

# The Religious Aspects Reflected in the Purāṇas with Special Reference to Assam Region- A Brief Study

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## **Abstract**

The Purāṇas are the vital mirror of wisdom, which deliberates the core knowledge of religious acts performing in our society since ancient period. The Purāṇas have obtained a unique status in Indian religious literature. As a religious literature, the Purāṇas are donated miscellaneous knowledge like ancient history, religion, philosophy, geography, sociology, literature, medicine, Vrata, Vāstu and politics etc. The Purāṇas are explained the Vedic rituals and customs in easier way that the general masses are easily understand the vital theory of the Vedic hymns and Vedic knowledge. So, the Purāṇas are called fifth Veda (Chāndogya Upaniṣad - 7/1/2). On the basis of these Paurāṇic knowledge the peoples of different parts of the world has celebrated different religious acts (Vrata) in different seasons for their own desire and welfare. Among those religious activities, the Vrata has played a unique role in our society (Especially in Assam region). The Vratas are deeply connected with the worships. Without observing Vrata, the worships cannot be fulfilled. In Assam region, different types of Vratas are performed in different season. The Vratas has its scientific and philosophical values. For acquiring the scientific and philosophical result, the people of Assam organize some specific religious activities in different seasons. Generally in Assam region, different types of Vratas should be performed in honor of different deities. Among those Vratas some specific Vratas should be generally performed in day to day life. The present paper highlights those common Vratas which are performed day-to-day life in Assam region.

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The Purāṇas are the vital mirror of wisdom, which deliberates the core knowledge of religious acts performing in our society since ancient period. The Purāṇas have obtained a unique status in Indian religious literature. As a religious literature, the Purāṇas are donated

miscellaneous knowledge like ancient history, religion, philosophy, geography, sociology, literature, medicine, Vrata, Vāstu and politics etc. The Purāṇas are explained the Vedic rituals and customs in easier way that the general masses are easily understand the vital



different parts of the world has celebrated different religious activities (Vrata) in different seasons for their own desire and welfare. The word Vrata means ‘religious observance’ or ‘obligation’ which is performed in honor of different deities. Many ancient texts have explained about Vrata that Vrata is called saṅkalpa, by which anybody has conducted his daily religious task with specific saṅkalpa. According to Amarakośha, the Vrata is called Niyamas and Saṁnyama. The Niyamas are observed during the period of Vrata. Thus, the Vrata has played a unique role in our society. The Vratas are deeply connected with the worships. Without observing Vrata, the worships cannot be fulfilled. Different types of Vratas are performed in different season all over India.<sup>6</sup> Vrata has played a unique role in our society (Especially in Assam region). The Vratas are deeply connected with the worships. Without observing Vrata, the worships cannot be fulfilled. In Assam region, different types of Vratas are performed in different season. The Vratas has its scientific and philosophical values. For acquiring the scientific and philosophical result, the people of Assam organize some specific religious activities in different seasons. Generally in Assam region, different types of Vratas should be performed in honor of different deities. Among those Vratas some specific Vratas should be generally performed in day to day life. The present paper highlights those common Vratas which are performed day-to-day life in Assam region.

The Vratas which found in the purāṇas are mentioned below:

Bāra Vrata, Pratipada Vrata, Dvitiyā Vrata, Tritiyā Vrata, Chaturthī tithi Vrata, Pañchamī Vrata, Ṣaṣṭhī Vrata, Saptamī Vrata, Aṣṭamī Vrata, Janmāṣṭamī Vrata or Kṛṣṇa-Janmāṣṭami, Rāma-navami, Akṣayya-tṛtiya Vrata, Paraśu Rāma Jayanti Vrata, Daśahara Vrata, Gaṇeśachaturthī Vrata, Navarātra or Durgotsava Vrata, Vijayā daśamī Vrata, Ekādaśī Vrata, Dvādaśī Vrata, Trayodaśī Vrata, Chaturdaśī Vrata, Dipāvalī or Divālī Vrata, Naraka – Chaturdaśī vrata, Aśvina

<sup>6</sup> Amarakośha- 93,94,95.

amāvāsya Vrata, Bali- Pratipada Vrata, Yama-Dvitiya Vrata, Makara- Saṅkrānti Vrata, Mahā-siva-rātri Vrata, Pañchamī Vrata, Ṣaṣṭhi Vrata, Saptamī Vrata, Aśokā Pūrṇima Vrata, VataSāvitṛī Vrata, Nāga pañchamī Vrata, Manasā- Pūjā Vrata, Rakṣābandhana, Haritālīka Vrata, Rishi- Pañchami Vrata, Ananta – Chaturdaśī Vrata, Chāturmāsya Vrata, Mauna Vrata, Viṣmapañchaka Vrata, Bhīm ekādaśī Vrata, Māshopavasha Vrata, Kārtika Vrata, Naksatra Vrata and Ṛtu Vratas, Akshaya Tritiyā vrata, Laxmi vrata, Ramva Tritiyā vrata, Akhandadvādasī Vrata etc.

The above mentioned Vratas have the special greatness. The people of the different parts have hugely performed these Vratas in their day-to-day life. Besides that there are some Vratas which have mostly performed in undivided Goalpara district among the Koch Rājibongshī community also. These are mentioned below-

1. Hudum-Deo- Vrata: - The deity is related with the rain. It is called the deity of rain. It should be followed in the Assam specially in Goalpara

- district since ancient times. The women should observe this vrata for increasing the rate of paddy grain. Basically this Vrata is deeply connected to Agricultural tasks. The vital aim of this Vrata is conducting for welfare of the society from the evil thoughts.
2. Tistā-Buri-Pujā or Mesenī Vrata:-The ordinance should be performed in the month of Vaiśākha and end in the month of Jaiṣṭha first date. The ordinance should follow in honor of the river Tistā. The devotees should perform this ordinance by imagining river Tistā as goddesschenē. So, it is recognized as Tistā-Buri-Pujā or Mesenī Vrata. The Vrata should be followed by uttering songs.
  3. Śāital Vrata : - This ordinance is very popular among the Rājbonshi community. Basically the Vrata should be performed in the month of Pauṣa . The women devotees should performed this ordinance for attaining progeny in life. The story of Vrata should be presented by presenting song.
  4. Kāti-Pujā-Vrata: - This is a popular Vrata in Goalpara district. The devotees of Assam have followed this ordinance for attaining progeny and developing grains in the paddy field. The votaries have performed songs and dance in honor of God Kārtika during the whole night. The ordinance should be observed in the month of Kārtika Śukla Paksha.
  5. Subochonī Vrata: - In Sanskrit, the real name of goddess Subochonī is Suvosuchanī. According to Sabdokalpadrum, the goddesses Chaturvaktra, Hanshabahini, Raktavarnā are the annihilator of all infectious diseases etc. The goddess, which have good vocal quality that is called Subochonī. The goddess Subochonī should be honoured by reciting various names such as-Subochonī, Śutchondī, Subochonī Durgā etc. The devotee who observes this Vrata should give oblations in four places along with the garments, mango leaves, full of water pot, white cloth, white flowers and a seat(Āsana) in honour of the goddess. The womens should worship the goddess with scent, flower, lamp and other items etc. Hereafter the greatness of the goddess(Vrata-kathā) should performed during the worship. Specially the Vrata should be performed early in the morning. The devotees should follow this Vrata for gaining prosperity of the society. However, this Vrata should be observed for achieving good results in marriage, results of examinations, disputes, good health and progeny etc. At the end of the ordinance the votaries should perform the vrata-katha by reciting songs and making act on this.
  6. Kātyāyanī-Vrata: - This Vrata, which is performed hugely in Assam specially among the Rājbonshi community since ancient times. This

Vrata has been observed in the Rāsa Pūrṇimā tithi in every year. Generally the unmarried girls, who are followed this Vrata for achieving good husband in life. The Vrata must be followed three or five times continuously in three or five years. The main characteristic of this Vrata is the devotees have sung local music (lokasangeet)during the Vrata.

7. Tulsī-Vrata: - This Vrata should be observed in the month of Chaitra Saṅkrānti tithi or in the month of Vaiśākha first date. The Vrata should be performed only female devotee also. But the Widows should perform this Vrata also. The goddess Tulsī should be worshipped during the Vrata.
8. Janmaṣṭamī Vrata: - This Vrata has hugely followed in the different parts of the Assam among all Hindu community. The devotee should take fast for the whole day and the devotee should worship god Krishna at mid night and eat food after the worship. The Vrata-katha, Bhāgavata Pātha should be presented at night on that specific day. Next day the devotees should offer sweet dish called 'Miṣṭānno' to god Krishna and hereafter some games should be organize in honor of god Kṛṣṇa.
9. Āmāti-Vrata: - This Vrata is deeply connected with the agriculture. The widows of the different Hindu community have observed this vrata for increasing the rate of production in the paddy grains and save the

paddyform natural disaster. The Vrata should be observed in the month Āṣāḍa Ambubāchī tithi in Assam every year.

10. Ekādaśī-Vrata: - The Vrata should be observed in different parts of Assam. Specially this vrata has followed by the widows and old persons of the society. On that day the votaries should take fast for the entire day and reading the Bhāgavata, purāṇa and the greatness (Vrata-kathā) of Ekādaśī tithi. At night the devotee should eat only fruit after completing the vrata.
11. Douḷ –Pūrṇima: - The Vrata should be observed hugely in the different parts of the Assam among the different community. In Assam it is called "Fākuwā-Utsav". On that day the votaries should take fast at night and reading Bhāgavata and reciting the names of God Krishna. The people should sung different songs in honour of God Krishna and play with different colour during that specific tithi.
12. Guru-Pūrṇimā:- The Vrata should be observed in honor of the preceptors. The devotees are followed this Vrata for offering deep respect to his preceptors.
13. Laxmī –Pūrṇimā –Vrata: - The Vrata is hugely observed in the different parts of the Assam among different community. The Goddess Laxmī is known as in different names among the Rajbangsi community such as Kheti Laxmī, Bhumi Laxmī and Dāk Laxmī. The devotees should take fast for the entire day and worship

goddess Laxmī at night. At the end of the worship, the devotees should eat food.

14. Sheetalāsaptamī Vrata : The Sheetalāsaptamī Vrata should be performed in the month of Chaitra Kṛṣṇa paksha saptamī tithi. In some region, the Vrata should be observed in the month of Srāvana Saptamūtithi. The people should follow this Vrata for achieving happiness, welfare and good health etc.
15. Madana Kāmadeva Puja Vrata or BāshPuja :The Madana Kāmadeva puja Vrata or Bash Puja has performed hugely in different parts of Assam specially among the Rājibongsī community. The Vrata should be started on Madana Chaturdasī Tithi and followed continuously for five days. Different types of religious songs have presented during the sacrifice in honour of God Kāmadeva (Madana). Generally the people should perform this Vrata for Achieving good health, beauty, good husband, wives and progeny etc.
16. KāmākhyāPujā Vrata : The goddess Kāmākhyā should be worshipped every year in the month of Āṣāḍa Saptamī Tithi. The people have come to the Kāmākhyātemple(Dhām) from the different parts of India, which is situated in the Assam. The Vrata should be observed continuously for four days. The devotees of the different regions have come to here and honoured goddess Gauri(Kāmākhyā). At first the devotees should bathe the

statue of Kāmākhyā, enrich it with different kinds of flowers and worship in the Mahāpitha of goddess Kāmākhyā. Hereafter, the votary should invite unmarried girls to his home and worship them with edibles and gift new garments for satisfying goddess Kāmākhyā. After that the votary should utter Durgā Saptasātīstotra in honour of goddess Kāmākhyā to attain benediction. It is said that the vrata is observed for the welfare of the entire society and increase the production in the paddy grains.

17. Jāmāi Ṣaṣṭhī Vrata: Generally, this ordinance should be followed among the Bengali community. This Vrata is performed women's only to highlight the socio-religious duty. The son-in-law is recognized as 'Jāmāi' and Ṣaṣṭhī means Ṣaṣṭhī tithi. The ordinance should be observed in the month of Jyeṣṭha śukla paksha Ṣaṣṭhī tithi on the basis of Hindu calendar. The Vrata is observed in honour of goddess Ṣaṣṭhī. The procedure of this vrata is that the Son-in-law should be invited along with the daughter in to the residence. The mother in law has come to take a dish, which full of durbā grass, grains and five type of different fruits. Then she has to sprinkle the grains and durbā grass on the forehead of her son-in-law and bless him. Hereafter, she has given a mark made with curd and knot a yellow thread on his wrist. The Vrata

is hugely performed in Assam among the Bengali communities.

18. Shat Puja Vrata : The Vrata should be performed in the month of Kārtika śukla paksha ṣaṣṭhī tithi. Generally, the woman votary has followed this vrata. The female votary should start this vrata in the month of Aghrāyana Chaturdaśī tithi. The votary should take bath in the morning and take sāttika food. In the Pañchamī tithi, the devotees should take bathe and remain fast for whole day . At night , the devotee should take boiled food mixed with jaggery and bottle gourd dish . In the ṣaṣṭhī tithi, the votary should take fast for entire day without eating anything. When sun sets, devotees should take bath and going to the river along with various oblations. Guava, banana, apple, lemon and custard apple are the vital fruits in this vrata. The vrata should be performed in honour of deity Surya. By observing this Vrata, the devotees should liberate from all types of obstacles, disputes and attain peace, success and joy in life. However, the votary obtains desirable results by performing this vrata. The vrata is hugely observed in Assam among Bihāri communities.

19. SantoṣīMaaVrata : The Vrata should be performed for sixteen consecutive Fridays. Specially the female devotee has performed this special vrata for attaining bless form the goddess. The goddess is worshipped as the mother of gratification, the real meaning of her name. The vrata has performed

specially in the northern India. This vrata has hugely performed in Assam region also. By performing this vrata, the devotee should gain peace, prosperity and fulfill his desires.

Besides, Vratas like Bihu, Kāmākhyāpujā Vrata, holi, DurgāPujā, Kali Pujā, SaraswatiPujā, Shat pujā, Charakapujā, Deepāvalī, Me-Dum-Me-Fi pujā etc. are hugely performed among the different communities of Assam.

Conclusion: In the conclusion, we may say that Vrata is a played a vital role in our day to day life. Peoples have performed this Vrata for acquiring the scientific and spiritual benefit in present time. It creates national unity and integrity among the general masses. Its can generate the mental satisfaction among the masses. These ordinances have performed since ancient times among different community. And the people of Assam have followed deeply for the welfare ness of the society since ancient times.

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