

Contextualize of Ear-piercing Rituals of Odisha as Eros-Agro-Fecundity Practices: A Historical Study on Socio-Anthropological Perception

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Abstract: The ear-piercing rituals of Odisha serve as a fascinating subject for historical study, offering valuable insights into the region's cultural heritage and socio-anthropological dynamics. By contextualizing these rituals within the framework of Eros-Agro-Fecundity practices, the paper explore the intricate interplay between ancient sexual rituals and their enduring significance in Indian society, with a specific focus on Odisha. It highlights the connection between these rituals and religious practices, particularly in relation to the region's depiction of erotic-agro-fecundity in temple sculptures. The evolution of religious beliefs, influenced by processes like brahmanization and sānskritaization, is evident in Odisha's cultural landscape, marked by shifts in worship practices such as those concerning Jagannātha. It employs literary evidence to delve into the nuances of 'agricultural sexual rituals' and socio-sexual behaviors linked with various cults. Additionally, it explores the integration of these practices into diverse cultural events such as fairs, fasts, festivals, and ceremonial activities like ear-piercing.

Keyword: Ear-piercing, Rites, Erotic, Agriculture, Fertility, Society.

Background

Ear-piercing as a tradition of Anthropological/Cultural/Socio-Religious/Ethno-Medicinal Practices (...?)

Every culture is characterized by its distinct traditions that foster a sense of unity among its members. An instance of such a habit is the act of piercing the ears of a young infant. The tradition of piercing children's ears is widespread throughout many continents and diverse civilizations, with certain regions of the world having practiced it for millennia.

The practice of ear piercing among young individuals has been subject to criticism due to issues over safety and the infringement upon bodily autonomy. Nevertheless, by implementing appropriate measures, the act of piercing the ears of young children is a secure procedure and a significant aspect of one's cultural legacy that should be perpetuated and commemorated. Young individuals in Latin American cultures, as well as certain regions of Asia and Africa, exhibit a notable prevalence of ear piercing. The habit is frequently linked to femininity and can be perceived as a 'automatic' decision due to its long-standing practice throughout generations. Many communities consider it customary to perform ear piercings on infants, and this practice is even available at hospitals in places like Mexico.

Critics frequently engage in superficial analysis of the tradition, positing that the practice is primarily motivated by superficial considerations. Nevertheless, ear piercing carries a heightened significance and a more profound connotation in numerous cultural contexts. Within the Hindu religion, ear piercing is referred to as a ceremonial practice known as *Karnavedha*. The rite holds great significance in Hindu culture as it is believed by many that having pierced ears facilitates significant spiritual connections. Likewise, within Kenyan communities, the practice of ear piercing is prevalent among children of both genders. The occurrence is frequently perceived as a ceremonial milestone, signifying a shift in the level of development for adolescent individuals. Moreover, within Kenyan culture, earrings are commonly donned not just for their visual appeal, but also as a representation of one's individuality and courage.

The primary issue of contention around the practice of piercing children's ears pertains to their safety. Critics express apprehension regarding infections; yet, under the supervision of a paediatrician, ear piercing is indeed a secure procedure. Studies indicate that issues associated with piercings are not contingent on age and can occur at any stage of life. In the case of a young individual who has undergone a piercing, it is imperative that their parents or guardians assume the responsibility of caring for their piercings in order to facilitate a seamless recovery. If the piercing procedure and its associated maintenance are executed correctly, it is expected that no medical complications would arise. Concerns pertaining to bodily autonomy are also evident; nonetheless, the act of obtaining ear piercings is not as intrusive as it may initially appear. It is an inherent reality that not all persons will possess a desire to don earrings, a decision that holds complete validity. Engaging in ear piercings at a young age may lack consent; however it offers a sense of liberation. An earring has a temporary nature, so affording individuals the option to abstain from wearing them if they experience unease with them. Earrings should be regarded in a comparable manner to other jewellery items such as necklaces or rings, as they are easily removable. The criticism of ear piercing traditions may stem from a lack of knowledge, as critics may disregard its importance in specific cultures.

This cultural practice does not involve the intentional infliction of pain for personal beauty purposes, but rather serves as a means of preserving one's cultural legacy in a secure and visually appealing manner.

Karnvyadhana, which is more commonly referred to as ear piercing, is a *Samskara* (Pandey 2002:102-105) that maintains a large amount of prestige within the Hindu religion. Sushruta, Charaka, Kashayapa, and Vagbhatta were some of the *Ayurvedic* intellectuals who contributed to the clarification of the *Karnvyadhana Samskara* (Pandey 2002:102-105; Bhishagratna 1963:141-154) doctrine. This is said to be practiced for the purposes of *Raksha* (protection) and *Abhushana* (ornamental), in addition to above said seers or *Ayurvedic* practitioners (Pandey 2002:102-105; Bhishagratna 1963:141-154). Despite the fact that the grasp of the ornamental use of *Karnvyadhana* has shown to be uncomplicated, the underlying protective mechanism is yet unknown. This *Samskara* was proven to be helpful in strengthening the immune system of children and protecting them from more opportunistic illnesses, according to the findings of the current study, which was carried out within the framework of both *Ayurvedic* and modern/ethno medicine.

The practice of ear lobe piercing, referred to as *Karnvyadhana Samskara*, holds significant cultural significance within Indian traditions. There is a lack of consensus regarding the optimal year for conducting the ear piercing ritual. Typically, this procedure is conducted within the sixth or seventh month, or alternatively, within the third, fifth, or seventh year following childbirth. A propitious day and time are selected for conducting the ceremony, followed by the performance of rites accompanied by prayers, and the presentation of earrings to a kid. Based on the Hindu book known as '*Dharma Sindu*,' (Upadhyaya 1986:119-288) it is recommended that *Karnvyadhana Samskara* be conducted on the 10th, 12th, or 16th day following the birth of a child. However, it is observed that a majority of individuals opt to undertake this ritual during the sixth or seventh month following childbirth. There are claims that ear piercing can help regulate the menstrual cycle in female children and protect against hysteria, as well as maintain the flow of electric current in the human body (Bhishagratna 1911:141-154 and 1916: 135-138).

A child's ears are pierced using a golden needle, allowing them to easily wear gold trinkets. Acupuncture facilitates the unobstructed circulation of blood within the child's brain, so enhancing the child's memory capacity. Various perspectives exist on the execution of this ritual in *Ayurvedic* literature. Sushruta suggests that this *Samskara* should be conducted during the 6th or 7th month (Shastri 2004:64-65). According to Vagbhata, it is recommended to place the infant on the mother's lap during the 6th, 7th, or 8th month of the winter season, rather than after the ear, on a day that is considered auspicious. In males, the right ear is pierced first, while in females, the left ear is pierced

first (Tripathi 2009: 18-32, 882-883). The primary objective of *Karnavedhana Samskara* is to save children from various ailments and to adorn them with ornaments (*Raksha-Bhushana Nimittam*) (Pandey 2002:102-105).

The analysis encompasses cultural-anthropological ideas derived from critical perspectives, as well as the comprehensive enumeration of many cultural concepts inside complex societal interventions. The theory of assimilation of thought, ideas, and every-day practices, as well as the spreading tendency within human beings and their old age practices and existence of society was further substantiated by additional cultural theorists. The survival of individuals is contingent upon their interpretation of the social environment and their ability to persist across successive generations. This generation acquired the ability to integrate themselves into different cultural practices within a certain region, such as *Samskara*; it can be viewed from several perspectives, such as cultural and spiritual viewpoints, to determine their appropriateness.

The diverse range of ceremonies and rituals associated with the *Samskaras*, from a cultural perspective, contribute to the shaping and maturation of one's personality. The *Parashar Smruti* states that the character of an individual is shaped via the experience of different *Samskaras*, similar to how a painting is painted with different colors. Consequently, the Hindu sages recognized the necessity of deliberately directing and shaping the character of individuals, rather than allowing them to develop in a random fashion. From a spiritual perspective, seers believe that *Samskaras* bestows a greater level of holiness. The elimination of impurities linked to the physical body is achieved through the practice of *Samskaras*. The entire physical form is dedicated and rendered suitable for the residence of the *atma*. As per the *Atri Smruti*, a man is initially born as a Shudra. By engaging in the *Upanayana Samskara*, he undergoes a transformation and becomes a *Dvija*, a person who is born twice. By obtaining knowledge of Vedic wisdom, he becomes a *Vipra*, a poet who is inspired. Lastly, by attaining a realization of *Brahman*, he becomes a Brahmin. The *Samskaras* represent a type of spiritual pursuit known as *sadhana*, which serves as an external practice aimed at enhancing one's internal spiritual development. Hence, the entirety of a Hindu's existence might be regarded as a majestic sacrament. According to the *Isha Upanishad*, the ultimate objective of the *Samskaras*, through the observance of rites and rituals, is to surpass the confines of *samsara* (earthly world) and traverse the vast expanse of death. In addition, it might be stated that once the *Atma* surpasses the cycle of births and deaths, it achieves *Paramatma*.

The practice of *Samskara* (Shastri 2004:2-35) has been observed since the Vedic time. *Samskara*, also known as *Gunantaradhanam*, is a technique employed to facilitate the transformation of attributes. In the field of *Ayurveda*, numerous *Acharya* have documented numerous types of *Samskāra*, which encompass sixteen rites of passage that are observed in contemporary Hindu society, spanning from

birth to death (Bhisagacharya 2006:5-8). The rites of passage in a human being's life, known as *Samiskāras* (Tripathi 2009:1-37), are documented in ancient Sanskrit texts. They encompass significant cultural occurrences throughout an individual's lifespan, spanning from birth to death. *Samiskāra* cultivates a state of alertness in order to achieve social standing and entitlements for the individual. Children are widely regarded as the most susceptible demographic within society due to their limited capacity for self-expression and reliance on caregivers. Therefore, it is imperative to provide children with specialized care and nurturing, as they undergo a rapid and ongoing process of physical and cognitive growth and development. During *Samiskāra*, the physician can also evaluate the child's appropriate growth and development. *Kaumarbhritya* is a prominent branch of *Ayūrveda* in *Ashtāṅga Ayūrveda* (Sharma 2008:29-30). The quantity of *Samiskāra* differs among various *Hindu Dharma Granthas*, ranging from around 16 to 40. However, the specific *Samiskāra* that are applicable are 16 (*Shoḍaṣh*) in number, spanning from *Garbhadān* to *Anteysthi Samiskāra*. This work will provide a concise description of eight *Samiskāras* that contribute to the growth and development of children, as well as their medical significance. These *Samiskāras* include *Jātakarma* (birth rituals), *Nāmkaṛaṇ* (naming the child), *Nishakramaṇ* (first outing), *Annaprāśhan* (first feeding), *Chūdākaraṇa* (head shaving), *Karṇavedhan* (piercing the earlobes), *Upanayana* (thread ceremony), and *Vedārambha* (beginning formal education). This part of study focuses on the *Samiskāras* mentioned in *Ayūrvedic* books, which are based on the many stages of child growth and development. These *Samiskāras* offer a logical framework for caring for children from conception to puberty.

Susruta thinks that ear piercing possesses the capacity to offer safeguarding against conditions such as hernia and hydrocele (Bhishagratna 1911:79-84). According to Chinese medicine, the application of acupressure to a targeted region on the ear has been proposed as a potentially efficacious approach for the treatment or prevention of asthma (Bhishagratna 1907:288-292 and 1916:319-325). There is an intrinsic, minor form of depression. The auditory lobe encompasses an inherent, diminutive recess that accommodates nerve terminals associated with conditions such as bronchial asthma, coughing, and tuberculosis. The act of piercing one's ears is purported to contribute to the maintenance of a stable menstrual cycle in females. Many cultures have the belief that ear piercing offers protection against hysteria and various other diseases. Earrings are said to sustain the body's electrical current, according to commonly held beliefs.

Based on the principles of *Ayūrveda*, it is believed that the lobe of the ear exhibits a prominent central point. The aforementioned element carries substantial significance within the domain of reproductive health. Moreover, it has been shown that ear piercing plays a role in the preservation of a regular menstrual cycle in females (Bhishagratna 1907:106-119, and 1916:135-138). It is widely accepted that early ear piercing in

youngsters can facilitate optimal brain development (Bhishagratna 1911:230, 274, 285, 659, 664). A meridian point exists within the auditory lobes, connecting the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere of the brain (Bhishagratna 1911:230). Piercing this area enhances the stimulation of certain particular brain regions. According to the principles of acupressure therapy, the activation of meridian points is believed to facilitate the enhancement of brain growth in a healthy and accelerated manner. The act of wearing earrings is thought to facilitate the maintenance of energy circulation within the human body. The visual center is situated in the central point of the ear. Hence, applying pressure to these particular regions contributes to the improvement of visual acuity. As per the principles of *Ayurveda*, the positioning of ear piercing is associated with the existence of two significant acupressure points, specifically the master sensory and master cerebral points. These two elements play a critical role in maintaining the auditory function of your youngster. As per acupressure specialists, this particular site has demonstrated efficacy in mitigating symptoms associated with tinnitus, a condition defined by the presence of ringing or buzzing sounds in the ears. Furthermore, ear piercing not only facilitates proper brain development but also functions as a prophylactic measure against health conditions such as hysteria (Bhishagratna 1907:4, 443 and 1911:126, 204, 739). The acupressure hypothesis posits that this particular region is also regarded as the site of the master cerebral, which governs the operation of the brain. It is widely considered that the application of pressure at these particular places can serve as a preventive measure against the development of mental disorders, including obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), anxiety, and unease (Bhishagratna 1911:289-296). Stimulating this area is thought to support the maintenance of one's digestive system. Additionally, this serves as the threshold for hunger, and its activation has been shown to reduce the probability of developing obesity. Ear piercing is thought to augment sperm production in males, thereby making it a mandatory practice in numerous societies to safeguard their reproductive health. In the context of female ear piercing, it is customary to commence the procedure by piercing the left ear. On the other hand, for a male person, the first piercing takes place in the right ear. This phenomenon can be ascribed to the congruence of these specific facets with the attributes associated with masculinity and femininity in an individual. The dominant perspective posits that masculinity is commonly connected with the right side of the body, whereas femininity is commonly associated with the left half. Ear piercing is typically advised to be performed on either the 10th, 12th, or 16th day of pregnancy, or on the 6th, 7th, or 8th month of pregnancy. In addition, it is possible to perform the task in any non-conventional years subsequent to the month of birth. The ear-piercing ceremony conducted on astronomical occasion enhances the child's emotional and physical well-being. Additionally, this ceremony may alleviate various ear-related issues, deafness,

and mental disorders in the child. Elderly individuals often hold this belief. Failure to conduct *Karṇavedha* on a kid is said to result in the child being deprived of the chance to partake in rituals such as *Pitrū Śhrādh*.

Furthermore, in traditional another ancient civilization like Chinese medicine, the act of wearing earrings has been considered advantageous for one's well-being. Ear piercing is said to have an acupuncture-like impact on the body. Ear decorations in ancient China were primarily designed for health-related objectives rather than for female ornamentation, with the expectation of achieving acupunctural benefits. In approximately 470 BCE, Hippocrates, widely regarded as the progenitor of Western medicine, documented the practice of ear piercing and the utilisation of earrings as a potential therapy and treatment for menstrual issues. Galen also expounded upon the same subject matter. In ancient times, gold earrings were inserted into a pierced acu-point to stimulate energy or chi in cases of insufficiency. If there is a surplus of energy, silver earrings are utilised. The inclusion of gemstones was motivated by their medicinal properties. A ruby was employed for the purpose of menstrual regulation and reproductive enhancement. The purpose of wearing an emerald was to prevent miscarriage and facilitate childbirth. Citrine was utilised as a means to enhance sexual vigour. Subsequently, these advantages were conveyed via the gold or silver. Currently, the conventional location for ear piercing is located in the central region of the fleshy lobe. The intuitive, third Eye, or psychic point is located in this area of the ear.

As per the *Sūshruta Samhitā*, the lobules of an infant's ears are typically pierced to provide protection and also for decorative purposes. The act of piercing should be conducted during a period of abundant daylight, characterised by favourable lunar and astral alignments, and specifically in either the sixth or seventh month of the year, as determined from its commencement. The placement of the child on the lap of its mother is recommended, and it is suggested that benedictions be pronounced over it. After pacifying and enticing the animal with toys and playthings, the doctor should gently touch the lobules of its ears with their left hand in order to observe the natural openings present in those areas, using the reflected sunlight. Subsequently, he ought to penetrate them directly using a needle grasped in his right hand, or alternatively, with an awl or a robust needle, in cases where the appendages are excessively thick. In the event of a male infant, it is recommended to pierce the lobule of the right ear before proceeding to the left ear. Conversely, for a female child, the operation should be reversed. The insertion of cotton lint plugs into the pricked ear-lobules should be followed by the application of lubrication or rubbing with raw oil. If there is a significant amount of bleeding accompanied by discomfort, it suggests that the needle has penetrated a location other than the previously mentioned natural fissure. On the other hand, if there are no significant side effects, it can be assumed that the piercing has been

done correctly (Bhishagratna 1907:141-151). Furthermore, it is stated that improper *Karṇvyadhana* might puncture the *Kalīka*, *Mārmarika*, and *Lohitikā nādis* of the ear, leading to significant detrimental consequences (Bhishagratna 1907:62-63).

A study led by a professor (Dhabhar 2012:3) from Stanford University School of Medicine has monitored the paths of important immune cells in reaction to temporary stress and meticulously examined how hormones activated by such stress improve immunological preparedness. The research, carried out on rodents, contributes to the existing body of evidence supporting the notion that the immune response is enhanced, contrary to popular belief, by the ‘fight-or-flight’ reaction. In the course of the investigation, the researchers successfully demonstrated that the extensive redistribution of immune cells around the body was regulated by three hormones secreted by the adrenal glands, varying in quantity and timing, in reaction to the stress-inducing incident.

According to Dhabhar (Dhabhar 2012:3), there exists a prevailing trend wherein no-repinephrine is released at an early stage and plays a major role in the mobilisation of several immune cell types, including monocytes, neutrophils, and lymphocytes, into the bloodstream. Epinephrine, which is also released in the early stages, facilitates the mobilisation of monocytes and neutrophils into the bloodstream, while simultaneously directing lymphocytes towards more active sites such as the skin. Subsequently, the production of corticosterone resulted in the migration of nearly all immune cell types from the bloodstream to the ‘battlefields’. These movements collectively enhance immunological preparedness. “The response is observed throughout the entire animal kingdom,” he stated. The act of ear piercing is a rapid operation that likely initiated a series of events, as elucidated by Dhabhar from Stanford University (Dhabhar 2012:3).

The body initiates an antigen-antibody reaction in response to mechanical stress and the presence of inert materials (Mohan 2002:114-121). Hence, it is likely that ear piercing elicits an antigen-antibody response within the body, thereby enhancing the body’s immune response to opportunistic diseases. The practice of wearing earrings in both the right and left ear is rooted in the yogic energetic anatomy of the human body. According to this theory, the right side of the body is governed by the *Pinglā* or Solar *Nādi*, which governs the more masculine aspects of our personality. Similarly, the left side of the body is governed by the *Ida* or Lunar or *Idā Nādi*, which controls the feminine aspect of our personality (Bailey 2007:4).

Based to the Microsystems of auricular acupuncture, the entire body can be effectively treated by targeting specific points on the external ear or auricle. In other words, the entire body is projected onto the auricle. Alternatively, the ear can be seen as a reflection or reflex of the entire body. Hence, it is evident that the traditional Chinese acupuncture points located on the ear have comparable anatomical alignments to the

many regions of the foetus (Phillips 2013:2). An additional issue that emerges pertains to the appropriateness of doing *Karṇvyadhana* on either the lobe or *pinna*. In the past, longer ear lobes were regarded as a symbol of attractiveness, leading to the practice of ear piercing as a means to increase the size of the lobule. Occasionally, ear lobules may get twisted or torn during this procedure. Hence, Sushruta provides a comprehensive account of fifteen distinct methods involved in lobuloplasty (Singhal 1981:279-280). This statement asserts that *Karṇvyadhana*, as indicated in *Ayurveda*, is associated with the practice of piercing the earlobe.

Karṇvyadhana has been a longstanding practice spanning several centuries, serving two primary purposes: decorative and defensive. The latest developments have provided more confirmation of its role as a modulator of immunity. *Karṇvyadhana* has been practiced on the right ear in male children and the left ear in female children. This practice aims to achieve a balance and harmonisation of energy flow between the male and female genders inside the body's organ systems. This work has the potential to facilitate future research endeavours that align with the principles of *Āyurvedic*, Chinese acupuncture, and Western reflexology.

Ear-piercing tradition as Tantrik/Agro-Fecundity/Religious/Erotic Essence/ Puberty Practice/Historic/Textual tradition (?)

Like hair-shaving, *Karṇavedha* or ear-piercing forms an essential part in puberty rites of India (Crooke 1926:246). The earlier Indian texts are silent about this rite though a faint reference to it may be traced in the *Nirūkta* (Bhadamkar 1942:839-897). It is only mentioned in the *Vyasa Smṛti* and in the *Kātyāyana Sūtra* which is a supplement of *Pāraskara Gr̥hysūtra* (Nene 1926: XXIX). The *Smṛti Chandrikā* of Devannabhata gives a brief note on the *Karṇavedha*. Referring to the rite of ear piercing observed by the Gonds and other Eastern and Central Indian tribes and other community, Russell says that this particular rite should be explained in terms of fertility magic. He views that, since the lobe made in the ear is supposed to have some sympathetic effect in opening the womb and making the child-birth easy (Russell 1911:99). Jevons considers it to be associated with the offering of blood to the deity (Jevons 1896:171). Crawley thinks that it is a relic of the physical mutilations performed by the primitives. He opines that: "When we find that the mouth and lips, teeth, nose, eyes, ears and genital organs are subjected to such processes, we may infer that the object is to secure the safety of these sense-organs by what is practically a permanent amulet or charm" (Crawley 1902:135).

It appears therefore that such rites as ear-piercing have a magical or mysterious significance in the outlook of primitive ancestors, and this has been revealed in certain features of puberty rites and rituals of the *upanayana*.¹ According to the *Dharmasūtras* (Buhler 1892-24:21-30) and *Smṛtis* (Buhler 1886:33) the initiated one has to observe a

number of taboos in relation to sexual affairs. These taboos are in striking agreement with those found among various tribes and community of India and outside. Some other taboos were imposed on moral and hygienic ground. But there are a lot of others practices which cannot be easily explained. For example, “an individual should not blow with his mouth to kindle fire (Buhler 1886:27), hold simultaneously in his hands fire and water, come between a fire and a Brahmana (Buhler 1892:5-12), use a seat or shoe or tooth brush made of *palāśa* wood (Buhler 1892:32), see the sun rising or setting (Buhler 1892:20), go over a rope by which a calf is tied (Buhler 1892:23), point out the rainbow to another (Buhler 1892:23), enter a village from the west or south or by a by path (Buhler 1892:32-33), wander by day with his head covered (Buhler 1892:14) and so forth” (Buhler 1892:68). These may be regarded as relics of primitive animistic beliefs, but it is not possible to explain with certainty in the present state of our knowledge why such taboos were really introduced. The probable explanation is that these may be associated with fulfilment of desire or some ritual for religious purpose.

Indian society remained predominantly agricultural based, even then the evidence relating to the sexual rituals and their connection with the cult of the Mother Goddess could not be completely hushed up. It is interesting to note that, in almost every period, Indian literature shows traces of agricultural sexual ritual or ‘agro-fertility concept’. It has a pattern of sexual behaviour different from the officially accepted norms. Among many rituals of the other traditions, *Tāntrik* practices which found their way into certain ancient texts is a tip of ice-berg, whose significance were denied or distorted by subsequent generations (Bhattacharyya 1975:6). According to E.O. James “So intimate appeared to be the relation between the processes of birth and generation and those of fertility in general that the two aspects of the same mystery found very similar mode of ritual expression under prehistoric conditions” (James 1957:172). The magical rites designed to secure the fertility of the fields seemed to belong to the special competence of the women. Those were the first cultivators of the soil and whose power of child-bearing had, in the primitive thought, a sympathetic effect on the vegetative forces of the earth (Frazer 1922-11-82, 399-423). The agricultural rituals rested on the assumption that the productivity of nature or mother-earth could be enhanced by the imitation of human reproduction. This gave rise to the sex rites all over the world including the cults of *liṅga* and *Yoni* (male and female organs), the former symbolising the act of cultivation and the latter, and the fruit bearing earth.

Sex and religion are intimately associated in the ancient societies as well as in the modern societies that conserve essentials of primitive culture in their religion. James Frazer in his work (Frazer 1922:100), *The Golden Bough*, has revealed the crucial responsibility of sex in spiritual rituals and attitude of early civilizations and non-literate culture. For the primordial man, the sacred generative power of the God is the source

of his entire requirement, so they rightly prefer the sexual organs as the symbol of this favour and prosperity (Frazer 1922:100). It was believed that the sex played a prominent role in attaining magical powers in the actual sense of the term. To the prehistoric man, the great quantity of the crop, the birth of many sons and daughters, the increase of cattle was nothing but the blessings of the invisible power (Bhattacharyya 1975:7). In another way, the dual task before the primitive man is to get rid of evil such as hunger and infertility and to secure food and fruitfulness. Hence, the primitive man since time immemorial attributed sex with magical power and employed it as a means to achieve these two fundamental objectives. These are mainly protection against evil spirit such as hunger, and fruitfulness in the sense multiplication and revitalization of animals, vegetation, earth and human being (Bhattacharyya 1975:7). Material remains from the Palaeolithic period shows that magico-religious cults had developed around the primary existential needs of man. Substantiation of graves, burial rituals and funeral offerings points to a deep preoccupation with and concern for death (Bhattacharyya 1975:7 and Desai 1975:88). Cave paintings and figural art of this period, again show the use of magic for food gathering and hunting.

The generative organs in the ritualistic belief of the Chalcolithic culture of Harappa formed an important part. Huge number of seals and sealing's depicting nude spirits with plant issuing from their womb, the genital emblems, phallic-shaped stones and rings are the finest specimen of Harappan art. Again the ithyphallic feature of the so-called *Pashupati* depicted on a seal and numerous female terracotta figurines. These female figurines are stressed on the weight of hips against a sophisticated slimness of the waist point to an established belief of the Harappans in the vital force of procreation and fertility (Bhattacharyya 1975:7 and Desai 1975:88). Radhakamal Mukerjee observes, "The Dryad represents the fecundity of vegetation in Indus valley; the nude goddess with a leafy spray gushing out of her womb like a stream represent the productive force of water; the bull which also appears with three heads in Mahenjodaro represents the power of generation in the animal world; and the Śiva prototype together with various conical and cylindrical stones that are obvious phallic emblems the fecundity of man. All this exemplifies to the deep reverence that the Indus civilization paid to the principle of reproduction and growth in nature, animal and man (Mukherjee 1964:39-40)."

The adoration of the phallus by the Indus Valley people is in all probability oblique at in the *Rigvedic* reference to *Śisnadeva* (Rigveda VII: 99.3) interpreted as the people whose god was *Śisna* (phallus). It is interesting to note that the cult of Śiva and the phallus play a very dominant role in the later Śiva and Śakti concepts.

Nowa day's also Śiva is commonly worshipped in the form of a *linga* (phallus), which stands upright on a flat base, the *yoni*, and round and oval in shape. Almost

all Śiva temples in Odisha are being worshipped in phallic form. The *liṅga-yoni* amalgamation symbolizes the male and female sex in lieu of creation of the world. The early representations of the *liṅga* are sensible copies of the penis erectus; but slowly they were stylized in later centuries, though the meaning and symbolism remained the same. Even in the *Mahābhārata* and in *Purāṇas* Śiva is described as totally exposed. He becomes indistinguishable with *liṅga*. In the Middle Ages Śiva and his personification *Lākuḷa* (*Lākuliṣha*) were portrayed naked with stress on the ithyphallic trait.

The combination of the male and the female was figurative of the celestial bi-unity of being and becoming of the so-called *pūrūṣha* and *prakṛtī*. The *Upaniṣhads* had long ago worn the symbol of sexual unification as the sign of the delight of union of *ātman* with *Brahman* and the *pūrūṣha* with *prakṛtī*. Thus, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* observes “in the embrace of his beloved a man forgets, the whole world everything both within and without, in the very same way, he who embraces the self knows neither within nor without” (Madhavananda 1934:660-661).

An inference from the *Vedic* literature shows that sex played a very important role in its religion, and there are many rites, derived from it. In the *Vedic* rituals the *Aśvamedha* rite lasted for one year was performed by the king to establish suzerainty over his neighbors was one of the important ceremonies during the *Vedic* period. The chief elements of this rite were ritual copulation, accompanied by sexual dialogues. It happens that four wives of the king were to participate in the ceremony which included the chief queen’s lying with the horse and the use of abusive language by the other queens (Bhattacharyya 1996:11, 98, and Penzer 1924-28:14-16). The commencement of acquiring supernatural control through sexual command was implied in one of the rites of the *Aśvamedha* where the king was to recline between the legs of his favorite wife, behind the sacrificial hearth, without enjoying her (Penzer 1924-28:14-16). In the *Mahābhārata* also numerous examples are seen for, instance, which involved the sacrifice of *Soma* to *Prajāpati*, presents many interesting features. During the ritual a prostitute and celibate abused each other on the northern side of the sacrificial altar. The mutual insults were offered for ‘fertility purposes’ (Gonda 1961:80). Many ancient texts like *Kathaka Samhitā* (XXXIV-5) and the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (V. 1.5) mention that many pairs were involved in ritual copulation.

Moreover, the rites in *Vedic* time, there were some sacrificial rituals, where some sexual symbolisms were linked. It is noticed that the descriptions with which *yajña* was performed, were often the images of sexual congregation. Even there are numerous instances of rituals and symbolic pairing in the religion of the *Brahmaṇas* and *Āraṇyaka* (Bhattacharya 1967:47-50). The sacrifice could not be considered absolute without coupling. Inferences from the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, (11.5, 2,16) suggests that emblematic copulation of diverse substances, conceived of as male and female were

prepared besides the human pairing. Perhaps all these pairings were supposed to give progeny and cattle to the sacrifice. The act of reproduction was considered as auspicious. Hence in the Vedic times, sex was at all times associated with creed prudishly as the basis of reproduction or fertility.

During the historical period, numerous festivals were solemnized in India such as the *Holi*, *Vasantotsava*, *Madāna-mahotsava*, *Kaumud-mahotsava*, *Dola-yātra*, *Aśhokāṣṭamī*, *Nāga-pañchamī*, *Ratha-sapatmī* and *Sabarostava* etc., where features of sexual magic to arouse powers of fertility were noticed. One of the most interesting features of these festivals was the use of obscene words and gestures. Even today also during the festival of *Holi*, before lighting the so called replica of *Holikā*, the village people use obscene words. It was believed that obscenity on the day of *Holi* would help to avoid the notice of a demons called *Dhoṇḍā* or *Holikā* and be useful in destroying her (Kane 1930-62:238-289). During the *Madāna-mahotsava*, celebrated in the month of *Chaitra*, even married woman of good families forget their socially cultivated bashfulness and indulged in obscenity. Damodaragupta in the 8th CE and Jimūtavhāna in the 12th CE note the uses of obscene language on this day (Kane 1930-62:238–289). Men and women could freely meet and have sexual liberty on this festival. It also reveals that during this *Madāna-mahotsava* festival, the participation of courtesans in celebratory jollity was measured propitious. So, the king used to call together a jolly get-together in the city garden, where courtesans were especially invited (Meyer 1930:373). *Kathāsarita-sāgara* reveals that dancing and singing were part of the celebration of *Kaumud-mahotsava* (Penzer 1924-28:33,243). The *Sabarostava* festival celebrated during ancient period was a festival connected with worship of mother goddess *Dūrgā*. During this festival, songs about the sex organs; sexual intercourse and mimicry were performed by the people (Sircar 1948:105-106 and Majumdar 1965:606).

The celebration of festivals was believed to bring luck and avert evil in general and stimulate agricultural fertility (Bhattacharyya.1968:35-37) in particular. Thus, it is seen that there was a considerable relaxation of social restraint in respect of the mixing of man and woman on festivals, so much so that sexual liberty likely to have prevailed in those days. In *Deva-yātra* and *Ratha-yātra* festival, the temple idols were taken in procession either in a palanquin or in a *ratha* or chariot, through the streets of the town or village to a particular sacred place near the temple. In Odisha the *Ratha-yātra* festival of lord *Lingarāja* at *Bhubaneswar* take place on auspicious day of *Aśhokāṣṭamī* (Mitra 1875:77-81), which fall on the dark 8th day of *Chaitra*. On this day, the proxy of Lord *Kīrtivāsa* is taken in the *ratha* to the temple of *Ramesvara*, that area was known as *Aśhokāvāna* or the forest of *Aśhoka* trees. So the phallic god *Lingarāja* visits the forest of *Ashoka* trees on the day of *Aśhokāṣṭamī*, which was a vegetation festival, again support the fertility rite and religious festivals.

The *ratha* or the cart worn for the march is ornamented with the obscene figure. Possibly those obscene figures over the cart drive away all the evils and endorse auspiciousness and well-being. One strange feature of the *Ratha-yātra* is the dancing girl. It is mentioned that the *Ratha-yātra* of Jagannātha at Puri used to be attended by one hundred and twenty *Devadāsī* who danced in admiration of the god (Brown 1930:240). Not only at Puri alone during the famous car festival of Jagannātha, celebrated on the auspicious bright 2nd day of *Aṣhāḍha* in every year but also across the province of Odisha. The use of obscene language is altered by a particular person known as *ḍāhūka* standing over the chariot, *i.e.*, known as '*Ḍāhūka-Boli*' or '*Ḍāhuka-Ḍāka*'.² Perhaps those vulgar words were worn to prevent evil character, mishap and for smooth running of chariot on the road. *Deva-yātra* and *Ratha-yātra* are seems to be an ancient practice which was known to Kautilya. Many ancient texts like *Atri Samhitā* and *Kāśyapa Samhitā* ornately explain the demonstration renowned in order to appease inauspicious measures such as draught, famine etc. Similarly in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapūrāṇa* (Shah 1961:191,214) and *Deva-yātra* is associated with the purpose of promoting opulence and forestalling evils. It is mentioned, 'the merit of one who perform such *yātra* regularly every year gets all his desires fulfilled in this world and goes to the abode of Viṣṇu.' The performance of the *yātra* is beneficial to the king and the citizens and is supposed to remove all evils. Hence, it can be said that the festivals of the ancient India is prudishly or primarily concerned with fertility, prosperity and security from the evil spirit as well as used sexual symbol and activities as a medium of achieving their goal of fertility and well being.

Brāhmanical religion is profoundly connected with sex and sex worship. The sex constituent is as significant issue in Hindu culture as the folklore. Sex has ever engaged an influential position in the arrangement of spiritual precepts and practices. Above and beyond, the manifestation of sexual skin tone in the religious fair and festivals of ancient India, there was the practice of devout prostitution that flourished for a long time. It is known from the study of comparative religion that sacred prostitution was widely prevalent in many parts of the civilized world such as India, Egypt, Babylonia, other regions of west Asia, Cyprus, Greece, Persia, Rome, North Africa etc (Briffault 1929:32). In no country in the world did religious prostitution flourish more than in India, and in no country it survived as long as in India. The indispensable thought behind the recital of the sexual act in or around the holy shrines is that it promotes all usual productivity and the general welfare of the society. It seems that ritual copulation was regarded as obligatory for every woman, at least once in her lifetime, in the interest of the community. However, with the social controls and restraints over sexuality associated with civilization, it was delegated to the specially anointed women, priestesses, who performed this blessed job in the sanctuary (Briffault 1929:32, 46 and 1927:210, 216).

In India, women devoted to temple are called *Devadāsī*, or servants of god. The earliest reference of *Devadāsī* occurs in central India at Jogimara cave in the Ramgarh hill and is assigned to the 2nd BCE (Chakravarti 1933-34:3031). There are many references of *Devadāsī* system in many ancient texts and medieval Indian inscriptions, which point out the widespread magnitude of this scheme all over India.

In Odisha, a special structure called *nāṭa-maṇḍira* was added to the formerly existing *vimāna* and *jagamohana*, which shows the significance of the dancing girls in the temple. The dancing girl or so called *Devadāsī* attached to the temples was habitually prostitutes. Although most of the temple prostitutes were girls forced by their parents, or by the powerful clergy, to dedicate their services to the god, there were many older women among them who choose their profession of their own free will. Indeed, temple harlotry seems to have been an essential part of the Hindu temple and the cause of which was unavoidably linked with the early cults of fertility.

In the religious history of India, the cult of the mother goddess never ceased to be an important cult of the people. It was so profoundly rooted in the Indian mind that even in the sectarian religions like Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc; the female principle had to be given a very prominent position. Even the basically atheistic religions like Buddhism and Jainism could not avoid this popular influence. Later Buddhism (*Kālachakra-yāna*, *Vajra-yāna*, and *Tantra-yāna*) is, in fact, nothing but a disguised *Tāntrik* cult of the female principle. Among the vast masses of Indian peasantry, male deities have only a secondary position. Indeed, a predominantly agricultural country like India, with her stunted economic development accounting for a strong survival of tribal elements, and this explains the cause of the popularity and survival of the cult of the female principle and kindred *Tāntrik* rituals (Bhattacharyya 1975:8).

The identification of earth with a woman implies that the functions of the earth and those of women are alike. The same preconditions that fertilize women are also thought to fertilize mother earth (Bhattacharyya 1975:8). In Odisha, it is believed that during the days of the *Raja-parva* ritual, mother Earth menstruates to prepare herself for her fertilizing work. This explains why in Punjab and also in different parts of the Deccan and Bengal, mother Earth is given time to have a rest. The special importance is attached to rituals to the menstruation of the goddess Pārvatī in different parts of India and that of the goddesses Bhagavatī and Kāmākṣhyā of Kerala and Assam respectively (Bhattacharyya 1975:8). In the *Tantras*, for the same reason, special importance is attached to the menstrual blood. In primitive thought, all fluxes of blood, menstrual as well as lochical, were treated alike as manifestations of the life-giving power inherent in the female sex (Das and Mohapatra 1979:102-103 and Das 1953:68). This also explains the use of vermilion or red-ochre on cult objects and on female bodies. The relation of vermilion or red ochre with the menstrual blood and also with the productive

aspects of nature has been shown by scholars (Briffault 1952:32, Thomson 1949:89 and Bhattacharyya 1968:8-19, 53-59).

The fertility of the field when linked up with that of the woman has given rise to the universal belief that whatever is planted by a pregnant woman will grow well while a barren woman is expected to make the field barren (Bhattacharyya 1968:9). The commonest Sanskrit word for childbirth is *bhūmiṣṭha* which means simply 'being placed on the earth'. This belief may have resulted from a simple association of ideas: women bring forth children as the land yields fruit. But this belief also has an economic basis. Ancient agriculture was women's work. Primitive myths ascribing the invention of agriculture to women are found all over the world. Because primitive agriculture was a chancy thing, dependent on the weather and on techniques which were barely understood, magic accompanied every phase of the mysterious operation, from sowing to reaping (Bhattacharyya 1968:11). The primary purpose of agricultural magic was to communicate to the fields the fertility of women. Two basic methods were therefore used to enhance the fertility of the fields: ritual nudity (the exposure of the female sexual organ to the fields) and sexual union. Women of many tribes all over the world³ are known to strip naked periodically for the benefit of crops. The same custom was widespread in India (Crooke 1894:70) and persists until this day.

Ceremonies involving sexual intercourse almost invariably marks festivals marking various agricultural operations. As stated above, primarily the *liṅga* or male organ was the symbol of the act of cultivation, while the *Yoni* or the female organ represented mother earth. This finds support in a statement of Manu: *iyam bhumirhi bhutanam sasvati yoni rucyate* (IX. 37), (this earth is the eternal female organ for beings. One should not forget to recall in this connection that the primitive hoe was designed to resemble the male organ, while the world *laṅgala* (plough) is closely associated with *liṅga*). Elsewhere he identifies man with seed and woman with seed-field: *kshetra-bhuta smrtanari vija-bhuta smrtahpuman* (IX. 33) (man is identified with seed and woman with seed-field).⁴ The association of sexual union with agriculture is universal (Briffault 1952:270). Referring to these customs Briffault observes that "the belief that sexual act assists the promotion of abundant harvest of the earth's fruits and is indeed indispensable to secure it, is universal in the lower phases of culture (Briffault 1952:270). Among the Hos of Chotanagpur, during the harvest festival, complete sexual liberty is given to the girls. The Kotas of Nilgiri hills have a similar festival of sexual freedom. In Odisha, among the Bhuīyānas, sexual freedom is given to the girls during their harvest festival called *māgha-purnimā*. In Assam, women are allowed during spring festivals complete freedom 'without any stain, blemish or loss of reputation.' The same holds good in the harvest festivals of many other tribes of India. The *Zemi* villagers (*Kacha Nāgas*) at their sowing season make a model of the sexual organs in coitus. The female organ is

exactly modelled in clay, with dry grass representing the pubic hairs, while a wooden stake serves for the male organ. Young men and girls surround this model, and one of them works the stake in the appropriate way, to the great amusement of the rest of the party (Thurston and Rangachari 1909:244). In some cases their original purposes have been forgotten. The *Holi* festival was a celebration of this type in which even persons of great responsibility were not ashamed to take part in orgies which mark the season of the year. Today men run about the street dousing each other with red-powder or water, the significance of which is entirely forgotten (Bhattacharyya 1968:45, 1970:34 & 1975:114-119).

The origin of the *Tāntrik* sex rites is therefore to be sought in the aforesaid beliefs and rituals. In fact, erotic practices associated with the Mother-Goddess cult appear to be older than the *Tāntrik* texts themselves. The adoption of the ritual of a particular group of people by another group is essentially connected with the social changes caused by the shifting tensions in the primitive mode of food production (Bhattacharyya 1970:28). The pastoral tribes must have borrowed or inherited many of their ritual features from the hunting tribes, since hunting led to the domestication of cattle. In the second pastoral grade, as the case was with the *Vedic* peoples, when stock-raising was supplemented by agriculture, some agricultural features were also incorporated in the pastoral rituals (Bhattacharyya 1970:28). In the later *Sam̐hitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, for example, there are references to agricultural rituals while they are conspicuously absent in the earlier portions of the *Rgveda*.

The central ritual of the *Aśvamedha* was originally the queen's sexual union with the priest (Bhattacharyya 1971:1-21). According to the evidence furnished by the *Vajasaneyi Sam̐hitā* (XXIII) this union used to take place in a curious way. The queen was raised up high by a few men, and so was the priest. And in that condition they were to make sexual intercourse, according to the demand of the ritual (see Uvata's commentary on *Vajasaneyi*, XXIII, 26-27). This was evidently a fertility ritual which is proved by the fact that the ancient commentator explained the sexual act in terms of the act of sowing in the field: *Yatha krsivalah dhanyam vate suddahm kurvan grahana maksaujhatiti karoti*.

In the *Satapatha Brahmana* (I. 9.2.7, 11; VI. 4.3.7; VI. 6.2.8; VI. 6.1.11; etc.) we come across numerous passages in which sexual union is identified with sacrifice. The *Chhāndogya Upaniṣhad* (II.1.3.) has the following passage: "One summons; that is a *himkara*. He makes request; that is a *prastāva*. Together with the woman he lies down; that is an *udgitha*. He lies upon the woman; that is a *pratihāra*. He comes to an end; that is a *nidhana*. He comes to a finish; that is a *nidhana*. This is the *Vāmadevya Sāman* as woven upon copulation. He, who knows thus this *Vāmadevya Sāman* as woven upon copulation, comes to copulation, procreates himself from every copulation, reaches a

full length of life, lives long, and becomes great in offspring and cattle, great in fame. One should never abstain from any woman. That is his rule” (*Chandogya Upanishad* II: 1.3). In many scattered passages of the *Upanishad* (cf. *Chhāndogya*, V. 8. 1-2; *Brhadāranyaka*, (VI. 2.13 etc.), the woman is conceived as the sacrificial fire, her lower portion as the sacrificial wood, the genitalia as the flames, the penetration as the carbon, and the copulation as the spark. The *Brhadāranyaka* (VI. 4.3) says that the lower portion of a woman (*upastha*) is to be conceived as the sacrificial altar or (*vedi*), the pubic hairs (*lomāni*) as the sacrificial grass, the outer skin (*bahischarman*) as the floor for the pressing of the soma plants (*adhisavana*), and the two labia of the vulva (*muskau*) as the inmost fire (*Brhadaranyaka* VI: 4.3). He who remembers this during copulation gets the reward of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice. Since *Vājapeya* means ‘food and drink,’ there is no difficulty in thinking that by sexual union, as the said *Upanishad* suggests one is entitled to get food and drink (*Brhadaranyaka* VI:4.6.7). In other words, here sexual union is regarded as a means, or rather a technique, of food production. The same text (VI. 4.6.7) goes on so far as to state that if a woman refuses sexual union, she must be forced to do so.

In *Tāntrikism* special importance is attached to the rituals centering round the female genital organ and these rituals are called *bhāgayaga* or *lata-Sādhanā*. The word *Tantra* is derived from the root *tan*, the most simple meaning of which is ‘to spread,’ ‘to multiply.’ The *Tāntrik* ‘*Śrīchakra*’ is nothing but the representation of female generative organ (Bhandarkar 1936:209). In the *Dūrgā* worship, a *Tāntrik* diagram showing the pictures of female generative organ, called *Sarvato-bhadra-maṇḍala*, is drawn upon the ground and a *pūrṇa-kumbha* or *pūrṇa-ghaṭa*, i.e., an earthen vessel filled with water, a symbol of the female womb, is placed on it. The figure of a baby, called *sindura-puttali* is drawn on the surface of the vessel. The open mouth of the *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* is covered with five kinds of leaves (mango branch bearing a bunch of leafs), and a cocoanut, smeared with vermilion, is placed on it (Das and Mahapatra 1979:104-105). The *Kathāsarit-sāgara* (LXX. 122) identified *kumbha* or *ghaṭa* explicitly with uterus. What is stated above is simply a fertility rite by which the plants are brought into contact with female reproductive organ to ensure multiplication (Chattopadhyaya 1968:294-296). This also finds expression in a piece of sculpture of the Mother Goddess found at Nagarjunikonda which depicts the lower portion of a female figure in a sitting posture with legs doubled up and wide apart and feet pointing outwards. The bifurcated lower portion of the vulva is very prominently indicated, while the area between the broad belts below the navel and the upper portion of the vulva is used to make a *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* highly decorated with an ornamental belt around it (Bhattacharyya 1970:42). It is famously known as *Aditī-Uttānpada* or *Lajjā Gaurī*.

Later religions like Buddhism and others, to get themselves popular among the masses, had to make a compromise with these existing cults and beliefs. It was one of

the processes through which the *Tāntrik* deities and rituals of the lower strata of society could have access to the upper levels (Bhattacharyya 1975:12). This process began to work in full motion from about the beginning of the Christian era, and the subsequent history of the Indian religions was the history of the conflict and fusion of the *Tāntrik* elements with the so-called higher religions. *Tāntrik* elements profoundly influenced Buddhism and transformed it beyond recognition. Śaivism, due to its popular character, was saturated with *Tāntrik* ideas, practically since its inception as an organised religion (Bhattacharyya 1975:12). Vaiṣṇavism too, could not avoid this popular influence. Jainism alone with stood this current and could largely maintain its rigid orthodoxy. Still it had to make room for a good number of *Tāntrik* goddesses. The mass strength behind the *Tāntrik* cults also created a new religion, entirely dominated by female in which even the great gods like Viṣṇu or Śiva would remain subordinate to the goddess. This new religion came to be known as *Śaktism*.

Tāntrik Buddhist texts like the *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* or the *Guhya-samāja* say that creation is due to the *Śakti* or female energy of the *Ādi* Buddha, and as such the adepts should realize that the female sex is the source of all. Therefore, they are to be initiated by *prajñā* or *Śakti* (Bagchi 1939:110 and Moharana 1993:84). The aim of the *Śākta-Tāntrik* worshipper is to realize the universe within him and to become one with the goddess. In the *Tantras*, all women are regarded as manifestations of *Prakṛti* or *Śakti*, and hence they are object of respect and devotion. The *Tantras* do not make any distinction between a so-called virtuous and a so-called fallen woman. The patriarchal concept of female chastity has nothing to do with the *Tantras*. Every aspirant has to realize the latent female principle within him, and only by becoming a female, he is entitled to worship the Supreme Being (*Vāma bhūtvāya jetparām*). A woman is entitled to function in the role of the preceptor and she has no sexual obligation to anyone.

It is obvious that such a socio-religious viewpoint is bound to be discouraged by the orthodox upholders of Brahmanical patriarchal traditions. Therefore, very naturally this viewpoint had its solid base among the lower section of the people who did not follow the injunctions of the *Smṛtis*. The women use to work freely in the fields, markets, mines and industries, as they do even today. Seclusion of women was essentially the affair of the higher caste peoples who were guided by the higher *Smārta* or *brāhmānical* tradition. In the *Tantras*, supreme importance is attached to such characters as the *Chāṇḍali*, *Dom̐bī*, *Rajakī*, *Śabarī*, *Chamārūñī*, *Lahūrāñī*, *Telūñī*, *Gauḍuñī* etc. These were all female names representing some of the lowest castes carrying on despised occupations. According to the *Nātha* tradition, the queen Maināmatī was initiated by a Hādi or Hādipā, a member of a despised caste. *Saraha* of the *Sahajiya* tradition says in his *Dohakośa* that the Brahmaṇas as a caste cannot be recognised to be the highest of men, because their only task is to deceive the people. Such examples are numerous.

The writers of the *Smṛtis* insisted upon class-division, hierarchy and authoritarian social structure and it was violently enforced by the ruling class in public life. It severely acted upon the natural development of sex and social life in India as well in Odisha. But in spite of all ruthless efforts, the triumph of extreme privileged group's values was confined only among the dominant class. The cause of this limited success cannot be properly understood unless a clear picture of the influence of depressed class in Indian social life.

Discussion

When we were having the session that occurred before this one, we discussed the rituals that are associated with the erotic sculpture that can be found in the temples of Odisha. Along with the literary tradition, the ceremonial manner of presentation, the life-giving ceremony, the various types of initiation and tendencies such as ancient the practice of ethno medicine ancient health care, ancient medicine practices, and ancient science to provide for human beings, these rituals are also related with different types of initiation. In addition, we have discussed the relationship between the erotic-agro-fecundity of Odisha and India as a whole, within the context of the particular environment that exists in India. The other side of the coin is that there are instances in which the site of the event and the rites that are performed are identical in each and every region of India. The only difference is that the name of the festival and the date of the event are presented in a different way. This is the only difference. The primary focus of the conversation was on the components of religious belief systems and rituals that are related with reproduction. This was the case for the entirety of the conversation. The majority of these were connected to the cultural inheritance of the routines that are a part of the daily lives of everyone. These routines are a part of your existence. In addition to the fact that they are connected to religion and tradition, the rituals and practices that have been described above have a relationship to the social sphere. This connection exists because of the fact that they are related with the social sphere. These folks are primarily concerned with the improvement of religious merit, well-being, and happiness in their lives. The above discussion shows that sex is intimately related to the practices, ideology and religious beliefs of historical society.

Conclusion

The intricate interplay between art, ritual, and daily life in Odisha, with a particular focus on sensuous sculptures are found in the temples of Odisha. It deeply intertwines with local rituals and practices. These artworks are not mere decorations but are integral to religious and cultural rituals, reflecting and reinforcing local beliefs and practices. From the ethnographic view point these rituals insight into the everyday life of people.

This includes traditional practices related to health, medicine, and initiation rites. The ancient knowledge and practices in Odisha, such as ethno-medicine and healthcare traditions are historical and bear a great contemporary relevance. It also situates these rituals within the broader Indian context, noting similarities and differences across regions. Despite variations in festival names and dates, the core rituals often remain consistent, reflecting a shared cultural heritage with regional adaptations. It also embedded in religious belief systems, with significant implications for social life; those play a crucial role in enhancing religious virtue, well-being, and overall happiness. These rituals and sculptures have contributed to reproduction and sensuality. This connection underscores the importance of these themes in the cultural and religious life of past societies. Therefore these rituals are not only religious but also deeply ingrained in the cultural legacy and daily routines of individuals. They reflect a broader philosophical and religious perspective on human existence and societal values.

Notes

1. The taboo on the presence of women in the place where the initiation of the males is performed and the custom that the novice must avoid women during the rites, found among other tribes of India and abroad have a close bearing on the custom that when the ceremony of *upanayana* take place no women allowed to be present there.
2. My personal observances in the time of the *Ratha-Jatra* ceremony happened in Puri, and several time discussions and personal communications with Pandas of Puri town.
3. The custom was followed by the ancient Greeks in a rite associated with Demeter, by Flemish women and British priestesses of the pre-Christian era, and was associated with the shamanistic practices of the Taoist in China, especially with regard to rain-making.
4. This line recurs in most of the Puranas and the law-books. Behind the universal conception of the fruit-bearing Mother as the Great Goddess how the ancient beliefs relating to procreation and fertility worked out.

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