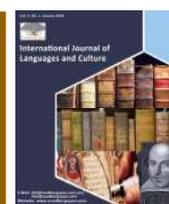




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## Phagwa as a Community Festival

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### Abstract

The Phagwa festival, mainly referred to as Holi or festival of colours, was first introduced to the Indo-Fijian society during the Indenture period in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is celebrated after the lunar month of Phalgun or simply known as 'Faag', which is the last month of the Hindu calendar. In Fiji, the Phalgun period is from February to March but the singing of the folksong (Faag) begins at least two to three weeks prior to the festival. The celebration holds great cultural and historical significance implying the victory of good over evil related to the story of Prince Prahlad and his devotion to Lord Vishnu. The celebration includes singing of Faag by various 'village groups' (mandali's) known as the Faagmandali's, making of variety of sweets, lighting of bonfires and smearing of powdered and water colours in fun and harmony. In a multi-lingual country like Fiji, Holi is no longer considered as the festival of Hindus but is widely recognized by people of all different religious backgrounds demonstrating the multiplicity of Fiji's unique heritage. Thus, this research paper seeks to emphasize on how Phagwa (Holi) is celebrated as a community festival in Fiji. It will also accentuate on the history, rituals, advancements and the cultural significance of celebrating the festival.

**Keywords:** *Phagwa, Holi, Diaspora, Multi-Lingual, Community festival, Chutkulas, Chutaals, Rang*

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### 1. Introduction

Holi is an ancient Hindu festival originated in India but it spread to different parts of the world through the diaspora from the Indian sub-continent. Holi is also variously known as the 'festival of spring', 'festival of love' and the 'festival of colours', each harbouring a different reason for the celebration. It is also commonly known as 'Phagwa'. Phagwa is not only celebrated as a community festival in Fiji and India but rather as an inter-national festival. There are a few countries which celebrate Holi like festivals in their own style and uniqueness. For instance, in Valencia town of Buñol in Spain, people celebrate 'La Tomatina' festival whereby they throw tomatoes at each other with pure entertainment. Similarly, in the Chinchilla town of Australia, people celebrate the watermelon festival while the people of Thailand celebrate Songkran festival where they throw ice water and apply beige coloured paste to each other marking the washing away of sins and bad luck. Likewise the Holi festival has its own different names and uniqueness in the different states of India, for instance, the Lohri festival in Punjab, Makar Sankranti festival in Uttar Pradesh and Pongal festival in Tamilnadu. The

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people may have given the festival different names and ways of celebrating it but the notion behind all is the same, whereby it marks the end of the winter season in India and welcoming of the spring season. Crops harvest at this time of the year and farmers celebrate the occasion thanking the Gods for the harvest.

This festival with its cultural rituals and origins is mentioned in the Puranas<sup>1</sup> and Dasakumara Charita<sup>2</sup> and also mentioned by the poet Kalidasa in his 14<sup>th</sup> century Sanskrit drama 'Ratnavali'<sup>3</sup>. Holi is regarded as an important spring festival for Hindus with a national holiday in India and Nepal with holidays for Hindus in other diaspora countries. Holi is celebrated at the end of winter, on the last full moon day of the Hindu luni-solar calendar month marking the spring. The date falls typically in March in month of 'Phalgun' which is the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the Hindu calendar.

The Holi festival is celebrated with numerous reasons, perhaps, most prominently, as a celebration of the beginning of the spring season. In 17<sup>th</sup> century literature, it was identified as a festival that was associated with agriculture, at the onset of spring and expectations of good spring harvests and to enjoy spring's abundant colours (Ebeling, 2010).<sup>4</sup> The festivities also marked the beginning of the new year when relationships are renewed, a day to forget and forgive and to start refresh.

In the Braj region of India, Holi is a commemoration of the divine love of Radha for Krishna and celebrated as a festival of love. Again the festivities officially usher in the spring season.

Holi is celebrated as a festival of triumph of good over evil in the honour of Hindu god Vishnu and his devotee Prahlada. Vishnu in his avatar as Lord Narasimha kills the evil King, Hiranyakashipu to re-establish dharma (the path of righteousness). King Hiranyakashipu, according to Bhagavata Purana<sup>5</sup>, had earned a boon that gave him five special powers: he could be killed by neither a human being nor an animal, neither indoors nor outdoors, neither at day nor at night, neither by 'astra' (projectile weapons) nor by any 'shastra' (handheld weapons), and neither on land nor in water or air. Hiranyakashipu thought he had become invincible, grew arrogant and gave himself the status of God. He demanded that everyone to worship only him. Hiranyakashipu's own son, Prahlada, however, disagreed. He remained devoted to Vishnu and encouraged others to do the same. This infuriated Hiranyakashipu. He subjected Prahlada to continuous harsh punishments. Prahlada remained to his resolve to do what he thought was right. Finally, Hiranyakashipu took help from his sister Holika who was blessed by Lord Brahma that she will never be harmed by fire in her life. She was given a cloak as part of the boon to protect her from fire. Holika, Prahlada's evil aunt, tricked him into sitting on a pyre with her by wearing the special robe (cloak) wrapped around herself that made her immune to injury from fire. As the fire roared, Prahlada, survived the ordeal while Holika was burnt alive. Later, Vishnu, took the form of Lord Narasimha, appeared as half human and half lion (which is neither a human nor an animal), at dusk (when it was neither day nor night), took Hiranyakashyapu on the doorstep (which was neither indoors nor outdoors), placed him on his lap (which was neither on land, water nor air), and then eviscerated and killed the king with his lion claws (neither astra or shastra). This victory of good over evil is celebrated by lighting a 'Holika' bonfire, a day prior to play with colours and other festivities.

Holi is also associated with the 'Kama Deva and Rati' legend, where 'Lord Shiva' is roused from deep meditation by 'Kama Deva'. Thus rudely awakened Lord Shiva burns 'Kama' to ashes but is restored due to pleas from 'Kama's wife 'Rati'. This return of the god of love (Kama) is celebrated on the 40th day after Vasant Panchami<sup>6</sup> festival as Holi.

Holi being celebrated as a festival of triumph of good over evil is pre-dominantly the reason Holi is celebrated in the Fiji Islands. In the second section, the origins of the Fiji diaspora are explained. In the third section, light is shed on how Holi was celebrated in the early days after the arrival of people of Indian origin to Fiji. In the fourth section, the current status of Holi is discussed while the final section elucidates how the celebrations have changed over this period of time and conclusions.

## 2. The Fiji Diaspora

The Fiji Islands consists of an archipelago of about 300 islands, of which two are bigger islands. It is on these two bigger islands that the majority of people of Indian origin are settled. They are generally known as Indo-Fijians or Kai-India

<sup>1</sup> The Puranas are ancient Hindu religious texts, written between 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century CE.

<sup>2</sup> Dasakumara Charita is a romantic prose in Sanskrit language.

<sup>3</sup> *Ratnavali* (Precious Garland) is a Sanskrit drama about a beautiful princess named Ratnavali, and a great king named Udayana. One of the first textual references to the celebration of Holi, the festival of Colours have been found in this text.

<sup>4</sup> Ebeling, Karin (2010), Holi, an Indian Festival, and its Reflection in English Media; Die Ordnung des Standard und die Differenzierung der Diskurse: Akten des 41. *Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Mannheim*, 2006(1), 107, ISBN 978-3631599174.

<sup>5</sup> *Bhāgavata Purāna* also known as Śrīmad Bhāgavatam or Bhāgavatam, is one of Hinduism's eighteen great Puranas.

<sup>6</sup> Vasant Panchami is a festival that marks the preparation for the arrival of spring.

(people from India) by the indigenous population. They are citizens of Fiji and are officially known as 'Fijians' like others who have the Fijian citizenship.

The Indo-Fijians were brought from India as indentured labourers to work on plantations in Fiji. The recruitment began in 1879 and ended in 1916, mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and later from South India. Altogether 60,945 individuals were recruited to work in Fiji<sup>7</sup>. The Indentured labourers signed an agreement (a contract) to provide their services for 10 years.

The people of North Indian origin spoke a Bhojpuri dialect which became the lingua franca for all Indo-Fijians. This language has also been picked up by the indigenous population. It is of course the language (Avadhi) in which Poet Tulsī Das narrated his 'Ram Charitra Manas', the story of Ramayan of Sage Valmiki. This language was familiar to most North Indians<sup>8</sup>. In Fiji the 'Ramayanmandal is' (religious groups) to recite this epic are numerous and are well attended, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. The Hindi language has been taught in Indo-Fijian schools from the indenture days. The recital of common Hindu mythology (some believe these are historical events) are quite regular because of the language emphasis in Indian schools and the Hindu culture and traditions are well preserved to this day. Now it is possible to pursue higher studies in the Hindi language at all three Fijian Universities.

Altogether 60,000 Indentured labourers were recruited under the indenture system and eventually Indo-Fijians formed the majority of Fiji population, comprising more than 50% of the Fiji population. After events of 1987<sup>9</sup>, this population has dwindled to about 30%, due to mass migration to countries like New Zealand, Australia, Canada and USA, where the religious events such as Diwali and Holi are celebrated with the same zest as it is celebrated here in Fiji.

The Hindu festivals are given national recognition and prominence in Fiji, with Diwali (Festival of Lights) being a public holiday. Hindu schools are granted a holiday for the Ram Naumi and Holi festivals. Similar recognitions are given for the festivals associated with Sikhism and Islam.

### 3. Holi Celebrations

Holi festival is ancient with cultural rituals but devoid of strict religious observances. Holika puja is a major attraction of Holi. The locals create an effigy of Holika on the first day of the forty day period which is commonly known as Holika sthapana (establishing the bonfire) using twigs and dry leaves. Inside the effigy, they place a special plant known as 'redh plant' which symbolizes Prince Prahlada which is removed right before the lighting of the bonfire. Traditionally, the actual Holi festival begins with singing of chautaals by village mandali's (religious groups), after Holikasthapana moving from house to house in the locality. On the thirty-ninth day, the bonfire is lit after sunset and people do parikrama (ritual of moving clockwise round an object of devotion as an indication of reverence) singing the chautaals as a symbol of purification. The following morning, which is the final day, people perform prayers and apply the bonfire ash to each other and distribute it to every household as they continue the singing of chautaals from house to house to play with colours and enjoy sweets and meals to mark the special day. The importance of lighting the bonfire simply implies the end of evil and impurities of our heart and the upcoming realization of our spiritual glory.

Singing of chautaals is one of the main features of the festival. Playing of drums (dholak) in particular is paramount. As a ritual, the drums are tuned (the nine strings around the drum are tightened) at the start of the celebration. At the end of each session of chautaal all strings except one is de-tuned, which denotes a promise among the group members that the Phagwa will continue till the next forty days and this pattern is followed till the last day of celebrations. The final remaining string is de-tuned a week after the celebrations end on a Tuesday evening which is commonly termed by the Indo-Fijians as Budhwa Mangal. The de-tuning ritual is marked by singing of chautaals for the final time and enjoying grog sessions. Budhwa Mangal is not given as much significance in Fiji as it is prioritized in India. It is again celebrated on a big scale in India as it commemorates the day when Lord Hanuman burnt Lanka. On this day, many temples are thronged with people worshipping Lord Hanuman and seeking his blessings for prosperity.

The chautaals could be explained as four different styles of beating drums and singing. The chautaal is sung by a group of 10-12 people with 5-6 people forming a competitive sub-group for continuous, repetitive singing of the same verse before moving on to the next verse of the song. The beating of the drums and singing of verses reach anup-tempo with each of the four rhythmic patterns (chautaal) of beating drums and singing. Dhol beating (Drum beating) is usually accompanied rhythmically by melodious music from harmoniums, tambourines, dhantal (long steel rod based percussion instrument), kartaal (brass cymbals) and jhika (sistrum).

<sup>7</sup> Lal, 2000

<sup>8</sup> Lal, 2000

<sup>9</sup> There was a military coup in 1987 against the Indo-Fijian dominated Government. Subsequently three coups followed the first one.

The verses sung enable the listener to visualise events and actions quite vividly. For example, verses would describe the body movement or behaviour of especially a female in a revealing manner, creating an atmosphere of immense excitement and hilarity. Sexual overtures and intimacy are clearly evident in the verses sung. The lyrics of the chautaal verses range from political coups to religious myths, biography of renowned leaders and history of the country. The chautaal includes subgenres of chutkulas, kabira, jogira, ulara and jhumar and the most significant farewell song, ‘Sadaanand’, which signify the divine love of Radha for Krishna and the iconic Holi celebrations between the two. The farewell song also implies the group of singers blessing the hosts for the hospitality and that may their lives be filled with colours.

Brenneis (1985) describes the singing of chautaal in ‘Bhatgaon’<sup>10</sup>, as, ‘Cautal, the second popular song form important in Bhatgaon, refers both to a style of singing and to a particular song genre performed during the Holi festival. North Indian Holi represents ritual inversion of mammoth proportions, an overturning of quotidian order and rank in a day of truly Turnerian anti-structure (Turner, 1969; Babcock, 1978)<sup>11</sup>. It both brings forth and depends upon masti, a sense of total and divinely induced intoxication often aided by hearty draughts of hashish, milk and honey. In Fiji, on the other hand, both Holi and the cautal-singing associated with it seem bowdlerized and far too polite.’

‘Holi in Fiji clearly lacks the insult, ribaldry and release that it affords in India. Bhatgaon villagers, however, find it an occasion of high spirits, to be anticipated with mischievous glee and discussed afterwards with pleasure. For Bhatgaon Holi is the definitive occasion for tamasha- “fun”-in the village year’

Holi is a period when relationships are renewed and becomes a day to forget and forgive. A glimpse of this relaxed atmosphere is best captured by this line of a chautaal sung during this period,

*‘Phagunbhar baba devarlage.....’<sup>12</sup>*

This is also depicted in the same manner in India, the source of these celebrations. There is atmosphere of societal relaxation of relationships and freedom from societal etiquettes<sup>13</sup> especially of females. This is captured in the memoirs of a plantation ‘overseer’ in Fiji:

‘On the day of the Holi or Phagua, bands of women roamed the country side until noon, showering men with a red fluid meant to represent blood.....being the only period of licence during the long year, the women make most of it. By mid-day, unpopular overseer looked like what happened on St Batholomew’s day; the popular were drenched in cheap perfume. From the glimmer of dawn, Lautoka and the estates were overrun by gaggles of excited women and girls out for a good time. With male control absent, things happened which staggered the godly. The afternoon and evening were different. Lautoka with its hair down, thronged the Indian fair...if they were sufficiently uninhabited by race-consciousness, and could laugh at themselves as well as others, people found that they were having an astonishingly good time.’ (Gill, 1970, 121).<sup>14</sup>

The above view though true to certain parts of India and somewhat similar but also different to Holi depiction by Mayer (1973) who described Holi celebrations in Fiji during 1950’s.

‘The Holi festival was traditionally a period of licence, where the poor were free to insult the rich, the women to forsake their modesty, and all classes of society to mingle and to throw red dye on each other, the sign of Holi. Freedom for normal restraint was carefully regulated in Fiji – it did not extend to women, nor to those men who did not wish to join in; but the aspect of equality was there, as expressed by one man when he said, ‘the importance of the red dye is that everyone looks the same when it is poured on them, it makes everyone equal and happy’ (Mayer, 1973: 87).

Mayer’s description of Holi depicts his observance of the festival in 1950’s but Gill’s description captures an overseer’s depiction during the indenture period which is some what similar to celebrations in certain parts of India. This is not surprising as links with the homeland were still afresh and time still too short for adaptations to new environment and new way of living. Mayer’s description of Holi more or less fits the current celebrations of Holi but the passion and zeal with which it was celebrated has been diminishing in Fiji over time.

<sup>10</sup> Bhatgaon is a village of 650 Fiji Indians, the descendents of indentured labor migrant. It is a rural village of Hindi-speaking Fiji Indians located on the northern side of Vanua Levu, the second largest island in the Republic of Fiji.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Brenneis (1984 and 1985).

<sup>12</sup> During the Holi period (Phagun) the father-in-law (baba) is same as (lage) devar (husband’s younger brother). Implying that all proper etiquette between a daughter in law and the father in law are relaxed during this period of celebrations

<sup>13</sup> This relaxation may be the reason for vulgar behaviour of males against females in India.

<sup>14</sup> Also Quoted in J D Kelly (1988), Page 4.

#### 4. The Metamorphosis of Holi Celebrations

This metamorphosis of the celebrations can be seen from Gill's description of the celebrations to Mayer's description. The reasons for this change may be attributed to the transformation of the social system from one where informal relationships prevailed with that of more formal relationships adopted in light of family responsibilities and the expectation of normal etiquette in relationships. This is a change in the role of women during celebrations while men continued with the status quo. This change has been observed in the second to third generation of Indo-Fijians in Fiji. This happened when settlements during indenture period from coolie lanes<sup>15</sup> changed to individual farms holdings and homes. If the laxity in relationships occurs, it would be confined to family members and close friends.

However it must be noted that as in India various parts of country or different communities celebrated Holi in different ways. This variance has also been observed within the Indo-Fijian communities in Fiji. The women are in the background and more involved with cooking and distribution of sweets and snacks. Coolie lanes to individual holdings still meant the agrarian occupation and predominately rural settlements so Holi has been more associated with the rural areas and settlements. The mandali groups would move from house to house singing, playing colours and enjoying sweets and snacks. Children will be more concerned with playing colours and enjoying sweets prepared for the day.

In some parts of India, Holi celebrations are associated with singing and dancing and the drinking of 'bhanga'<sup>16</sup> and men climb on top of each other to form a human pyramid up to the height from which a pot of buttermilk is hung. The one who breaks the pot is named the Holi King of the year. This is known as *MatkiPhod* (breaking the pot). This practice of drinking 'Bhang' and 'MatkiPhod' has not been observed in Fiji but drinking of yaqona (kava)<sup>17</sup> is prevalent, though it is not only restricted to Holi but to other social occasions too. Consumption of liquor has also been observed during this occasion. This practice of drinking yaqona was limited in the first and second generations of Indo-Fijians in Fiji. In the third and fourth generations the practice has become prevalent with its associated social problems. The forty day Holi celebration turns out to be a yaqona drinking spree for a lot of participants. Initially, this yaqona has been used traditionally by the itaukei (indigenous) people in traditional ceremonies but now is widely used as a social drink by both itaukei and Indo-Fijians.

All Hindu communities in Fiji celebrate Holi, mainly following the tradition of Vishnu Purana epic of the victory of good over evil and related to the Holika Dahan. This is despite the fact that holi is celebrated in different parts of India for different reasons. For example, in South India, Holi is associated with the Kamadeva / Rati tradition. South Indians in Fiji follow the North Indian tradition of the Vishnu Purana. This may be due to the traditions being well established before the arrival of South Indians in Fiji. They were smaller in numbers and adopted traditions already in place. At district or village where now South Indians are in greater numbers, they follow their own deities associated with Marriaman and Subrahmanya Swamy.

#### 5. A Typical Holi Celebration

Chand (2013)<sup>18</sup> attempts to capture Holi celebrations at his village during the 1950s and 1960s, as a village boy in Fiji, as

*'The Holi fell during the rainy season. The singing of phagua was rotated among the homes....But I did not miss the burning of Holika on the hills. It was fun to light the fire amidst loud singing and chanting. We put a special plant found along the river called, radh, a symbolic representation of Prahlad. The fire was lit and the plant removed. This meant that Prahlad was saved from the fire.*

*The most important day was the actual day of the festival. I mixed rangh (coloured paint)brought from the shop in small granules and filled in small bottles.....The village mandali all the homes and sang at each home. The members were treated with sweets mainly goolgoola and ladjimitha. At some homes adults engaged in rum drinking..... Adults could not throw rangh on everybody. One did not throw rangh on their village sisters, aunts and the like. But one could throw rangh on individuals with whom they had some joking relationships'.*

The above description of Holi generally remains the format of celebrations with slight variations across different localities. Of interest is how the celebrations differ between urban and rural areas. Initially, in Fiji, the celebrations were

<sup>15</sup> Buildings where indentured labourers were housed.

<sup>16</sup> Bhang is an edible preparation of cannabis originating from the Indian Subcontinent. It has been used in food and drink as early as 1000 BC in ancient India. Bhang is traditionally distributed during the spring festival of Holi.

<sup>17</sup> Kava is *Piper methysticum* Kava is consumed for its sedating effects throughout the Pacific Ocean cultures of Polynesia, including Hawaii, Vanuatu, Melanesia, and some parts of Micronesia such as Palau. To a lesser extent, it is consumed in nations where it is exported as an herbal medicine.

<sup>18</sup> Pratap Chand (2013), *A Fijian Memoir, Footprints of a Girmitya's Grandson*, Vicas Press, Lautoka.

generally rural based. Largely the celebrations described above is typical of rural Hindu settled areas. Urban settlements are a population mixture and this changes the nature of the celebrations to be more centrally based around Hindu temples or Hindu community centers. Now with the urban drift of the Indian population<sup>19</sup> from the rural areas and settling around urban centers, centralized celebrations have become common feature of the Holi celebrations. The overall organization of festivities is done during evenings when people are home from work. The singing of the chautaals occurs during the evenings and is held in public spaces like village temples and squares. Though *Holi* is a Hindu festival, there is a marked secular content to it that helps to explain its appeal to people with different religious beliefs who partake in the celebrations if not in the ritualistic traditions but enjoy at least in the savouries, usually offered by friends and neighbours. The gist of the celebrations is joviality, fun, dancing and singing and playing with colours.

## 6. Gender Dynamics in the Celebration of Holi

In the celebration of Holi, the gender norms in India are highly tilted in favour of males, with males at the forefront of the celebrations, with clear overt sexual intonations against the females, especially in Northern India, perhaps, a symptom of a sexually repressed society. However regional differences prevailed:

*'In Vrindavan in the state of Uttar Pradesh, widows have in recent years come out against tradition to partake in the festivities of colour. In Hindu tradition, widows are regularly expected and coerced to live a life of deprivation, giving up all worldly pleasures, including the use of colour even in their clothing. By participating in the celebrations, they have begun to defy those expectations and traditions.'*<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Northern India, the drunkenness, sleaziness and the vulgarity associated with the festival is not observed in Fiji celebrations. While, male are at the forefront leading the rituals, females are in the background, with the preparations of sweetmeats. Women in some communities are more assertive in the celebrations. For example, in Gujarati community the women have liberty to light Holika Bonfire (Dahan) and sing and dance around the Holika bonfire. This is not observed in other communities where men are more involved with the Holi Dahan.<sup>21</sup>

Widows also celebrate Holi, though in light coloured dressings. They play Holi using 'facial powder' instead of using bright colours. The play is within established relationships and friends. Women generally play colours freely but they are restricted by social norms to interact respectfully with men and only in certain socially permitted relationships or where it is socially permissible. For example, 'father-in-law' and 'daughter-in-law' where as the chautaal goes,

*'Phagunbhar baba devarlage.....'*<sup>22</sup>

Another example is sister's husband and sister or younger brother and elder brother's wife. The singing (chutkula), special songs sung 'teasingly' to delineate these casual relationships creates the atmosphere of joviality and fun to be enjoyed by all. In fact the gist of the celebrations lie in free play of musical instruments, singing, dancing and playing with colours.

## 7. The Scale of Celebrations

The scale of the celebrations have come down especially in the rural areas, with urban drift, migration and somewhat cursory interest shown by now a more educated younger members of the society. The urban drift, more accentuated for Indians, has meant concentration of Indian population around urban and peri-urban areas.

Recently, efforts have been made to celebrate Holi in open public spaces in the urban centres. For example, an event like 'Holi in the Park' is organized by business houses around the country which brings together people from all cultural backgrounds signifying the multiracialism in Fiji. Another feature of the celebrations has been chautaal competition or 'faagsammelmam' at district and national levels. This is where singing groups compete for a prize.

This revival has larger connotations of inclusivity of a wide cross section of the Fiji society in the celebrations. The celebrations accommodating the 'love', the win of 'good' over 'evil' ancient slogans of celebrations is now being tinged by slogans of 'tolerance', 'valuing diversity' in terms of 'multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-lingual', the indispensable ingredients for nation building in a multi-ethnic society.

<sup>19</sup> Due to urban drift necessitated by non-renewal of farming land leases and to seek alternative urban employment.

<sup>20</sup> Siddhi Bhandari (2017), *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 60, Berkeley.

<sup>21</sup> The Gujarati Community in Fiji still has strong links with India and maybe following the practices in Gujarat State not only in Holi celebrations but in other religious observances too.

<sup>22</sup> During the Holi period (Phagun) the father-in-law (baba) is same as (lage) devar (husband's younger brother). Implying that all proper etiquette between a daughter in law and the father in law are relaxed during this period of celebrations

## 8. Conclusion

The Holi festival is a community festival, celebrated in open spaces. It is a period of fun and joviality. Unlike other festivals, religious observances are not paramount; this festival coincides with harvests and onset of spring with its promising diversity of colours. It becomes a joyous occasion for celebrations amid plenty. It is observed over a period of forty days.

The mode of celebrations basically has not changed from its inception in India. The celebrations have been localised and taken a local flavour especially in singing of chautaals and chutkulas. In Fiji it is turning out to be an occasion where inclusivity and diversity of different ethnic groups in the celebrations of Holi is a distinct possibility.

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