

Dakshinapatha Vaartha

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Dakshinapatha (Also known as Dakshināvarta) is Dakshin Bharat – Southern India; Dakshin is traditionally regarded as the land south of Vindhya. Dakshinapatha varthavani Bulletin aims to capture, assemble and consolidate the rich political history, culture and traditions, the people and the inspirational icons, reflecting the society and it's changing times. In terms of political states of present day, Dakshinapatha covers Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, Tamilnadu and Telangana. It also covers parts of Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. We are presenting information related to these states in this bulletin.

Mahavir Jayanti (March 31)

Mahavir Jayanti is a special celebration for the Jain community that shines with spiritual light. It is not just a festival, but a sacred occasion to remember the birth anniversary of Vardhamana Mahavira, who delivered the great message of peace and non-violence to humanity. On March 31, millions of Jains across the country celebrate this holy day with great devotion and reverence. Vardhamana Mahavira is the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism.



He was born in 599 BCE in Kundagrama in Bihar. At the age of 30, he renounced royal comforts and accepted ascetic life. Through long penance and meditation, he attained enlightenment. After that, throughout his life he spread the importance of five principles to the world: Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth or honesty), Asteya (not stealing), Brahmacharya (self-control), and Aparigraha (non-possessiveness).

On the day of Mahavir Jayanti, Jain temples are filled with spiritual splendor. Temples decorated with colorful festoons and flower garlands welcome devotees. Special prayers, bhajans, and religious discourses echo throughout the temples. The idol of Mahavira is bathed in Panchamrita—a sacred mixture of milk, curd, ghee, honey, and water.

On the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti, the Jain community organizes various religious activities. Service activities such as offering food to the poor,

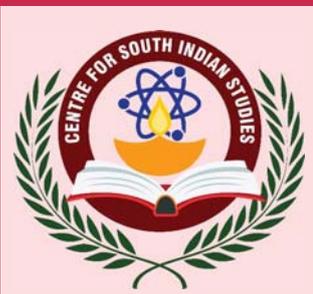
organizing medical camps, and conducting educational programs are carried out especially on this day. Jains observe fasts and practice control over their senses. They take special care to avoid violence and ensure that even the smallest living beings, such as ants, are not harmed.

In the city of Hyderabad, Mahavir Jayanti celebrations are conducted with great grandeur. All the major Jain temples in the city are specially decorated. Morning processions in areas such as Charminar, Abids, and Secunderabad become a feast for the eyes. Devotees dressed in colorful clothes participate in the procession, singing religious songs and spreading the message of Mahavira.

In the evening, special cultural programs are organized in Jain temples. Eminent scholars deliver discourses on the life and teachings of Mahavira. Jain bhajans and devotional songs are sung.

Among the main teachings of Mahavira, Ahimsa (non-violence) is the most important. He believed that every living being possesses a soul and taught that no living creature should be harmed. He advised avoiding not only physical violence but also violence through words and thoughts. Emphasizing the importance of truth, Mahavira taught that one should always speak the truth.

In today's world, where violence, falsehood, and selfishness are increasing, the teachings of Mahavira have become even more significant. The path of peace and non-violence shown by Mahavira is like a lamp that illuminates the world. On the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti, we should not only remember his



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teachings but also try to practice them in our lives. If everyone strives to live a peaceful and compassionate life, many problems existing in society can be resolved.

On this Mahavir Jayanti, let us illuminate the inner peace within us. By following his teachings of non-violence, truth, and compassion in our lives, let us strive to build a better society.

Samartha Ramdas Swami (Janma Tithi – Chaitra Shuddha Navami, March 27)

Samartha Ramdas was one of the great yogis and saints in the world. He was born in Jamb, a region on the banks of the Godavari River in Maharashtra. From childhood, he was a devotee of Rama and Hanuman. During his wedding ceremony, when the priest uttered the word "Savadhan" (be careful/alert) at the auspicious moment, he immediately got up and prepared to leave.



Near Nashik on the banks of the Godavari, Samartha Guru performed severe spiritual practice for twelve years. From early morning until noon, he would stand in the waters of the Godavari and chant the Gayatri Mantra. He chanted the Rama mantra "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" thirteen crore times. Later, he travelled across the country visiting holy pilgrimage places. Even in Pandharpur, he perceived only Lord Rama. There he also met the great devotee Tukaram. Seeing the social, political, and economic misery prevailing in the country during that time caused him great sorrow. He felt as if Lord Rama himself had instructed him to help Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Observing caste discrimination in society and the suffering of a large section of people due to humiliation deeply pained Samartha Guru Ramdas. To remove these divisions completely, he undertook the task of awakening society. Explaining this theoretically in his famous book Dasbodh, he taught that there is no difference between big and small, king and poor, woman and man; everyone is the same, and the same Parabrahman resides in all. Whether one is a Brahmin, Shudra, king, or common person, the same sacred Parabrahman exists in everyone. Seeing the same divine form in all human beings, he rejected caste discrimination.

While writing about God in the context of Chokhamela, a saint belonging to the Mahar community in the Varkari tradition devoted to Panduranga, Swamiji wrote that God, the protector of the helpless, has no caste; he sits with Chokhamela and shares meals of milk and curd. In another place he wrote that there is no difference of high or low caste; he bows to the sacred dust of the feet of those who are filled with the chanting of God's name. He also questioned: if one

becomes impure merely by the touch of another person, what kind of purity is that? Reject differences of high and low caste, love and respect everyone wholeheartedly; only then will everyone's hearts become pure.

In the Chafal region, in the village of Bherwadi, Samartha Ramdas invited a couple considered "untouchables" to his Rama Navami discourses. After they bathed in the Mand River, he offered them clothes according to tradition, arranged a shared meal with them, and presented them with gifts. According to Sachchidananda Parli in his book, this incident can be considered a great revolution for that time. He wrote that Samartha Ramdas never accepted divisions among people in the name of caste, class, region, or language.

During that period, Samartha Ramdas worked systematically to free the country from Islamic invasions. In the Mahabaleshwar hills, where the sacred Krishna River originates, he first built a Hanuman temple and monastery. Later he established Hanuman temples and monasteries in eleven sacred places. Gradually he built thousands of Hanuman temples and akhadas throughout Maharashtra.

At that time, Hindus across the country were facing many severe attacks and atrocities under Muslim rule, and in many regions political power was in Muslim hands. Along with the Bhakti movement, Samartha Ramdas considered it a divine mission to regain authority from Muslim rulers. He called upon people saying that Swarajya is a sacred duty. Holding God above their heads, they should declare war against the rulers who had devastated the country and should not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the nation. He said that those who destroyed Hindu temples were betrayers of God, and those who punished them were servants and devotees of God; victory would ultimately belong to the devotees of God.

To unite Hindu society, Samartha Ramdas organized Rama Navami festivals on a large scale. In the grand Rama Rath Yatras held during those times, people of all castes and communities participated with great enthusiasm.

Samartha Ramdas worked across the country to awaken and unite Hindu society. From among his large lineage of disciples, he trained nearly 1,100 Mahants, including about 300 women, which was a major social reform and progressive step at that time. These disciples spread throughout the country and worked to unify Hindu society in many places. They established more than a thousand monasteries beyond caste distinctions. These monasteries and akhadas, extending from Thanjavur to Kashmir, greatly supported Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. When Shivaji's son Rajaram I left Maharashtra and came to South India, the Thanjavur monastery provided him full support, enabling him to fight Aurangzeb for nearly

twenty years.

Keeping Hindu society in mind, Samartha Ramdas wrote many excellent works. Among the most famous are Dasbodh, Karunashtaka, Manache Shlok, and writings on the Sundara Kanda and Yuddha Kanda. He trained thousands of workers and made great efforts to organize society. He said that Lord Rama resides in everyone's heart, and clinging to caste differences is nothing but denying the presence of Rama within all of us. By working with socially backward communities and organizing them, he brought them forward to stand in support of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

General K. S. Thimayya (Janma Tithi – March 31)

Kodandera Subayya Thimayya was a distinguished soldier in the Indian Army. From 1957 to 1961, during a period when war-like conditions existed between India and China, he rendered important service as the Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army. During World War II, he was the only Indian who commanded an infantry brigade. He gained recognition as a distinguished officer produced by the Indian Army. After the Korean War, he led a United Nations division responsible for sending prisoners of war back to their respective countries. After retiring from the army, he was appointed as the Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, serving from July 1964 to December 1965. He died in Cyprus on 18 December 1965.



General Thimayya was born on March 30, 1906, in Madikeri in Kodagu District (formerly called Coorg) of Karnataka, to Thimayya and Seethamma. Their family was among the leading coffee plantation owners. His mother Seethamma was well educated and a social worker. The British government awarded her the Kaiser-i-Hind title. Thimayya was the second among six children of his parents. His elder brother Ponnappa, he himself, and his younger brother Somaiah all served as officers in the Indian Army. The first Commander-in-Chief of India, K. M. Cariappa, was a relative on his father's side. During the 1935 Quetta Earthquake, his wife Neena Thimayya rendered notable service, for which she was also awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind title by the British government.

With the aim of pursuing better education, he joined St. Joseph's College at the age of eight in Tamil Nadu. Later he studied at Bishop Cotton Boys' School in Bengaluru. After completing his early education, he joined the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College in Dehradun. After graduating from there, General Thimayya was selected for further training at

the Royal Military College in United Kingdom.

After completing military training, he was appointed as a Second Lieutenant in the British Indian Army on February 4, 1926. Among those appointed in that batch was Pran Nath Thapar, who later served as Chief of Army Staff. On May 28, 1927, Thimayya was posted to the 4th Battalion of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment. On May 4, 1928, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant.

In January 1935, he married Neena Cariappa. On February 4 of the same year, he was promoted to Captain.

After World War II, he was transferred to the Singapore Battalion. Later, in 1941, he was appointed as Second-in-Command at the Hyderabad Regimental Centre in Agra. Afterwards he was sent for training at the Staff College in Quetta. During that time, he and his wife rendered valuable service to the victims of the Quetta earthquake. In 1943 he was promoted to the rank of Major. He was appointed as Grade-2 Staff Officer of the 25th Infantry Division, becoming the first Indian to hold that position in the army.

His infantry unit received jungle warfare training and confronted Japan forces in Burma during World War II. In 1944 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and served as Commanding Officer of the 8th and 19th Hyderabad Regiments in Burma. In 1945 he rose to the rank of Brigadier. In recognition of his services in the war, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

After returning to India in 1947, during the Partition of India, he was appointed as a member of the committee responsible for dividing arms, equipment, and army units between India and Pakistan. Later, in September 1947, he was promoted to Major General and appointed as commander of the 4th Infantry Division. In the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947–1948 in Kashmir, he played an active role. As commander of the 19th Infantry Division, he drove the Pakistani army out of Kashmir.

Considering his experience, the United Nations appointed him as the head of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and sent him to Korea. Although it was a very delicate and extraordinary task, he carried it out skillfully. After returning to India, he was appointed in 1953 as General Officer Commanding, Southern Command with the rank of Lieutenant General. In 1954 the Government of India honored him with the Padma Bhushan. He assumed office as Chief of the Army Staff of India on May 7, 1957.

In 1959, due to differences with the then Defence Minister V. K. Krishna Menon, he submitted his resignation. However, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru rejected it, and he continued in office. After

completing 35 years of military service, he retired on May 7, 1961.

After retiring from the Indian Army, the United Nations again utilized his services and appointed him in July 1964 as Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in Cyprus. While serving in that position, he died on December 17, 1965.

In memory of him, some streets in Bengaluru, Pune, and Larnaca in Cyprus were named as General Thimayya Road. In 1966, the Republic of Cyprus honored him by issuing a commemorative postage stamp. Alumni of Bishop Cotton Boys' School organize the General K. S. Thimayya Memorial Lecture every year in his memory.

Kodanda Ramalayam, Ramatheertham Kshetram

Many ancient temples stand as witnesses to numerous wonders and discoveries. Each such temple construction appears in a mysterious and unique architectural style. Ramatheertham, a famous sacred place in North Andhra, is no exception. Ramatheertham is located in Nellimarla Mandal of Vizianagaram District. According to legends, Rama spent some time here during his exile and chanted the mantra of Shiva. To the north of this temple, a monolithic hill about two kilometers long and 600 meters high can be seen.



Sita and Rama, as well as the Pandavas, moved around on this hill. The water in the temple tank located beside the Ramalayam is never to dry up in any season. If one goes west from that water pool, one can see marks and places associated with Bhima's skull, Gadi Poyyi, a Buddha statue, Parnasala, Paluku Rock, the Pandavas' seats, and the childbirth bed marks of Sita.

In the 16th century, Pusapati Sitarama Chandra Maharaja, who ruled this region, saw Rama in a dream. Rama told him that the idols which had been given to the Pandavas during the Dvapara Yuga were located in a water pool on Bodikonda Hill here. The king then had the idols excavated and built a temple. Since the idols were found in a sacred water body (teertham), this place came to be known as Ramatheertham. History says that it is not only a very ancient temple but is also recognized as another Bhadrachalam Temple. Footprints belong to Rama and Anjaneya can still be seen on this hill. To the north of this premises lies Neelachalam Hill, and to the west there is a Jain Temple. The stone-built structures appear in a way that captivates visitors.

Among the other sub-temples present here are

shrines of Vaikunthanatha, Venugopala, Lakshmi, Madhava, Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha, Anjaneya, the shrine of Alvars, and Uma Sadasiva. Devotees who come to visit Ramatheertham also make sure to visit Bhima's House. Moreover, historical evidence suggests that Jainism followers once lived in this region. Historians have mentioned that ancient Buddhism temples existed on nearby hills such as Gurubhaktakonda Hill and Durgakonda Hill, and they hold historical importance.

Festivals are celebrated throughout the year in this sacred place. On Magha Shuddha Ekadashi, the celestial wedding of Rama is performed and festivities continue until the full moon day. During this period, the festival idols of Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana are taken in procession through the streets each day on different vehicles. Similarly, during Dussehra, ten days of Kalyana Brahmotsavams are conducted for Venkateswara. On Vijayadashami, the Lord reaches Neelachalam on the Ashwa Vahana, where Jammi tree worship and Ayudha Puja are performed, which is a delightful sight to witness.

Once a year, Jyeshtha Abhishekams are performed in this temple, during which Sahasra Ghata Abhishekam is conducted for the deity. On that day, devotees can see the true form of Rama. During Dhanurmasam, special rituals are conducted for an entire month. Devotees also consider Ramatheertham as a Shiva Kshetra and come from distant regions to witness the grand fair held here on Maha Shivaratri.

Ramatheertham is located about 12 kilometers from the headquarters of Vizianagaram district. Those travelling by train should get down at Vizianagaram Railway Station, from where autos and buses are available to reach Ramatheertham. Those coming by national highway from distant places should get down at Ranastalam in Srikakulam District, from where buses are available. Those travelling by air should land at Visakhapatnam and then travel to Vizianagaram.

Manyam Struggle of March 1922

The Manyam struggle is one of the significant movements that reflected the role of forest dwellers in the history of India's freedom struggle. It began in March 1922 in the forested areas of the Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh. The great leader Alluri Sitarama Raju led this armed rebellion against the British rule to fight for the rights of the forest dwellers. This movement continued from 1922 to 1924 and earned a distinct place in India's freedom struggle.



The lifestyle of the forest dwellers was severely affected under British rule. Particularly, under the Madras Forest Act enacted in 1882, the forest dwellers were prohibited from freely hunting in the

forests, cultivating the land (podu cultivation), and using forest resources. Additionally, the system of “Begar” (forced labor) was implemented. These laws devastated the economic and social conditions of the forest dwellers, causing strong resentment against the British authorities.

Alluri Sitarama Raju, as a young man, traveled through the forest regions and understood the hardships of the people. He gained the trust of the forest dwellers and organized them. With courage, self-confidence, and a spirit of sacrifice, he led the struggle using guerrilla warfare methods. He also devised plans to attack police stations to acquire weapons.

In March 1922, attacks on British police stations began in the Manyam region. In areas such as Chintapalli, Krishnadevipeta, and Rajavommangi, attacks were carried out, and weapons were seized. These raids alarmed the British government, and the forest dwellers fought effectively under the leadership of Alluri Sitarama Raju.

The Manyam struggle continued as a guerrilla war. Using the forests as their base, the fighters conducted night attacks and hid during the day. This tactic posed a significant challenge to the British army. In response, the British government sent Special Forces and conducted harsh measures, attacking villages and persecuting forest dwellers.

In 1924, the British army captured and killed Alluri Sitarama Raju. Though his death marked the end of the movement, it showcased the pride, dignity, and freedom aspirations of the forest dwellers to the world.

The Manyam struggle was a significant movement for the rights of forest dwellers and served as an inspiration for the Indian independence movement. Alluri Sitarama Raju remains immortal in history as the “Hero of Manyam.” Through this struggle, the problems of the forest dwellers gained nationwide attention.

The Manyam struggle, which began in March 1922, represents a distinct chapter in India’s freedom movement. The self-respect, spirit of freedom, and sacrifice of the forest dwellers were clearly reflected in this movement. The sacrifice of Alluri Sitarama Raju remains eternal in the history of India.

Maratha Wars Resisting Aurangzeb's Campaigns (A.D. 1681–1707)

The Maratha wars against Aurangzeb, spanning from 1681 to 1707, represent one of the longest, most strategic, and guerrilla-style campaigns in Indian history. These wars were not only about territorial expansion but also a comprehensive struggle for the protection of Swarajya (self-rule), preservation of Hindu dharma, and local administrative autonomy.

After the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji (1674), the founder of the Maratha Empire, his death in 1680 left the Maratha state vulnerable.



Aurangzeb personally marched into South India in 1681, aiming to completely subdue Maratha power, annex the Deccan sultanates (Bijapur and Golconda), and expand the Mughal Empire southwards.

Shivaji's son, Shambhaji Maharaj, fiercely resisted these treacherous campaigns. As part of his military strategy, Shambhaji maintained alliances with Golconda and Bijapur and launched attacks on Mughal forces. He adopted guerrilla warfare tactics to sustain the struggle.

In 1689, Shambhaji was captured and brutally executed on Aurangzeb's orders. Although this was a severe blow to the Marathas, the war did not end.

After Shambhaji's death, Chhatrapati Shivaji's other son, Rajaram, ascended the throne. He reached Jinji Fort in South India and continued the resistance. The Mughal army besieged Jinji Fort for eight years (1690–1698). The Maratha commanders—Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav—carried out guerrilla attacks to disrupt Mughal supply lines, showcasing excellent “hit-and-run” tactics.

Following Rajaram's death in 1700, his wife, Tarabai, assumed leadership (1700–1707). She personally devised military strategies, united the Maratha forces, launched attacks on Mughal territories, and inflicted significant economic damage. Tarabai's leadership revitalized the Maratha movement.

All these leaders, after Shivaji's death, continued to follow guerrilla warfare methods, conducting night raids with small forces, using mountainous terrain extensively, and targeting Mughal supply lines. They also constructed forts in the Sahyadri ranges as part of their military apparatus. Attacking one fort and retreating to another became an essential tactic. To strengthen their resources, they collected Chauth and Sardeshmukhi taxes, thereby disrupting Mughal revenue systems.

The prolonged Maratha resistance exhausted the Mughal treasury and significantly weakened their army. Additionally, the Mughals' lack of understanding of South India's geography forced them to retreat. Aurangzeb died in 1707, but Maratha power continued to grow and eventually extended to North India in the 18th century.

The Maratha struggle from 1681–1707 was not merely a war between states. It was a pioneering example of a local independence movement, guerrilla warfare, and the beginning of the decline of the Mughal Empire. Through these wars, the Marathas prevented Aurangzeb from securing a decisive victory

in the south and weakened Mughal authority in the region.

Rampant religious conversions in Andhra Pradesh

Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable and extreme increase in Christian conversions in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Large-scale conversions have taken place in a manner that is intense and disturbing. These have led to social conflicts, public order problems, and even family breakups. For the last two decades, major 'unethical' gatherings have been boldly organized in districts, towns, and mandals with a significant number of participants to attract more people to conversions. During these gatherings, speakers have spoken against Hindu religion and culture, sowing seeds of religious hatred in close-knit rural communities.



New converts are refusing to perform cremation for their deceased elders and are also reluctant to attend family celebrations. Evidence has emerged on television debates that the missionaries conducting these conversions are instilling divisive thoughts in the minds of new converts. The faith of those who have converted is being directed by foreign, extra-territorial, and unconstitutional Christian authorities. This is directly affecting national unity and integrity.

In Andhra Pradesh, there is no law to control or monitor conversions from one religion to another. Because there are no compulsory provisions for registering religious conversions, conversions from Hinduism to Christianity have not been widely recorded in official records. In the state, the majority of converts belong to the SC Hindu population. The fact that terms like "SC" and "Christian" are being interchanged for personal or opportunistic purposes indicates the seriousness of this issue.

Christian pastors in Andhra Pradesh claim that in recent years, nearly 30% of the state population is now Christian, according to statements made in television debates. As a result, when population data is calculated, it appears that many have misrepresented their religion. Most of these conversions involve SC/OBC individuals changing from Hinduism to Christianity. This is a blatant violation of laws and a mockery of the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

Those practicing Christianity have received verification certificates from Hindu SCs, and have availed themselves of all benefits, facilities, and schemes provided to SCs, such as reserved constituencies, political and nominated positions, jobs, educational opportunities, scholarships, hostels, and housing. It is noteworthy that true SCs who continue to follow Hinduism and their traditional lifestyle and cultural practices are not able to fully

access these constitutionally guaranteed benefits. This constitutes a severe misuse of special constitutional provisions meant for SCs

According to the 2011 census, the total Christian population in Andhra Pradesh was 682,660. Between 1951 and 2011, the percentage of Christians dropped from 5.37% to 1.38%. However, the number of churches and missionary activities across the state shows rapid growth. This indicates that reservations and protections constitutionally provided to Hindu SC/OBCs are being exploited by those who have converted to Christianity.

If proper census and verification are conducted regarding Christians who were originally Hindus with SC certificates and are now availing reservations and other benefits, a massive scam would be revealed. Considering the population data, misused funds, and the scale over decades, this could be considered one of the biggest violations of the Indian Constitution. These large-scale religious conversions reveal a conspiracy against genuine and eligible SCs. In fact, these conversions can be described as one of the largest post-independence scams in India.

Kunkullamma Vasant Navaratri Fair at Dwaraka Tirumala

Although the Dwaraka Tirumala region in Andhra Pradesh is primarily famous as the shrine of Lord Shri Venkateswara, the village deity Kunkullamma holds a special place in the spiritual and cultural life of the local population during the Vasant Navaratri fair. This festival is not merely a religious celebration; it is a comprehensive social process reflecting rural community organization, belief systems, economic development, and cultural unity.



The worship of village deities has continued as an ancient tradition in South India. People naturally seek protection from Kunkullamma as a motherly force, especially in agricultural livelihoods, for protection against natural calamities, diseases, crop uncertainties, and other risks. The Navaratri festival held in spring symbolizes rejuvenation of nature.

Navaratri is a symbol of Shakti (divine feminine power). The nine days of worship reflect different manifestations of energy. Rituals such as Chandi Homa, Kalash Sthapana, and special decorations represent the removal of negative forces and invocation of auspicious power.

As spring signifies rebirth, Navaratri also symbolizes spiritual purification and new beginnings. Hence, the devotion during this festival reflects not only emotional intensity but also philosophical depth.

During the fair, villagers collectively organize festivities, strengthening social unity. People who have migrated elsewhere also return during this period, restoring family and community bonds. Agricultural and food-related activities foster a sense of equality.

Women play a special role in this fair. Their participation in rituals like kumkuma offerings and lamp worship demonstrates the respect accorded to feminine energy in rural society.

Although the main temple at Dwaraka Tirumala belongs to the Vaishnava tradition, the Kunkullamma fair is rooted in local folk beliefs. It emphasizes emotional devotion over formalized ritual procedures.

During the festival, temporary markets and small businesses boost the local economy. Folk arts, devotional songs, and processions keep local cultural traditions alive. In this way, the fair serves as a platform for preserving cultural heritage.

Over time, modern interventions such as electric decorations, sound systems, and social media promotion have been introduced. Yet the core spirit of the festival—the faith in the village protector deity—remains intact. This demonstrates a balance between tradition and modernity.

The Dwaraka Tirumala Kunkullamma Vasant Navaratri fair is not just a spiritual event; it is a symbol of rural community development, feminine energy worship, social unity, economic activity, and cultural heritage. From a scholarly and cultural perspective, the fair can be studied as an integrated reflection of rural Indian life.

“Decolonize, Reclaim, Diselfhood” National Conference – Brief Report

A two-day national conference on the theme “Decolonize, Reclaim, Diselfhood” was organized on February 13–14, 2026 at the Chinmaya Institute of Management and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, under the joint auspices of the Center for South Indian Studies (CSIS) and the Indian Council of Historical Research.

The conference was inaugurated by the chief guest Shri R. Harikumar, who emphasized the need for decolonization. The presidential address was delivered by Professor M. V. Natesan, and the keynote lecture was presented by Professor M. Srinathan. Professor Kiyoshi Kawahara from Takushoku University, Japan, participated as a guest of honor.

On the first day, Professor K. K. Muhammad delivered a special lecture on “Reimagining Indian Civilization”. Several panel discussions were held on topics such as anti-colonial struggles in South India, cultural and intellectual resistance during colonial administration, and related aspects. In the evening, a cultural

program was organized.

On the second day, discussions were held on various themes including studies of decolonization, its contours, forgotten heroes and movements, migration histories, and the impact of literary works.

In the concluding session, Kerala Governor Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar participated as the chief guest and elaborated on the significance of decolonization ideas. Following this, book releases, felicitation ceremonies, and certificate distributions were conducted. The conference concluded successfully with the national anthem.

Important Days This Month:

1. Holi Festival – March 3
2. Ugadi, Hindu New Year, Beginning of Vasantha Navaratri – March 19
3. Sri Rama Navami – March 27

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