final finding
- Analysed three Haridasa Compositions of **Kanakadasa** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist and the explained concept of Pallavi and Charanas' are described further.

- Description of the total concept out of the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Expressive Dasya bhavas traced out from selected lines are noted and given in a table.
- The core concept Dasalakshana of the composition is pointed as the final finding
- Studied three Haridasa Compositions of **Vijayadasa** and meaning of each Composition are given as a gist.
- Concept of Pallavi and Charanas' are given as a follow up.
- Elucidation of Dasya concept portrayed through the lyrics is given as Scholar's insight.
- Noted the important Dasya bhavas traced out from selected lines are given in a table.
- The core concept Dasalakshana of the composition is pointed as the final finding

Chapter 5: Dhatu-Matu [Music and Lyrics] analysis of selected Compositions of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa

The fifth chapter analyses selected six compositions of the selected Haridasas, each with one musical aspect. As the main focus of the thesis lies on retrieving Dasya bhakti by lyrical analysis, the scholar has attempted only selected aspects of selected musical Compositions for musical analysis. This is to show the expression of Dasya bhava when sung in suitable ragas and also to express that these compositions have scope for musical analysis as well.

- Analysed gamakas based on Panchadasa gamakas from the composition 'Narayana ninna' composed in Kanada raga and Adi tala
- Traced out the gamakas based on Dasavidha Gamakas from the composition 'Haridasara Sanghake' in Brindavana Saranga raga and Khanda Chappu tala
- Examined the Visheshha Prayogas of Raga Dvijavanti included in the composition 'Ninna Dasara Dasa' set to Khanda chappu tala
- The significant beauty of Sangatis and Bhavapoorva aspect has been traced out from the Composition 'Irabeku Haridasara' in Bahudari raga and Adi tala

- Pointed out the Prasa beauty varieties like Adi prasa, Dvitiyakshara prasa, Antya prasa and Anu prasa from the composition ‘Dasa dasaramaneya’ in Hindola ragam and Rupaka tala
- Highlighted the Svarakshara beauties like Sudha Svarakshara, Suchita Svarakshara and Misra Svarakshara from the composition ‘Dasara bhagya vido’ composed in Sreeragam and set in Adi tala.

Conclusion

Title of the Thesis: **Exploring the Dasya Bhakti from the selected Dasa Sahityas**

The findings of the research work have been given in the Conclusion

- The first chapter described the different facets of worship prevailed from the primitive period till modern period with the evolution of Navavidhabhakti.
 - The second chapter focusses the uniqueness and essence of Dasya bhakti through various examples from sacred texts.
 - The third chapter describes the life sketch of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa and Vijayadasa
 - The fourth chapter traces out the Dasalakshhanas depicted in the select compositions of the selected composers.
 - The fifth chapter analyses the Dhatu-Matu aspects, to show up the musical beauties in the select compositions of six composers.
1. Limitations of the study
 2. Scope for further studies
 3. Works cited given after each chapter
 4. Relevant materials added in the Appendix.

Chapter - 1

Modes of Bhakti from Sacred Resources

Introduction

1.1 Introduction-Nature Worship

1.1.1 Worship in Ancient period [earliest time up to the 6th century AD]

1.1.1.1 Prehistory period [Before invention of writing]-Sun, Water and Fire

1.1.1.2 Worship of Sun during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]

1.1.2 Worship in Medieval period [6th century to 18th century AD]

1.1.2.1 Worship of Sun during the early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]

1.1.2.2 Worship of Sun during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

1.1.3 Worship of Sun in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

1.1.3.1 Worship of Water during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]

1.1.3.2 Worship of water during the early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]

1.1.3.4. Worship of Water during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

1.1.3.5. Worship of Water in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

1.1.3.6. Worship of Fire [Agni] during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]

1.1.3.7 Worship of Fire [Agni] during early Medieval period [6th century AD to 13th century AD]

1.1.3.8 Worship of Fire[Agni] during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

1.1.3.9 Worship of Fire [Agni] in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

- 1.2 Trees- Significance of Sthalavriksham**
- 1.3 Mountains and Temples-**
 - 1.3.1. Arupadai Veedu-Six abodes of Lord Muruga**
- 1.4 Uniqueness of Navagrahas**
- 1.5 Bhakti and Bhakti Margam**
 - 1.5.1. Navavidhabhakti**
 - 1.5.1.1 Sravanam**
 - 1.5.1.2 Keertanam**
 - 1.5.1.3 Smaranam**
 - 1.5.1.4 Padasevanam**
 - 1.5.1.5 Archanam**
 - 1.5.1.6 Vandanam**
 - 1.5.1.7 Dasyam**
 - 1.5.1.8 Sakhyam**
 - 1.5.1.9 Atmanivedanam**

Research Outcome

Conclusion

Chapter - 1

Modes of Bhakti from Sacred Resources

Introduction

A Part of Indian Culture that has developed and persisted through the ages is bhakti, or devotional worship, which has its origin in natural world, the Universe and the divine. This Chapter explores the modes of Bhakti reflected in India's sacred traditions, tracing its evolution from primitive age to the structured devotional practice in medieval and modern period.

The journey begins with nature worship, where early humans respected natural elements like Sun, Fire, and Water as manifestations of the divine, even before the invention of writing. By the time progressed, these kinds of worships evolved into formalised rituals during the ancient period, where the Vedic and post Vedic traditions systematized worship. The medieval period witnessed the Sun regain prominence as a major deity, while water, fire and air continued to be worshipped as life sustaining forces.

Another significant dimension of worship connects the sacredness of trees, which particularly focus to the concept of Sthalavriksham [temple trees] and the spiritual significance of mountains, which were often regarded as abodes of the Gods. Arupadai Veedu [Six abodes of Lord Muruga] exemplifies the same.

A unique feature of Indian Bhakti is the Navagraha -nine planetary deities, which integrates astrological worship into devotional practices. Finally, the chapter delves into Navavidhabhakti -Nine forms of Devotion, highlighting each mode Sravanam, Keertanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam, and Atmanivedanam. These paths open a distinct way of spiritual fulfilment.

Among the above bhaktis, Dasyam is often regarded as one of the primary or foundational forms of devotion. Dasyam includes all other bhaktis within it. Hence Dasyam is the most profound approach of prayer towards the Supreme Almighty.

1.1 Introduction - Nature Worship

Significant components of Nature Worship

A deep connection with nature is emphasized by earth-centered components. Nature worship reflects a spiritual approach, that acknowledges the interconnection of humans and the environment, and reflects a harmonious relationship with it. It is an important phenomenon to note that, the nature worship can be visible in various forms and

is found in different cultures and religions around the world. Nature has different forms, which is considered as powerful deities by the human beings. Hence the knowledge about various nature deities is mandatory to facilitate the path of early worship followed by human beings.

The Scholar has categorised the study of nature worship into four periods to analyse the worshipping attitudes prevailed

- **Worship in Ancient period [earliest time up to the 6th century AD]**
 - Prehistory period [Before invention of writing]
 - History period [after invention of writing]
- **Worship in Medieval period [6th century to 18th century AD]**
 - Worship in early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]
 - Worship in Medieval period [13th century to 18th century AD]
- **Worship in Modern period [18th century to the present period]**

1.1.1 Worship in Ancient period [earliest time up to the 6th century AD]

1.1.1.1 Prehistory period [Before invention of writing]

Primitive man learnt everything from nature. When he saw the sunrise, night, rainfall, stars, fire and many more, man believed that beyond his control, there is a power. In due courses, he started respecting those powers and started to worship. A kind of spiritual practice known as "nature worship" is centered on the respect and adoration of the natural world and its elements. Mountains, rivers, planets, trees and animals are all considered as nature deities and all these were connected to particular Gods and Goddesses. This chapter discusses about the way in which human being started worshipping nature deities and the in-depth belief of them towards the power of the nature deities. The connectivity of the God with the deities of nature has been followed by man from the very early ages.

- **Sun-** Primitive man considered the Sun as a fiery spirit in the sky, casting its golden rays as a blessing upon the land. The Sun was strong symbol, rich of magic for the primitive man and their life was influenced by the daily rise and fall of the Sun automatically. They understood the change of seasons and realised that the warmth and light provided them comfort for their living.

- **Water:** Primitive man experienced water as a strange and wondrous element, quietly flowing through their environment. At first, they didn't understand the importance of Water. They discovered rivers and streams by chance, taking the water almost unintentionally without realizing it could satisfy a deep, unidentified need for their body. As they began to drink from these fresh sources, they felt a refreshing joy, awakening sensations of comfort and relief in their bodies. They eventually realized that water was more than simply a resource and it is an essential element for their existence, which made them chose to live close to lakes and rivers. Living close to these water sources provided them with not just hydration but also a place to fish, wash, and gather, transforming their daily existence. As they learnt to appreciate the significance of water, it became a central element of their rituals and a source of inspiration for their myths and stories.
- **Fire:** Primitive man initially found that, when they struck two stones together, spark of fire is formed in front of them. They were fascinated and started experimenting it again and gradually they learnt to change the spark to flames. They experienced the warmth and use of fire as they learnt to control it, and they came to understand that it could offer both protection from wild creatures and gives light in the dark. They experimented with cooking after learning that heat might improve food's flavor and digestibility, improving their overall health and wellbeing. As they valued this life-giving energy that provided them comfort and relief, fire took on a spiritual meaning that sparked rituals and devotion.

The Scholar segregates the worship of nature deities such as Sun, Fire, Water, Trees, Mountains, and so on from the historic era, or after writing was invented, to the modern day. For instance, the scholar is explaining about the worship of Sun, prevailed from the beginning of historic era-after the introduction of writing, which is followed by the medieval and modern period as well.

- At first, the scholar is analysing the different kinds of **worship of Sun** followed during the below periods
- Worship in History Period [After invention of writing]
- Worship in early Medieval Period
- Worship in Medieval Period
- Worship in Modern Period

1.1.1.2 Worship of Sun during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]

- **Sun-** Sun has been worshipped continuously from the primitive times. Vedavyasa compiled the Vedas, providing insight and confirmation of many forms of nature worship, including the reverence for the Sun, Water, and Fire.

The Scholar is giving a sample of hymn, **the sixth sloka from Aditya Hridayam**, which is included in the **Valmiki Ramayana's Yuddha Kanda section. Aditya Hridayam is a sloka on the glorification of the Sun-God, recited by Sage Agastya to Lord Rama for the benefit to defeat Ravana during the battle time in Ramayana epic.** The hymn is devoted to Lord Surya Narayana, the Sun-God. Sun means Aditya and Hridaya means heart. It is among the most potent and revered hymns about the Sun God.

'Daivataishcha samaagamyā drushtu mabhyagato ranam

Upaagamyā braviidraamagastyo Bhagavan rishi' (Iyyer 70821)

Meaning -Sage Agastya who was with the other God approached Lord Rama and said as follows...

'rashmimantam samudyantam devaasura namaskritam

Poojayasva vivasvantam bhaskaram bhuvaneswaram' (Iyyer 7832)

Meaning: Worship the Sun-God, the Universe's monarch and ruler of the worlds, who is revered by all beings in the Universe, including Devas and Asuras.

'Asmin kshane mahaabaaho raavanam tvam vadhishyasi

Evamuktva tadaagastyo jagaama cha yadhaagatam' (Iyyer 7841)

Meaning: After telling Rama that "you would kill Ravana within a moment", Agastya Maharshi went back to the war field. Agastya had come to advice Rama, pointing about the sacred hymns of the Sun-God. Agastya encourages Rama by his ability of meditational power.

'Atha ravi ravadannirikshya raamam

Muditamanaah paramam prahrshyamaanaha

Nishichara pati sankshayam veditva

Suragana madhyagato vachastvareti' (Iyyer 7843)

Meaning: Aditya-the Sun-God along with other Gods, appears and grace Lord Rama with great mental and physical strength and ordered to kill Ravana.

Situation of Adityahridayam: In Valmiki Ramayana there is a situation of battle when, sage Agastya was there along with the Devas and Asuras in the battle field. Lord Rama faced the difficult task of defeating Ravana and was becoming nervous. Sage Agastya approached and counselled Rama to chant the Adityahridayam mantra, a potent hymn devoted to the Sun-God- Surya, because he recognized the significance of gaining strength from the heavenly powers of nature. The mantra was essential for raising Rama's spirits and confidence to defeat Ravana. Rama started chanting the mantra and defeated Ravana in the battle.

Scholars view: The story conveys that, in the epic period also, the strong belief exists that the significance of Aditya Hridayam will increase the vitality, strength, and energy within a person. The worship of Surya is more than just a physical practice and it represents enlightenment, mental clarity, and the pull down of mental barriers. Reciting this mantra gives the self-assurance and mental clarity to overcome obstacles. **Though these evidences are from the epic period, the practice of worshipping Sun-God is followed till today in spiritual activities.** Rama's path was therefore brightened by Agastya's words and the confidence of Rama was gained through the mantra. This led him to victory and the restoration of dharma in the world.

This instance demonstrates how Rama is able to utilize his mental and physical skill through the practice of reciting the Aditya Hridayam mantra.

1.1.2 Worship in Medieval period [6th century to 18th Century AD]

1.1.2.1. Worship of Sun during the early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]

- **Sun- Addanki stone inscription [ninth century AD]** gives the proof for the circumstances concerning the building of the Sun Temple and Sun-God.

Addanki is currently located in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

The lines 9 to 12 in inscription mentions about Pandarangas, who were the worshippers of Lord Siva, gave land showable with eighty candies of paddy to the God Aditya -Batara. As this proof has been given as the gift was given to Aditya-Batara of Dammavuram or the Sun-God, it is sure that the Sun Temple at Dammavuram existed at that time. (Sinha 18).

1.1.2.2 Worship of Sun during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

Konark Sun Temple is situated at about 35 kilometers (22 miles) northeast of Puri city, on the coast in the Puri district of Odisha, India, dating back to the 13th century CE. Around 1250 CE, King Narasingha Deva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty is credited with building the temple. There is an architectural wonder, which is shaped like a gigantic 100-foot (30-meter) high chariot, with enormous stone-carved wheels, pulled by seven horses, representing the Sun's movement across the sky. This temple stands as a monument to prove that Sun worship was common in the 13th century, particularly among the Kshatriyas and many regions of India.

1.1.3 Worship of Sun in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

India worships the Sun deity -Surya on Makar Sankranti. It is observed on January 14th of each year (15th January in leap years), which commemorates the Sun's passage from the sign of Sagittarius (dhanu) to Capricorn (makara). The event is devoted to the Solar deity, Surya, and is seen as a new beginning because this shift corresponds with the Sun's journey from south to north. Numerous multi-day celebrations are held throughout India to commemorate the anniversary. Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi are also worshipped on this festival. Prayers, holy baths, charitable work, the distribution of traditional sesame-jaggery sweets, kite flying, bonfires, folk dance and music are all common in India to celebrate this festival.

India's yearly celebration of **Makar Sankranti** is a vibrant proof of the nation's long-standing custom of Sun worship, which continues at present.

That was the detailing of Sun worship existed during different periods.

The Scholar has presented only a sampling of Sun worship from the ancient period to the present and has not addressed all forms of worship of the Sun prevailed.

The next listing is on to the stream of water worship, as water plays a significant role in supporting day to day life of the people.

Secondly, the Scholar is analysing the different kinds of worship of Water followed during the below periods

- **Worship in History Period [After invention of writing]**
- **Worship in early Medieval Period**
- **Worship in Medieval Period**
- **Worship in Modern Period**

1.1.1.3 Worship of Water during the History Period [After invention of writing-Up to the 6th century AD]

- **Water-** The following is a hymn from Rigveda 7.49.2 which focusses the worship of water in the historic period

*‘Aapo hi stha mayobhuvas ta ana Uurje dashaatana
Mahe ranaaya chakshase’* (Arya & Joshi 10.9.1)

Meaning: The sloka conveys the respect towards the Water – ‘O Water, May you [water] support us and give us strength. Give us vision in big conflicts. Waters, you are the origin of joy, so give us the ability to experience plenty and wonderful insight.’

Scholars sight: The mantra highlights the strength and purity of water, which is necessary for life as well as for providing both physical and spiritual support during difficult times. In ancient Indian culture, these mantras were used to show regard and respect for water, acknowledging its essential role in supporting life.

The Rigvedic phrase above provides strong evidence that water was valued and worshipped during the Vedic era. The Rigveda's references to water emphasize its holiness and ritual significance, mirroring the prevalent practices and traditions of the time.

1.1.2.3 Worship of water during the early Medieval period [6th century to 13th century AD]

- **Ponds [Water] - Padmatheertham Pond:** The Padmatheertham pond, which is connected to the Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple [8th Century], holds a unique position in the socio-cultural and religious background of Thiruvananthapuram's [Kerala] past. The historic body of water stands as a silent reminder of the history of the Fort and its surroundings. The pond now stands for the cultural identity within the contemporary urban setting.

The temple's history began in the eighth century, when Nammalvar, an Alvar poet, made reference to it in his songs. The Chera dynasty is thought to have constructed the temple. Over the ages, the temple has undergone renovations and expansions by a number of emperors, including the Travancore kings. The monarch of Travancore, Marthanda Varma, restored the temple in the 18th century to the temple's present layout.

These illustrations demonstrate the intimate relationship that exists between important rivers/ponds and temples, highlighting the crucial role that water play in India's religious and cultural landscape. Ponds and temples have a long history of being related in many different cultures, with ponds frequently found close to temples. There may be

practical, religious, and cultural usages to this association. **The devotee take bath in the temple pond to get body purification before entering into the temple and automatically he attains mind purification as he enters and prays inside the temple.**

In various parts of the world, there are numerous other rivers and bodies of water that are significant in terms of religion and culture. Rivers are often considered sacred because of historical events, and religious beliefs. Rivers near temples are generally beneficial for temple abhishekams and also for the living of the common people around that premise.

1.1.2.4 Worship of Water during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

- **Godavari River:** Nashik's Trimbakeshwar Temple [1755-1786 17th to 18th century], is connected with the Godavari river. This temple was constructed by third Peshva Balaji Bajirao on the site of an old temple. Godavari is one of the principal rivers which is known as South Ganga due to its significance. Trimbakeshwar, situated close to the Godavari river's source, is one of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines devoted to Lord Siva. (Sangh)

This holy river has long been valued for its spiritual and cultural significance and is connected to the temple-related rites and ceremonies. The Godavari River's close closeness to the Tribhakeswar Temple emphasizes the importance of the water to the religious worship at the time.

Worship of Water in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

- **River Ganga:** River Ganga passes through the Kashi Vishwanath Temple [1780], which is located at Varanasi. This temple is a testament from the 4th century, which was later destroyed by the Ghurids in 1194. Malhar Rao Holkar, the Maratha ruler, rebuilt the temple in 1742.

Religious faith on Ganga is on three main points:

- Dead bodies are put in River Ganga to attain mukthi for the soul
- Burning the dead bodies in the bank of the river Ganga to attain mukthi for the soul
- Ashes of the burnt dead bodies are put on River ganga to attain mukthi for the soul

This significant temple has Lord Siva as the main deity, who is considered as the embodiment power to give mukthi [salvation]. It is evident that water is still valued in modern culture from the continued worship of the Ganga River and the various rites that

are still performed by many people. This highlights the timeless character of water devotion by tying the Ganga River's historical significance to its current respect.

The Scholar has presented only a sampling of water worship from the ancient period to the present and has not addressed all forms of worship of the Water prevailed.

After the explanation of Water worship existed during different periods, the scholar is giving samples for the worship of Fire worship.

Next, the Scholar is analysing the different kinds of worship of Fire followed during the below periods

- **Worship in History Period [After invention of writing]**
- **Worship in early Medieval Period**
- **Worship in Medieval Period**
- **Worship in Modern Period**

1.1.1.4 Worship of Fire [Agni] during the History Period [After invention of writing- Up to the 6th century AD]

Agni is frequently portrayed in a variety of ways, signifying both spiritual illumination and physical fire. It embodies both creation and destruction, symbolizing the transformational power of fire. Fire is seen in Hindu rituals as a cleansing force that purifies both the environment and the soul. Fire is needed for spiritual practices because it is thought to be able to drive out negativity and impurities. Agni acts as a mediator between the divine and people, and yajnas are done to thank the Gods. Offerings to Agni are thought to ascend to the sky, successfully communicating the prayers.

- **Fire-** The Scholar is giving a sloka from **Rigveda-Mandala one -Sukta one**, which stands as a testament to the worship of Fire during the historic period. The first sloka in Rigveda.

'Om Agnimeele purohitam Yajnyasya Devamritvinjam

Hotaaram Ratna Dhaatamam' ||1||

[Reference-Rigveda Samhita-1.1.1-Authors-Ravi Prakash Arya and

K.L.Joshi-Parimal Publications]

Agnihotaa Kavikratuh Satyashchitrashravastamah

Devo Devebhiraagamat ||5|| (Arya & Joshi 1.1.5)

Meaning

1.1.1- *'I respect Agni, the divine, the ministrant, the high priest of sacrifice, the one who offers the sacrifice (to the Gods), and the one who is extremely wealthy'*

Here Agni is praised as the purohita of the Yajna[Sacrifice], which is focussed by the Devas

1.1.5 – *"May Agni, the presenter of oblations, the attainer of knowledge, he who is true, renowned, and divine, come to this place with the Gods."*

"May the Gods come here with Agni, the presenter of offerings, the attainer of knowledge, the one who is true, renowned, and divine."

On the whole the lines states that the invoker, Agni, with wisdom recognize the real devotion of the Yajna and bestow blessings in accordance with it. May Agni deva blesses with his presence and make the Yajna successful

The significance of the fire worship during the historic period is emphasized by this mantra. Agni is the high priest of the Sacrifice and a mediator between humanity and the divine through the sacrificial fire practised through homams and yajnas and other poojas. This passage emphasizes the importance of the fire god Agni as a main point of Vedic worship and rites. This respect for Agni confirms that Agni was widely respected during the Vedic era and highlights the great significance of fire in Vedic culture, where it is honored as a sacred element.

1.1.2.5 Worship of Fire [Agni] during early Medieval period [6th century AD to 13th century AD]

- **Fire-** Agnipureeshwar temple known as Thirupugalur temple, in Thirupugalur, a village in the Nagapattinam district of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is built during the Chola period in the **tenth century**.

According to Hindu mythology and the Sthalapurana, Agni-the fire god, worshipped Lord Shiva here. The temple tank is known as 'Agni *theertham*', and the presiding deity is known as Agnipureeswarar. **The statues of Saint Appar, Brahma, and Agni are kept in the Mahamandapam. Agni's bronze idol is unique and cannot be found anyplace in the state. The picture features three legs and two heads.** Lord Shiva and his companion Parvathi are revered as Agnipureeswarar and Karundar Kuzhali, respectively (Rao 203).

1.1.2.6 Worship of Fire [Agni] during Medieval period [13th century AD to 18th century AD]

Seth Dadibhai Noshervanji Dadyseth, a philanthropist, established the Fire temple named 'Atash Behram' in 1783 at Mumbai. This Parsi fire temple is historically significant and functionally particular to the Zoroastrian faith. Atash Behram temples are found in other major states of India as well. (Nanji 67-71)

1.1.3.1 Worship of Fire [Agni] in Modern period [18th century to the present period]

Fire worship during the modern period has many samples in and around at present. Hence the Scholar explains the fire worship in the modern period in general.

Today, many rites and rituals revolve around the Fire God-Agni. Fire worship is involved in many Hindu events, such as weddings, housewarming ceremonies and other festivals. In this tradition, offerings are presented to the Gods and the sacred fire [Homakundam] is lighted. Fire is a purifying force. It is a crucial part of spiritual rituals, since it is thought to transport prayers to the heavens. The communal customs, such as the lighting of lights and firecrackers represent the success of light over the darkness during the Diwali festival.

In conclusion, Fire worship holds an important place in India's spiritual life and continuing to be a major part of religious and cultural manifestations.

That was the brief description of Fire Worship existed from the ancient period till the modern period.

The Scholar has presented only a sampling of Fire worship from the ancient period to the present and has not addressed all forms of worship of the Fire prevailed.

After the description of the historical relevance of the worship of Sun, Water and Fire, prevailed during ancient, medieval and modern period, the Scholar is going to discuss the various aspects of the ongoing worship of trees and mountains from ancient to the present time in general.

This part elaborates on the significance of tree worship, highlighting trees connection to symbolize life, growth, and divinity. Special references are given to detail the deep spiritual connections that mountains share with the sacred, often seen as abodes of Gods or symbols of eternal divinity.

1.2 Trees- Significance of Sthalavriksham

"Sthalavriksham" is a Sanskrit term, with "Vriksham" meaning tree and "Sthala" meaning place. All together, "Sthalavriksham" designates a tree connected to a specific area or spot. It can also refer to a sacred tree, that is significant to a particular region's culture or religion in some circumstances.

Most of the temples are having a tree as the **Sthalavriksham**. Some of the examples are given below

- **Bodhi Tree** -The Mahabodhi Temple [3rd century], in Bodh Gaya at Bihar, India is home to the Bodhi Tree. It was built by Asoka emperor in 3rd century. It is considered to be one of the holiest places in Buddhism, as it is thought to be the location where, Gautama Buddha meditated and attained enlightenment. The Tree is located inside the temple complex. The Bodhi Tree is a magnificent example of tree worship in 3rd Century as it reflects the holy representation of the tree.
- **Kadambam Tree:** This tree is located at Madurai Meenakshi Temple at Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Sadayavarman Kulasekaran I, the Pandyan Emperor, constructed the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple (1190 CE–1205 CE) and this tree is devoted to Goddess Meenakshi, a manifestation of Goddess Parvati. Devotees offer prayers to the Kadambam Tree, during their visit to the temple.

These illustrations demonstrate the importance of Sthalavrikshams in religious backgrounds and their presence as essential elements near the temple complexes. Apart from these, a variety of sacred plants and trees are found in many cultures and faiths in different places. These plants have cultural, spiritual, and symbolic meanings, which makes them significant in many ways.

The Scholar has presented only a sampling of Tree worship from the ancient period to the present and has not addressed all Sthalavrikshams and Tree worship points which exist.

The Scholar is now explaining about the connectivity of mountains with the divinity and the worship prevailed during ancient to the modern period in general.

1.3 Mountains and Temples- In addition to being places of worship, temples are important hubs for community and culture that represent the traditional cultures. Temples carved out from rocks and temples situated on mountains are considered highly sacred.

Some of the examples of sacred places connected with the Mountains and Rocks are listed below

- **Elephanta Caves [6th Century]:** Instead of a direct depiction of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva united, the well-known Trimurti sculpture at the Elephanta Caves in Mumbai shows a three-faced Siva, illustrating his many facets.
- **Badami Cave (6th century):** Early representations of the Trimurti [Gods] can be seen in these Chalukya temples, which have distinct shrines for each deity. The caves are beautifully carved out into sculptures.

Hindu mythology attributes several mountains to Lord Muruga, and these mountains are revered in the deity's cult. "*Kunrirukkum Idam Kumaran*" -the tamil quote refers to a prosperous and flourishing place—that is, the location of Lord Murugan's residence. This expression expresses, respect and acknowledgement of Lord Murugan's divine presence in a prosperous place. It refers that where there is a mountain, that place is automatically connected to Lord Muruga. An important phase of Lord Muruga's connection with mountains leads to six principal sacred abodes of Lord Muruga, which is known as Arupadaiveedu.

1.3.1 Arupadai Veedu-Six abodes of Lord Muruga

The Six Abodes of Lord Muruga or Arupadai Veedu are six temples devoted to Lord Murugan that are located in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. The following are the six temples.

- **Subrahmanya Swamy temple at Tiruparankundram [6th century]**

The word 'Tiruparamkundram' itself shows the meaning of divinity as 'Tiru' is a word used as respectful, 'param' means parampariyam and 'Kundram' means small mountain. It is the first of Lord Muruga's six holy abodes- Arupadai Veedu. The temple is situated on top of a hill. The Lord is presented in the sitting posture in this temple.

- **Subrahmanya Swamy temple at Thiruchendur [2000 years ago]**

Among the six abodes of Lord Muruga, the temple at Thiruchendur alone is situated in a sea shore. All the other temples are located in hill rocks. Another name of this temple is Thirucheeralaivaai.

- **Dandayuthapani Swamy temple at Pazhani** [7th century]

One of the most revered temples devoted to Lord Murugan, also known as Dandayuthapani, is the Dandayuthapani Swamy Temple, which is situated in Palani (Pazhani), Tamil Nadu. The temple is situated around 150 meters above sea level on a hill. Here the primary idol of Lord Murugan is made of "Navapashanam," a special mixture of botanical components with the therapeutic qualities. This temple is also known by the name Tiruvavinankudi.

- **Swaminatha Swami temple at Swamimalai** [2nd century]

Swamimalai temple is the fourth among the six abodes and has sixty exquisitely laid stone stairs, which symbolize the Hindu cycle of sixty years journey to the Lord. The temple is situated in Swamimalai which is roughly sixty feet high, on the banks of Kaveri river-five kilometers west of Kumbhakonam. Temples honouring Lord Sundareswarer and Goddess Meenakshi are located on the ground floor.

- **Subrahmanya Swamy temple at Thiruthani** [2nd century]

At Tiruttani, a single rock 700 feet above sea level is carved to an exquisite temple of Lord Muruga. It offers a striking panoramic view and is surrounded by a variety of hills. This hill is known as Tanikasalam and the temple is also known as Kundruthoradal.

- **Subrahmanya Swamy temple at Pazhamudircholai** [2000 years back]

This temple is located on Solaimalai Hill, 20 kilometers from Madurai, and is home to the sacred "Nupura Gangai" stream. Lord Muruga is in the form of a master boy in this temple.

Seventh position followed by this is **Maruthamalai Sri Subrahmanya Swami Temple** [12th century], which is situated at Maruthamalai [mountain] at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The temple of Marudhamalai is located on the Western Ghats, fifteen kilometres west of Coimbatore, in a green, beautiful setting.

Many of the above temples are carved in rocks [Mountains] and has deep belief in the welfare of man, especially for good married life, childbirth and so on.

Till now the researcher examined the different range of nature worship customs, that have developed over the ages, emphasizing their importance and cultural impact.

The Scholar has presented only a sampling of nature worship from the ancient period to the present and has not addressed all forms of worship of the Sun, Water, Fire, Trees, and Mountains.

The Scholar now aims to make links between this historic respect and worship for nature and the worship of the Navagraha, which prevailed and followed till now. The study will also go into the idea of Navavidhabhakti, or the nine kinds of devotion, showing the procedure of worship practices and different paths of worship, to reach the God. Man worshipped everything in nature including, the Sun and the nine planets or grahas.

1.4 Uniqueness of Navagrahas

Navagrahas are the nine planets in our Solar System along with two demons-Rahu and Ketu. Everything in the Universe has an impact on other things, according to astrology and is affected by Celestial beings. The following are the Nine grahas which are worshipped by the man over years until now.

S.No	Navagrahas	Planets
1	Surya	Sun
2	Chandra	Moon
3	Mangala	Mars
4	Budha	Mercury
5	Brihaspati	Jupiter
6	Shukra	Venus
7	Shani	Saturn
8	Rahu	[North node of the Moon]
9	Ketu	[South node of the Moon]

When connecting Navagrahas to Carnatic Music, Muthu Swami Dikshitar has composed nine compositions on grahas, which is known as Navagraha kritis.

The soulful story behind the composition of Navagraha kritis are as follows. Thambiappan, a disciple of Muthuswami Dikshitar, had a stomach illness for which no medication had been able to provide relief for a very long time. Dikshitar was a legend in Philosophy, Tantric, Vendantam and Astrology as well. After checking his horoscope, Dikshitar reasoned that Jupiter was in a negative position and that the only way to heal his illness is to worship the planet God Brihaspati. He composed the song "Brihaspate" in the

Raga Atana and instructed the disciple to sing it for a week. As he followed Dikshitar's instructions, he got free from his illness. This experience gave inspiration for Dikshitar to compose kritis on each of the Navagrahas.

Among the Navagrahas, the worship of Surya is significant and Sun is the greatest strength of all the grahas. The Sun stands as a symbol for a variety of personalities like ego, ambition, leadership, and strength. Sun is always representative character and has an impact on the bones, blood, blood pressure, and body temperature within the body. The Sun is symbolized by the color red, ruby, sunrise and sunset, lion, copper, wheat, and lotus flower.

Worship of Surya- Surya is worshipped as Sun-God. One of the six principal branches of religion [shan-mathas] is Sauram, and the bhaktas of this grouping worship the Sun-God. Surya is called Surya Narayana, who represents the healing power of Vishnu-the Supreme God. The 12 Adithyas [Sun], rules each month in a year, in which God Vishnu resides in the center of the Surya to protect the world. (Kausik 26-30)

The 12 Adithyas are as follows:

S.No	12 Adithya names	Ruling Month	Solar Month	Lunar Month
1	Dhata	March-April	Madhu	Chaitra
2	Aryana	April-May	Madhava	Vaishakha
3	Mitra	May-June	Shukra	Jyeshtha
4	Varuna	June-July	Suchi	Ashadha
5	Indra	July-August	Nabhas	Shravana
6	Vivasvan	August-September	Nabhasya	Bhadrapada
7	Tvastha	September-October	Isha	Ashvina
8	Vishnu	October-November	Urja	Karthika
9	Amshuman	November-December	Sahas	Margasirsha
10	Bhaga	December-January	Sahasya	Pushya
11	Pusha	January-February	Tapas	Magha
12	Parjanja	February-March	Tapasya	Phalguna

After explaining the various facets of the ancient types of nature worship, the scholar is continuing with the detailing of Bhakti Margam, or path of devotion, which reflects the profound spiritual connections between the divine and the devotees.

1.5 Bhakti and Bhakti Margam

The term "Bhakti" originates from the Sanskrit root 'bhaj,' which signifies "to adore" or "to worship.". The term "**Bhakti Margam**" describes, the path of devotion and worship. Bhakti Margam is the practice of having a sincere and affectionate devotion to one or more deities, usually by worship and rituals. It is the process of releasing the soul from the physical and mental constraints through consistent dedication to reach the God. It emphasizes an emotional relationship path with the divine.

Different bhakti paths have been followed, as the paths allows a lot of variation, flexibility, and freedom in the practice of worship. Genuine procedures of Bhakti can be known from grandhas like the Srimad Bhagavatam, Narada bhakti Sutras, Sandilya Bhakti Sutras, Bhagavad Gita and many more.

Important aspects of Bhakti

One of the major beliefs of Bhakti [devotion] is faith in the divine and surrender. Devotees believe in surrendering to the will of the deity and letting go of the ego. It is believed that this sacrifice leads to moksha, or liberation in one's life.

Six kinds of branches for worship are termed as Shan-mathas which is known as Shiva, Vishnu, Shakthi, Surya, Ganesha and Muruga. These six are given sole importance always.

Sagun Bhakti and Nirgun Bhakti are significant two different routes to devotion, and many followers combine the two margas. Sagun Bhakti concentrates on the outward appearance of devotion, through the worship of a particular form of God, whereas Nirgun Bhakti stresses the inner path towards self-realization. The ultimate aim of Bhakti is to achieve connection with the divine and feel the joy of God-realization, regardless of the route taken.

The Bhakti Margam highlights devotion as the best way to communicate with God, and the Navavidhabhakti is a significant example to show the practice of the devotee's dedication to God in a variety of ways or paths.

1.5.1 Navavidhabhakti

The nine forms of devotion, or **Navavidhabhakti**, is the nine kinds of approaches or paths to reach the God. The root source of Navavidhabhakti is from Srimad Bhagavata Purana. It emphasizes nine different ways that devotees can show their devotion towards the God.

In Bhagavata Purana, Prahlada's life and teachings demonstrate the way of Navavidhabhakti, which gives Liberation or Moksha and attaining divine grace by practicing pure devotion in all situations. His unwavering devotion and dedication remain as a strong example for all the devotees, highlighting the fact that devotion in all its manifestations can cultivate a deep and solid relationship with the God.

The Scholar is giving sloka from Bhagavata Purana which defines Navavidhabhakti, the nine approaches of Bhakti towards the God.

‘Sri Prahlada uvacha

*‘Shravanam Kirtanam vishnoh Smaranam Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam,
Dasyam, Sakhyam and Atmanivedanam*

*iti pumsarpitha vishnobbhakthis ca navalakshana kriyeta bhagavathy addha tan
manye dhitam uthamam’* (Goswami 842-843)

Meaning: Prahlada replied- ‘[1] Hear the names, praises and stories of Lord Vishnu, [2] chant them, [3] remember Him, as well as His names and stories, [4] do Pada seva [feet worship] to Him, [5] offer worship with things, [6] do salutation to Him, [7] dedicate one’s actions and service to him, [8] cultivate friendship with Him and [9] offer one’s own body as well as one’s dependants and belongings to Him. Devotion marked by these nine features, practised by a man are devotion offered directly to Lord Vishnu, I reckon such Devotion to be the highest form of learning. (Suku 89-94)

Scholar’s sight-Sri Prahlada Maharaja stated nine kinds of praying approach to God. It includes listening and chanting of the divine names of the God, thinking about His virtues, stuff, stories of God, serving God’s feet, offering 16 types of stuff to God and worshipping, Offering Namaskaram to God, pray and service to God as a servant, Considering God as a close friend, Surrendering body, mind and words to the God.

These nine kinds of approach to the God can be all rounded or immersed within 5 kinds of bhakti, which is termed as **Panchama bhakti bhava**. They are Santa bhava, Madhurya bhava, Vatsalya bhava, Dasya bhava, and Sakhya bhava.

- **Santa bhava** -Praying to the God without showing much emotions is the key attitude of Santa bhava. Usually, munivaryas meditation can be same as Santa bhava.
- **Madhurya bhava-** Bhaktas consider the God as a lover or partner through this bhava.

- **Vatsalya bhava-** In Vatsalya bhakti, the devotee considers themselves as the parent of the God, he himself will be free from all fears and will remain with no expectation with his son [God].
- **Dasya bhava -**The devotee considers himself as the servant of the God in Dasya bhava
- **Sakhya bhava-** Sakhya bhava connects the devotee and the God as friends.

Through these five bhavas of Panchamabhakti, a devotee is able to develop and express their love, devotion, and relationship with the Supreme Almighty. Navavidhabhakti is a broader framework of paths of devotion of Panchama bhakti bhava, as it explains the nine kinds of approach towards the Almighty.

Evolution of Navavidhabhakti

As mentioned earlier, Srimad Bhagavata purana is the origin source of Navavidhabhakti. Reference of the same can be found in Bhagavad Gita, Vishnupuranam, Mahabharata, Saguna Upanishads and many more.

These nine kinds of approaches to God are considered as pure devotional service. They are Sravanam, Keertanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam and Atmanivedanam.

The Scholar is detailing each path of devotion in Navavidhabhakti with appropriate samples below.

1.5.1.1 Sravanam

The very first type of bhakti which focusses on the devotional practice of hearing/listening to the glories, charms, pastimes, leelas, miracles, spoken words about the God, qualities, and names of the Lord are Sravana bhakti. The characteristic features of Sravana bhakti can be traced out from Srimad Bhagavatam. **It is purely listening**, which purifies the mind and turns out people to a better and cherished living. Some of the features pointed out by the scholar for the Sravana bhakti are;

- Keertanams
- Kathakalakshepam
- Religious prasangams [talks]
- Listening to the chanting of mantras and slokas

Bhaktas [devotees] following Sravana bhakti, listens to the chanting or songs in praise of Lord with full mind and engage himself in worshipping the God. Purely indulging

in Sravana bhakti needs to have a good sathsung [a devotee friend], as the bhakta can listen to his friend talk, which always reflect Gods stories, glories and leelas. A bhakta who loves epics and puranas can be a Sravana bhakta because he can listen to Mahabharata, Ramayana and other puranas recited by others and find the right way to attain or reach the God.

The scholar is giving some of the examples for Sravana bhakti, which changed the people and made them follow a sattvic living. It gives a well and healthy living to the bhaktas.

- **The influence of Sravana bhakti on Arjuna**

Throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna imparts profound spiritual teachings on a variety of topics, including duty, righteousness, and the nature of the self, to Arjuna, who listens with the utmost reverence. As he absorbs the ageless knowledge given by his celestial charioteer, Arjuna's openness to Krishna's teachings is a reflection of his Sravana Bhakti.

Arjuna's readiness to accept Krishna's teachings and insights is another example of Sravana Bhakti. In the process of listening to Krishna and learning from him, Arjuna gradually gets over his uncertainties and confusion, arriving at a decision and a resolve to carry out his warrior's duty during the battle of Kurukshetra. **A powerful example of Sravana Bhakti in Mahabharata is the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.** It shows the transformational potential of hearing divine wisdom with unwavering devotion and surrender.

The following sloka explains how Arjuna expressed his doubt and fear to do his duty.

'Kaarpanya doshopahata svabhaavah prichhaami tvaam dharmasammudha chetaaha

Yachreyah syaannishchitam bruhi tanme shishyaste ham shadhi maamtvaam prapannam'

(Bhagavad Gita-Chapter 2- Verse 7)

"Being overcome by weakness and unsure of my responsibilities, I beg You to please tell me which is unquestionably better. You have me as a disciple.

Tell me who has taken refuge in You."

The following sloka explains Krishna's advice to Arjuna to perform his duty without attachment to the results.

'Karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana

Ma karmaphala hetur bhurmatesangostva karmani'(Yogananda 281)

"You are not entitled to the results of your actions, but you do have the right to carry out your assigned responsibilities. Never attach yourself to inaction or believe that the outcomes of your actions are your fault."

Sravana Bhakti is demonstrated by Arjuna's eagerness to learn from Krishna's teachings and his attentive listening.

Thus, "Geethopadesham" is a perfect illustration of this type of devotion.

"Geethopadesham" refers to the lessons that Lord Krishna imparted to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, a work that is widely regarded as a perfect illustration of Sravana Bhakti.

- **Points in Hanuman Chalisa**

Indian poet Tulsidas wrote the 40-verse devotional poetry known as the Hanuman Chalisa in the sixteenth century, and it is devoted to Lord Hanuman. It is frequently chanted for protection, trouble-relief, and spiritual empowerment. It conveys dedication and appreciation for Hanuman's qualities, including strength, courage, and selfless service. The scholar is giving one 'doha' from Hanuman chalisa as an example for Sravana bhakti

'bhotha pisacha nikata nahim avai mahaveera jab naam sunave'

(Tulsidas 572)

The above is the 24th doha of the Hanuman Chalisa. The meaning of the doha is as follows;

Meaning- "When the name of the great hero (Hanuman) is heard, the evil spirits and demons do not come near."

This verse emphasizes the purifying and protective properties of listening Hanuman's name. It highlights the belief in Hanuman's capacity to give protection and strength to devotees who call upon him by implying that **listening his name** can ward off bad influences and evil entities.

Tulsidas points out the statement that **listening to God's name itself will vanish all the bad elements, evil effects and fear**. Tulsidas is believed to have had a profoundly spiritual life, engaging in acts of service to humanity, meditation, and devotion in addition

to his literary works. His lessons place a strong emphasis on submitting to God, developing humility and compassion. **Legends like Tulsidas will definitely pour only the statements upon their personal experiences as a true follower and pure devotee. This point makes the authenticity of Sravana bhakti.** Hence Hanuman Chalisa is heard by thousands and thousands of people daily with faith and trust.

Sight of the Scholar

From the above two examples, the Scholar wanted to point out that listening to the glories of the Lord purifies the mind and hence all the evil from the heart will be vanished from the people.

1.5.1.2 Keertanam

Keertanam is one of the ways to worship God by repeating Gods names in different ways. One reduces the distance to reach towards the Lord by Keertana bhakti. Keertanam means Singing, which can be divided into categories.

The scholar categorises Keertana bhakti under two categories

1] Reciting/Chanting

2] Singing

- a) **Singing bhajans and simple tunings of viruthams in praise of the Lord**
- b) **Keertanam as a musical form of Carnatic Music**

The Scholar specifies that singing/chanting/reciting the songs or narrating/saying the glories of the God, which all comes under Keertanam bhakti, will lead the devotee to attain the Salvation.

The scholar explains the first category Reciting/Chanting with an example below

[1]Reciting /Chanting: Keertanam exposes the Chanting/narrating/reciting His glories/names and charms.

➤ Hunter Mrigari's moksha through Keertanam bhakti [Chanting/Reciting mode]

There is a story of Mrigari, the cruel hunter. Mrigari use to kill animals and always enjoyed watching the suffering of animals till death by half killing them. Sage Narada approached the cruel hunter and asked him to chant the holy name of the God, so that he could attain moksha. Mrigari didn't prefer praising Gods name and he was unable to do it. Hence Narada asked him to try the word '*mara*' which means death. Mrigari was feeling easy to chant that word and started chanting it continuously. The gap between the words disappeared as the word '*mara*' was continuously chanted which automatically turned out

as 'Rama' throughout the chanting. The divine power of Srirama deva poured blessing for the pure bhakti in cruel Mrigari by chanting Gods name knowingly or unknowingly. Mrigari was not aware that he was chanting the name of Lord Srirama, which can purify one's mind and body by even chanting once. Thus, Mrigari transformed into prodigious sage Valmiki, who was purified and accomplished excellence by chanting God's name.

Hence the scholar points out Mrigari's sincere dedication and practice of Keertana bhakti, which allowed him to achieve moksha, proving that true devotion by chanting the name of the God can result in spiritual enlightenment and freedom.

[2] **Singing-** Singing category includes **singing bhajans** and songs, which praises the Lord Supreme almighty. The scholar sights three examples for Keertana bhakti through modest singing mode which can be adopted by all people.

- **Naradamuni** can be sighted as a good example for Keertana bhakti, who felt proud to sing and chant the name and the glories of the Supreme almighty while traveling the world. Sage Narada's appearance itself is with a Veena called 'Mahati', which he used to accompany with his singing of bhajans and glories of the God. Through simple bhajans, Narada muni spread the glories of the Supreme almighty to the normal people, which automatically generated bhakti among the common people. The connection between Keertana bhakti and Sage Narada emphasizes the value of music through singing in the devotional path. His heavenly music and adoration for Lord Vishnu directly connects with the divine. Devotees can progressively transcend their ego, purify their hearts, and experience the divine presence within themselves and in all of creation by reciting divine names consistently and sincerely.
- **Mirabai's Devotion:** The Rajput princess Mirabai is revered in the Bhakti movement of medieval India for her deep Keertana Bhakti towards Lord Krishna. Through her soul-stirring bhajans and poems, Mirabai embodies the transformative power of Keertana Bhakti, which leads the devotee to union with the divine, through her love and constant singing in praise of Krishna.

[2] **Keertanam as a Carnatic Musical form**

Keertanam is a piece of music in Carnatic Music, set to a particular raga and tala, usually with devotional words. This musical form is a vital component of the Carnatic music. Keertanams are usually composed in spiritual and religious settings, connected with the worship and religious festivals or occasions. In general, a Keertanam adheres to a

systematic format that includes Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. Keertanam , as a **type of composition in Carnatic Music**, focuses the lyrical beauty. Keertanam in Carnatic music is developed and flourished during 14th to the 20th century.

Although there are numerous composers in Carnatic Music, Annamacharyar, Purandaradasar, Tyagaraja and Muthu Swami Dikshitar are noted for composing Keertana musical form numerously. The Scholar is going to specify that singing songs in praise of the Lord will lead one to attain salvation. The Scholar gives some of the examples below.

- Indian saint composer **Annamayya**, also referred to as **Annamacharya**, hailed from the Telugu region, lived in the fifteenth century. His devotional compositions, known as "Sankeertanas" are also called "**Keertanas**", which are well known. These songs are usually devoted to Lord Venkateswara, a manifestation of the Hindu God Vishnu.
- **Purandaradasar** is considered as Sangita Pitamaha [Father of Carnatic Music] and he lived in the 15th century. His compositions are known as 'Padagalu' and "**Devaranama Keertanas.**" He is one of the prolific composer of Carnatic Music and a Haridasa philosopher. The meaning of "Devaranama" is "songs of the Lord" or "divine songs," which reflects the spiritual quality. **Through his compositions, Purandara Dasa conveys the idea that, sincere devotion, righteous living, and selfless service can lead one to the ultimate goal of mukti, attaining union with the divine.**
- **Tyagaraja** attained mukti through **Keertanas** and his contributions to Carnatic music is unique. Tyagaraja continues to lead countless people towards greater devotion and self-realization on their individual spiritual paths by means of his compositions. Tyagaraja has composed many group Keertanas like Divya nama Keertanas, Utsava Sampradaya Keertanas and many more.

Utsava sampradaya kritis are usually sung during festivals and other special events.

Divyanama Keertanas reflects the composer's profound devotion to the divine connects through the chanting of divine names of the Supreme God.

Hence altogether, Keertanam is a unique kind of bhakti, approaching the God.

- **The scholar points out some of the references stands for the importance of singing and praying to reach out the Lord quickly**

The term Saivite or Saivam refers to the school of thought that worships and reveres Lord Siva. Saivism as a religion date back thousands of years in the Tamil nation. Saivism was raised and enhanced by the four Saiva grandmasters **Thirugnana Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar, and Manickavachagar.**

‘Vaasi theerave Kaasu nalguveer

Maasil mizhalaiyeer aesal illaiyae

Iraivaraayineer maraikol mizhalaiyeer

Karaikol kaasinai muramai nalgume’ (Sivamathi 45)

Thirugnana Sambandar says;

‘O Siva! The blemishless one from Thiruveezhimizhalai, please grant me good coins with high purity and remove any blemish [discounts] from them, so that I can exchange them for full value. You bear no blame for this’

‘O Siva! The one who is the Lord of everyone, the one in Mizhalai, where vedas are recited, Please grant me coins in a proper manner that have no marks or defects’

The above stanzas are from the pathigam sung by Thirugnana Sambandhar at Thiruveezhimizhalai temple [Veezhinadhar Koyil] at Kumbhakonam, Tamil Nadu. Appar and Thirugnana Sambandar stayed in Thiruveezhimizhalai village. They both prayed [by singing Lord’s praises] to Lord Siva to give gold coins to get food for the poor people at the time of famine. There were two ‘padis’ on either side of the temple corridors. God blessed both the persons and puts gold coins on both the padis, one which was next to Veezhi Nadeeshwarar for Thirugnana Sambandhar and one to the padi next to Padikasu Vinayagar for Appar.

Appar [Manickavasagar] got highly purified gold coin and he was able to get food quickly while God showered Thirugnana Sambandar with gold coins with less purity (kāsu), which has some marks and stains on it. Thirugnana Sambandhar noticed that Appar is getting good quality coins and was able to get the food more quickly than Thirugnana Sambandar. Soon Thirugnana Sambandhar realised that Appar is being appreciated by the God for his manual service, which he does inside the temple [Ulavaarupani].

The story ends as atlast Thirugnana Sambandar also got blessed with good coins from the God.

The following are another verse from Srimad Bhagavatam-Discourse Seven - Atha Sapthamodhaayam, which points out Keertana bhakti

*‘Nishmyakarmaani gunaanathulyaan veeryaani leelaathanupiha krithaani
Yathaathi harshopthulakaasrugadgad protkand udgaayathi rowthi nrithyaadi [34]
Yathaa grahagrasth evakwachidhas thyaakranthathe dhyaayathi vandathe Janam
Muhuha shavaasanwithi harey jagatpathey Naraayanethyatmamathigruthathrapaha [35]
Thatha pumaanmuth samastha bandhan sthadraavabhaavaanukrithaashayakruthiha
Nirgadhabeejeenaushayo mahiyasa bhaktiprayogen samethyadhoshajam’ [36]*

(Goswami 854-855)

When on hearing of his brilliant achievements, incomparable virtues and heroic deeds wrought through His various forms assumed for sport, **the devotee sings loudly with an open throat and in a voice choked with tears, shouts** and dances, his hair standing on end due to excessive delight, nay, when he, like one possessed by an evil spirits, now laughs, now weeps, now sits in meditation, now greets the people and now, devoid of shame ,exclaims: O Hari! O Lord of the Universe! O Narayana!’ with his mind and body being attuned to Him through contemplation on His past times, the man attains to Lord Vishnu [who is above sense-perception] by recourse to the highest device of devotion [34-36] (Srimad Bhagavatapurana 855)

Scholar’s view- This passage exquisitely captures the profound devotion and ecstasy of a devotee who becomes fully involved in reflecting on Lord Vishnu's divine forms and deeds by singing His glories. The devotee experiences such intense emotions that they show up as **singing**, dancing, crying, laughing, and meditation. Bhakti in its ecstasy, is a state in which the devotee **achieves union with the divine**, resulting in a deep connection with the Supreme Almighty.

These passages highlight the **spiritual fulfilment through singing, chanting and reciting**, which results in the union with the God

Scholars sight

The Scholar points to emphasise that singing and chanting God’s glories, names and stories, will cultivate and purify one’s mind and will lead a life in a good path. For the same, a lot of evidences has been happened in all the composer’s life in one way or the other. The Scholar, with the above statements states that Keertanam,

which praises the qualities of the almighty has the power to conquer the limitless ocean of sufferings. Praising the Almighty gives continued blessings to everyone's souls and supports in their self satisfaction.

1.5.1.3 Smaranam

The devotional practice of remembering or recollecting the divine is known as Smaranam Bhakti. It highlights the importance of reaching the God through remembering God by prayer in mind and meditation.

The Scholar is pointing out some of the highlights of Smaranam bhakti below

- Through Smaranam bhakti, the mind is detached from all other material attachments and focussed on a single manifestation of the Lord.
- Smaranam bhakti can also be connected as a kind of perfect meditation
- Always remembering God keeps the negative energy away from one's life.

Constantly remembering the Lord and always having thought of His charms leads to Smaranam bhakti. After listening [Sravanam] to the glories of the Lord for a long time, recited or chanted [Keertanam] by devotees, the bhakta remembers [Smaranam] about all the stuff he heard and thinks about the Supreme Lord. Hence it is assumed that Sravanam and Keertanam leads to Smaranam bhakti. Smarana bhakti is remembering God's name, leading a common way to do the worship. Hence remembering itself is a kind of worship.

The Scholar points out about the instances of fulfilment of salvation through Smaranam bhakti.

- Purandaradasa composed a Keertana called '*Smarane ondhe chalade*', which emphasise the importance of Smaranam bhakti

Pallavi of the composition is as follows:

'Smarane ondhe Chsaalade govindaana naama ondhe Chsaalade'

The literal translation of 'Smarane' is "remembrance." The above phrase points that 'Thought of remembering the names of the Lord, [Govinda] is the only refuge. Through the lyrics of Pallavi, the composer points that one can find strength and support through Smaranam bhakti by stating the name of Govinda.

Recalling God's name consistently and consciously is the core characteristic of Smaranam bhakti. This concept confirms that remembering and reflecting God's name shows the right path, when one faces life's obstacles. It is believed that focusing one's attention on the divine can bring calmness and help to ease hardships. According to the

Smarana bhakti, one can experience spiritual awakening and soul cleaning just by remembering the name of Lord Govinda. Smaranam bhakti is an ongoing practice that infuses all aspect of daily life and is not just restricted to ceremonial ceremonies.

The Scholar has not taken full lyrics of the above composition mentioned, as only Pallavi is taken to give the example for the core pointing of Smarana bhakti.

- The Scholar focussing to another sloka from the epic of Mahabharata-which is given in Bhagavad Gita, to emphasis Smarana bhakti importance in Puranas

'Man-mana bhava mad bhakto mad yaji namaskrtaha

yajante maam ananya bhakta aham evam prapasyati' (Yogananda 766)

Meaning: *'Set your thoughts on me, devote yourself to me, worship me, and bow down to me. You will thus come to me. Since you are one of my most cherished devotees, I swear to you'*

Scholar's view: The starting phrase "Man-mana" highlights the significance of concentrating one's thoughts on Supreme Almighty. The terms 'man' and 'mana', which have the same meaning [mind] are repeated in order to stamp the bhava [emotion] of the mind. This idea is essential to Smarana bhakti because, it encourages the devotees to develop a continuous sense of the divine presence. One important component of devotional recollection is the act of focusing one's thoughts on God. The phrase "ananya bhakta" suggests that a direct relationship with God is the result of constant, undivided devotion. This type of solitary attention is necessary for Smarana bhakti, in which the devotee is unwavering in their memory and not distracted by other influences.

Scholar's sight: **These stories from the Puranic literatures demonstrate the way of Smarana Bhakti leading devotees to ultimate liberation, protection from harm, and divine realization. Devotees develop a close and profound relationship with the divine through firm memory and devotion to the divine, avoiding worldly limitations and achieving eternal bliss.**

1.5.1.4 Padasevanam

Padasevanam is an approach of worshipping God focussing on His feet. This is a unique bhakti, serving the Lord's feet or respecting the Lord by serving at His images or idols. This kind of bhakti reflects the devotee, who keeps his feelings and wishes aside and touches the feet of God requesting to take care of Him. Devotee holds his full life at the feet of God doing Paadapooja. In many temples, there is a custom that the priest touches

devotees head with a shatagopam, which indicates that the devotee is at Lords feet. This is the fourth kind of bhakti approach to God.

- **Goddess Lakshmi** is a unique example for Padasevanam bhakti, who always does Paadapooja of her husband God Vishnu. Usually, Goddess Lakshmi seems to be a fortune devi, who always moves restless by nature but here she has seen sitting in one place to serve Paadapooja of the God.

The reference of Goddess Lakshmi has been given in Srimad Bhagavatam [1.11.33], as massaging the legs of the Supreme God - Garbhodakashayi - Vishnu. Lord's feet are the cascade source of all wealth.

*'Yadyapyasau paarsvagato rahogata
stathaapi tasyaanghri yugam navam navam
Pade pade kaa virmeta tat padaa*

Chalaapi yachinr na jahaati karhirschit' (Goswami 111)

Meaning: *'Although He ever remained by their side and too in their private chamber, His feet appeared to them as full of fresher charm every moment. What women would cease to love those feet which even Sri-the Goddess of Fortune, cannot abandon even for a moment, though noted for Her fickleness'*

Scholar's sight: The attitude of Goddess Lakshmi devi shows her valuable humble practice of Padasevanam bhakti, even though she is the Goddess of wealth and leads all forms of prosperity in the world. This points out that Lord's feet are greater than all resources on the earth. **The reference to Sri (the Goddess of Fortune)** emphasizes that even She, who is renowned for her devotion to richness and beauty, is unable to leave Lord's feet. This reference emphasizes the deep level of attachment that genuine devotees feel through their devotion which brings them, a lasting and constantly refilling joy and satisfaction by doing Paadapooja. The idea that spiritual experiences are dynamic and always changing is reflected in the word "navam navam" (ever-fresh), which highlights that every moment spent in devotion gives new insights of liberation.

- **Another slokam from Srimad Bhagavatam**

*'Sakrinmanah krishnapadaaravindayor nirveshitam tadgunaraagi yairiha
Na te yamam paashabhrithashcha tadbhataan
Swapnepi pashyanti hi cheerna nishkritaah* (Goswami 705)

Meaning: *'They who have once fixed their life on the Lotus feet of Lord Krishna, their mind, that has conceived an attachment with Gods excellences, never witness Yama even in a dream. The God of retribution and his servants, carrying a noose in their hand, since they have actually done all atonement'*

Scholar's sight: The message of this slokam is that, people who have once fixed their service on Krishna's lotus feet and His divine attributes, are freed from the fear of Yama, the God of death and punishment, and his attendants. The service of the Lord's feet, or Paadasevanam, is a word that conveys a profound sense of respect and obedience. This way, the devotees perform apologising for bad deeds through Padasevanam, either physically or spiritually, focusing one's thoughts on Krishna. People who fully submit to Krishna's lotus feet develop mental and emotional purity, which leads to divine protection and freedom from retribution concerns, enabling them to live in the ecstasy of spiritual oneness with the Divine. This highlights the fundamental idea of Padasevanam bhakti, as a way to achieve spiritual fulfilment and transcend material constraints through the Padasevanam.

Through Padasevanam bhakti, one can develop a sense of submission to the God, letting go of their ego by bowing down at the feet of the divine. When a devotee performs acts of service at the feet of the divine, their mind and heart are purified, resulting in spiritual development and internal purification.

1.5.1.5 Archanam

This is a kind of peripheral type of worshipping the Lord by offering flowers, fruits, leaves, food, sandal paste, water, milk and many more. This fifth approach towards the God is made by external activities along with inner meditation and prayers. In temples and during homams, the priest carries out archana to the God. Poojas like ashtothara and sahasranama are examples for Archanam bhakti. This is a ritualistic form of devotion by chanting mantras and offering different things to God. A devotee who follows Archanam bhakti experiences inner fulfilment and stimulation through their offerings. There are references in Srimad Bhagavatam, which point out worship to God through offerings.

The Scholar is giving some of the examples from Puranas to point out Archanam bhakti

- **Srimad Bhagavatam [9.26] explicates that God says**

*‘Patram pushpam phalam thoyam
Yo mey bhaktya prayachati
Tadaham bhaktyupahrtamashnaami
Prayataatmanaha’ (Goswami507)*

Meaning- *‘Whoever offers to me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I accept and heartily enjoy that offering of love by that man of purified intellect’*

Scholar’s sight- The sloka clearly explains God saying that He accept the devotion of bhaktas, whoever approaches and worships Him with a leaf, a fruit, a little water or a flower with pure mind and devotion.

- **Another example- Prithvi- Incarnation of Lord Vishnu as a King connected to Archanam bhakti**

In history, Prithu, who was a King is referred as one who followed Archanam bhakti in a special unique way. Prithu was mentioned as an avatara of Lord Vishnu in Mahabharata, Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata Purana. King Prithu followed angaarchana, which means worshipping the Lord Supreme using each of his angaas[organs]. He considered each of his sense organs as a lotus and offered it to the Lord.

‘Netra kamalam samarpayami’ [Offering the lotus eyes to the Supreme God]

‘Srotra kamalam Samarpayami’ [Offering the lotus ears to the Supreme God]

‘Hridaya kamalam Samarpayami’ [Offering the lotus of my heart to the Supreme God]

Followed by this, he points each of his organs as an offering to the God. **This is one of the unique examples of Archanam bhakti.**

Key points of Archanam bhakti- Temples always can be a good example which, one can experience Archanam kind of bhakti. Archanam means worshipping the Gods in a ritualistic manner. Typically, this involves five offerings called Pancha Upacharas (**Gandha** is sandalwood paste, **Pushpa** is fragrant flowers, **Dhupa** is incense smoke, **Deepa** is light, and **Nivedya** is food offerings). Sixteen offerings called Shodasa Upacharas are also significant in Archanam bhakti

Scholars view - Archanam bhakti

In the sacred act of Archanam bhakti, each offering that a devotee offer blossom with pure devotion and it transforms his heart into a garden of pure Divinity. As the

devotee perform Archanam with each mantra as a gentle wave, he gets closer to the eternal light of the Supreme. Regular Archana Bhakti practice raises serenity within oneself. Archana bhakti frequently incorporates group worship in temples or other spiritual gatherings, which helps devotees feel a sense of solidarity.

1.5.1.6 Vandanam

This is respecting God in Namaskaram, bowing down to the Lord or to His pictures. By following Vandanam Bhakti, the devotee realises that everything in this world belongs to the God and whatever blessings he has are from the God. To portray the gratitude towards God throughout the life, one follows Vandanam bhakti. Devotee considers his Supreme Lord everywhere. **Some of the wrong doings that should be avoided while doing Vandanam bhakti are as follows**

- to bow down with one hand
- to bow down with one's body covered
- to bow down with one's back to the Deity

Any kind of approach to the God by the namaskaram position can be connected with the Vandanam bhakti. Hence, Surya Namaskaram can be directly connected with the Vandanam bhakti. The Scholar has pointed some of the examples below from the epics to portray Vandanam Bhakti.

- **The Scholar mentions a slokam from Bhagavatam which is connected to Vandanam bhakti**

‘Kham vaayumagnim salilam maheem cha

Jyoteemshi satwaani disho drumaadeen

Saritsamudraamshcha hareh shareeram

Yatkincha bhootam pranamedananyah’ [11.2.41] (Goswami 577-578)

Meaning: *‘With exclusive devotion he bows down to the sky, air, fire, water, earth, heavenly bodies, living beings, cardinal points, trees, river, seas and all created beings, considering them as the body of the Lord’*

Scholars sight: The slokam explains that the sky, the air, the fire, the water, the earth, the stars, all living things, oceans and everything in the Universe, which are made of the five elements are exactly the body of the God [Hari]. Hence devotees need to pay obeisance [prayers/bowing down to show the respect] to all these nature deities. In the above slokam, the devotee acknowledges Lord Vishnu as the ultimate essence that is represented

in every aspect of the Universe and pays respect to Him by doing Namaskaram. The slokam states that the devotee must pay respect to Lord Vishnu's [God's] body, which includes the entirety of creation. Vandana bhakti includes a strong and permanent respect and submission towards the Lord. In Vandanam, the devotee acknowledges that the divine presence stays in all creation in the Universe and bows down to all the creations of the Universe considering all as the holy body of the God. Hence the one who follows Vandanam bhakti, considers everything is an expression of the Lord, strengthening the relationship with the divine.

- **Importance of Sun as the Supreme God and the significance of Surya Namaskaram[Surya Vandanam]**

The Sun is regarded as the Supreme ruler of both the upper and below domains. Sun is the source of the majority of energy on earth. Sun is frequently connected to fire, warmth, light and is typically regarded as a God who gives the world, life and development. Sun can be viewed as a constructive force too.

Scholars' view

Vandanam is the sixth form of Bhakti and through this approach, a devotee can see or find his master [Lord] everywhere he wants to and pray by Namaskaram. The practice of Vandanam bhakti, lead to physically prostrating oneself in devotion to the Divine, frequently in front of a Guru or to the God. Vandanam approach of bhakti is included in the rituals like Pada Puja (worshipping the feet of the Divine), as after the puja the devotee will bow down and do namaskaram towards the God. Usually in the temple's Vandanam bhakti is frequently seen and depending on the culture, ladies may kneel down, whereas men usually make full prostrations to show their bhakti or prayer. In the end, Vandanam bhakti is presented high spiritual practice that heightens one's sense of devotion and prayer.

1.5.1.7 Dasyam

Dasyam is a unique kind of bhakti which means Serving and worshipping God as a devoted servant or slave. The devotee accepts the Lord as his father, mother, son, daughter and all his souls and serve the Lord for his happiness.

. **As the core part of the thesis is of Dasya bhakti, the elaborated details of Dasya bhakti have been given in the second chapter.**

1.5.1.8 Sakhyam

In Sakhyam bhakti, the devotee worships God as a friend and he behaves to God as an intimate friend. Friendliness is purely expressed in Sakhyam bhakti. Bhakta develops friendship with God and shares his grief, happiness and all happenings to the God. The devotee always feels calm as God will be there with him as an intimate soul throughout. The Scholar is pointing few examples of Sakhyam Bhakti

Arjuna and Krishna are best examples of Sakhyam bhakti. In the Bhagavata Purana, Lord Krishna's meet with his friend Sudhama, Krishna's connection with lot of cowherd boys of Vrindavan, and so many other instances are there to connect with Sakhyam bhakti or devotional friendship.

- **Sudhama, who is also known as Kuchela, is a friend and devotee of Lord Krishna.** Sudhama and Krishna have been friends since they were young children while attending the Gurukula education with their Guru Sandipani Muni. Even though Sudhama was in poverty and lack, his friendship and devotion to Krishna remain firm. There is a famous situation in which Sudama sends beaten rice [aval] to Krishna, which immensely pleases Lord Krishna which is mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam.

*'Sarva bhootatma drksakshaat tasyaagamana kaaranam
Vijnaayaachintayanaayam Srikaamomaabhajatpura
Patnyahpativrataayaastu sakhaa Priya chikirshaya
Praaptomaamasya daasyaami sampadomartya durlabhah'*

(Goswami 507-508)

Meaning: *'But the Lord, who sees the mind of all beings, knew the cause of his visit. He said to himself, 'The Brahmana is a great friend of mine', He never sought wealth from Me before. He approached Me now, at the entreaty of his devoted wife, whom he is naturally anxious to please. I shall bestow on him a fortune which is difficult of attainment even by the immortals'*

Scholar's sight: Since Lord Krishna was the direct witness in every devotee's heart, He completely understood the reason behind his friend Sudhama's visit to Him. Krishna says that His dear friend Sudhama has never worshipped Him for material wealth till now and this visit is to please his faithful wife. Krishna decides to bestow Sudhama with fortune and wealth, which no other Gods can give him. The bond between Krishna and Sudhama

is a potent illustration of Sakhyam bhakti, highlighting the beauty of friendship and faith with the divine. The devotion based on friendship can result in a deep heavenly connection of bhakti towards the Lord. Some of the Key points from the above sloka are noted below.

1. The close relationship between Krishna and Sudhama shows that the divine is not far away, but he is reachable and may be intimately known.
 2. Krishna's cordial greeting and the blessings to Sudhama serve as an example of Sakhyam bhakti. God responds to the sincerity and love of the devotee with compassion.
 3. Sudhama's small act of giving a tiny gift conveys a great deal about dedication and modesty. It demonstrates that the goal of the offering is not valued by its cost or the size, but with the true and loyal devotion towards the Lord.
- **Another example for Sakhyam bhakti** can be noted as the cowherd lads of Vrindavan, also known as Krishna's playmates was with a deep friendly connection with Lord Krishna, which demonstrates Sakhyam Bhakti. Along with Krishna, they engage in entertaining activities like games, naughty adventures, and cow herding in the forests of Vrindavan. Even though they know that Krishna is God, still they maintain a close connection with Him.

1.5.1.9 Atmanivedanam

Dedicating oneself completely to God is Atmanivedanam bhakti. One who follows Atmanivedanam bhakti, surrenders his body, mind, soul and all of his senses to the God. Such bhaktas will neglect his personal wishes and avoid independent existence in this world. He surrenders all his dharma and karma towards the God.

- **The Scholar is mentioning an example for Atmanivedanam bhakti from Srimad Bhagavata Purana**

*'tat te nukampam su sameeksamaano
Bhunjana evaatma kritam vipaakam
Hrdvag vapurbhir vidadhan namaste
jiveta yo mukti pade sa daya bhak'* (Goswami 507-508)

Meaning: *'My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering.*

You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim'

Scholar's sight- This verse exemplifies the concept of surrendering to the God in a wonderful way and has a clear connection to Atmanivedanam bhakti, which is the full offering of oneself to the Divine. Making obeisances with the body, mind, speech, all senses and heart represent a total surrender of the oneself towards the God. According to Bhagavad Gita, a devotee who completely surrenders to Him [God], is no longer subject to the consequences of his past karma. The essential element of Atmanivedanam is this kind of total surrendering.. They are filled with a desire for heavenly grace, have given up their ego, accepted their karma and completely submits themselves to the God. They become eligible for liberation through the Lord's mercy, as a result of their total self-offering, which built a strong bond with the Divine. It has become his rightful claim. The Lord is obligated by the devotion to return the favor, when one fully surrenders and submits to Him.

The principle of Atmanivedanam Bhakti, which is also called self-surrendering or self-offering devotion, is one of the main themes found in the Puranas. These kinds of devotees show unwavering devotion, and faith towards the deity of their choice, and through their complete surrender and submission to God, they achieve spiritual liberation.

After detailing all the nine paths of devotion, the scholar compares each of the eight paths of bhakti to Dasya bhakti in the coming up Chapter-two, to emphasise the importance of Dasya bhakti and to explore the indepth bhava of Dasya bhakti.

Research outcome

The worship of main nature deities like Sun, Water, Fire are divided into three main sections other than prehistoric period to Historic period, medieval period and modern period. References of nature deities from Rigveda, Valmiki Ramayana, various nature God temples built at different centuries, worshipped holy rivers, ponds are all highlighted to show the nature worship existed in different periods. Nature deities are still actively worshipped today through temples and festivals like Makara Sankranti, which celebrate and honor natural elements and celestial movements. Hence over periods, the path and practices used for worship changed into various modes and applications, but the ultimate aim or lead of worship is to reach liberation or to attain God. This point is traced out through various references from sacred texts.

Conclusion

The exploration of Bhakti in Indian culture reveals a thoughtful and evolving relationship between humanity, nature, and the divine. From the earliest forms of nature worship in the pre-historic period, where the Sun, Fire, and Water were adored as main forces of nature, which is further developed into the structured devotional practices of the ancient and medieval periods, the essence of Bhakti has remained deeply rooted. The worship of natural elements such as Sun, Water, Air, Fire, Trees and Mountains highlights a natural spirituality that sees divinity in all creation.

Finally, the Navavidhabhakti, the nine paths of approaches towards the God illustrates unified paths to divine communication.

As a unique approach of Bhakti, Dasya occupies the balanced and prominent place. Hence, the next chapter conveys the uniqueness and essence of Dasya Bhakti.

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