

# Impact of Festivals on Environments in India – A Perspective

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## Abstract:

Indian people celebrate numerous festivals throughout a year, irrespective of region, religion, caste, with joy and prosperity. Festivals bring people and their family member together from monotonous lifestyle. Apart from positive impacts of festivals, natural resources such as air, water, soil, sound, lately, are affected due to excessive and uncontrolled use. As a result, ecological balance is affected. This perspective aims to overcome the situation via spreading awareness among the people, and control over rules and regulations.

## Introduction:

India exhibits a social blend of religions with their celebrations and festivities. The country is extremely vast with diversity in people and religion. Almost each day of a year is being celebrated in India with incredible bliss and joy.<sup>[1]</sup> There are various regional celebrations that are commended specifically provisions as it were. Each celebration takes an essential part in the life of various people and groups from various networks of India. The reasons for festivals are numerous. These could be due to the evolving seasons, reap, compromise or celebration of the birth commemorations of holy people, masters and prophets and respects the divine beings and goddesses. Each celebration in India have distinctive colour, appeals, desserts and old remarkable ceremonies. Celebration of festivals can be divided as national, religious or occasional celebrations.<sup>[2]</sup> Life of people in the country also depends on the celebrations. Social and religious combination with the nearby populace is also occurred during festival celebration. No celebration in India is finished without a dining experience. Melas or Fairs are incredibly mainstream in India as well as everywhere throughout the world. Fairs serves an essential job as the greater part of the celebrations are praised in individual homes. They are typically celebrated for seven days to over a month to unite the network and offer welcome.

There are several national festivals, which is being celebrated over whole country irrespective of religion and region. Independence Day (celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> August) is one of them, which is being celebrated as remembrance of the day in 1947 when India introduced as world's greatest majority rule government from British guideline.<sup>[3]</sup> There are numerous festivals which are celebrated at regional level and some are being celebrated by a particular communities.

Among numerous festivals celebrated across the whole country, only few example of regional festivals are described below. Baisakhi marks the first day of the Hindu year in certain communities of the nation.<sup>[4]</sup> On this day the Sun enters Aries, the principal indication of

Zodiac. This connotes introducing the New Year. In the northern belt of India, ranchers play out their own supplications and celebrate. The fields can be seen brimming with nature's abundance. Desserts are conveyed, old hatreds are excused and life is brimming with delight, cheer and everybody appears to have a place. These are the two main principle purposes behind observing Baisakhi. Festival of reap is being celebrated in southern part of India as Pongal.<sup>[5]</sup> This is being observed for three days in January. It is a bright and customary celebration with numerous a service committed to different divinities. The sun is ground-breaking and aides in the development of the paddy and different fields. Distinctive verities of Rangoli (decoration with colour) are attracted front of the houses promptly toward the beginning of the day. Festival of colours is popularly known as Holi.<sup>[6]</sup> This festival is being celebrated at the arrival of spring. This signifies the evolving of love, meeting and greeting others in festive day, forgiving and forgetting, and repairing the broken relationships. The festival also celebrates the starting point of a good spring harvest season. Diwali is another festival celebrated all over the country.<sup>[7]</sup> It symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance. For Diwali celebration, people prepare their house or workplace by cleaning, renovating, and decorating with diyas (candles or earthen oil lamps). This festival also worships the goddess of prosperity and wealth. Celebration is observed with light fireworks, family feasts with loads of foods.

There are a large number of festivals throughout the whole year across the country and the people are celebrating with full enthusiasm. The commercialization is transforming each festival into a fabulous event. Beside all the petitions, excitements, fun; the question arises from the environmental view point: are these celebrations safe for environmental resources – air, water, soil, sound etc.? Herein, an attempt has been made to have a glance at how those celebrations influence the environmental resources.

### **Impact of festivals on environment**

Excess use of environmental resources and contamination provide the bad health of the resources. Therefore, pollution level for air, water, soil or sound is increasing gradually and as a result several consequences of health hazard are happening.<sup>[8]</sup>

The act of submersion of idol after the celebration in different urban areas is causing serious water contamination which prompts the demise of huge amounts of fish and numerous amphibian animals.<sup>[9]</sup> Gone are the days when the idols are made with soil (mud). These days, idols are made with plaster of Paris and colour blends. As indicated by biologists and ecological researchers, plaster of Paris does not break down or deteriorate easily.<sup>[10]</sup> In addition, the colours and artificial ornaments being utilized to shading the idols contain toxic components. Various colours contain several heavy metals such as mercury, zinc, chromium, lead, which are health hazardous.<sup>[11]</sup> Excess use of these chemical colours, overwhelming heavy metals such as lead and chromium are not only affect the aquatic animals, but also affect wide variety of vegetation of the waterway. Thereafter, utilising those contaminated water for household work also reason for several disease.

Heavy metals and other hazardous substances are also being used to prepare the colour dust, which are used during Holi festival.<sup>[12]</sup> Colours plays an important role in Holi celebration as different colours carries the symbol of bridging the gap among people. In older times, people

would make their own colours from natural sources, which are safe and non-hazardous. In recent times, the colours are sourced from cheap chemical-based ingredients such as mica, acids, soluble bases, dust of glass. These material are dangerous and often prompt skin-related issues such as scraped spot, aggravation, tingling.<sup>[13]</sup> However, these health-hazard chemicals are also raise concern for disable vision, respiratory issues and malignant growth. Afterwards, these material are mixed with water, soil and contribute towards water and soil pollution.<sup>[14]</sup> Pollution is also happening during Diwali celebration as people use excessive firecrackers. This brings nightmarish ordeal for babies and older individuals in light of the elevated amounts of sound and poisonous gas from firecrackers. Commotion contamination on Diwali is quite higher than the recommended level.<sup>[15]</sup> Moreover, crackers are made utilizing barium sulfate, sodium nitrate, sulphur, potassium chlorate, and therefore, burning the firecrackers releases toxic gases such as sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and metal oxides.<sup>[16]</sup> These can harm lungs and lead to lung issue like wheezing and shortness of breath for children and older people. Heavy metal which utilized in crackers such as lead, magnesium, cadmium, and others can have different hurtful impacts as they contaminate water and soil at the end.

### **Festivals & environmental sustainability**

People are celebrating festivals, which relates social issues, cultural influences and associate with economy as people in urban dwellers are spending more on these celebrations.<sup>[17]</sup> Pollution in terms of air, water, soil, sound, and so on is the main issue, now a days, for these celebration. Idol immersion is more prone to face ecological exploitation through using plaster of Paris in water bodies. Disposal of festivals wastes is a huge task for municipalities and corporations. The main reason of this problem is the lack of awareness among the people towards ecological protection and sustainable development. A total ban on festival is not an answer, but rules and regulations should be imposed on festival activities. Therefore, shrugging of the concern of hurting religious sentiments, it is the responsibility to the policy makers to enforce certain regulations during festival times.<sup>[18]</sup> Otherwise, the country will lose its ecological balance and consequences due to that is unavoidable. Initiation of waste management and waste segregation is very much required at all level and public awareness is essential.<sup>[19]</sup> These initiatives would help to address the growing problem of pollution in and around our localities.

### **Conclusion:**

Indian festivals are the reflection of culture, religion and social togetherness. Diversity of one festivals to another is also reflects the wide cultural hub in the country. In recent times, in the name of festivals and amusement, people contaminate the natural resources, namely air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, noise pollution and so on. Therefore, the ecological exploitation is inevitable. Man-made disasters are happening in the name festivals via plastic disposal, garbage dumping, traffic problem and so on. However, to tackle the issue, social awareness and strict law and regulation are required. Social workers and law-makers have to work together in tandem to reduce the ecological pollution and eco-friendly festival celebration.

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