

Maha Kumbha ; 2025: A Sociological elaboration

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Abstract: The kumbha mela, that is celebrated in the early months of year 2025 at Prayagraj, is the target of this cultural study. I wishes to attempt to find out the goal of such occasions and why such arrangements have been mentioned under the structure of Hindu mythology. Here I targeted to concerned the impact of such events on societal issues like social structure, economical structure, individual i.e spiritual and political structure. Such huge population is gathered here to take simply a dip in the river not only for tourism only, but actually, it is the power and strength of religion over the whole Sanatan community. That has impact over their followers to build up their belief and devotion towards such huge gathering. I tried to point out some facts regarding this belief as well as purpose of such events organized in Sanatan religion.

Key Words: MahaKumbha, Shahi Snan, Amrit Snan, Sanatan.

1. INTRODUCTION:

This is a religious event of Sanatan Dharmi or Hindu and related to very ancient and mythological event popularly known as “Samudramanthan” that had happen between Deities and Demons for getting Amrit (Nectar). Recollection of this event, In Hindu`s there are concept of Kumbha Mela has been organized on five different places of the country i.e. Prayagraj, Kurukshetra, Nasik, Ujjain and Haridwar. After every twelve years, the Kumbha Mela has been organized by Government previously by Saint and Sadhus. But Prayagraj Kumbh is something special out of all Kumbh festivals. Normally it starts from 14th January and lasted up to Shiv Ratri Festival, therefore minimum 45 days. This year, it is started from 14th January and lasted up to 26 feb, 2025 in Prayagraj. The government has made great arrangements to conduct this religious festival and it has gotten good and prior space on social media that`s why it has got great advertisement throughout the world. Government authorities has expected that approximately, 20 billion people will come to Prayagraj to take holy dip in Holy River Ganga, but up to last snan i.e. Shiv Ratri total 66 crore people has reach to Prayagraj to take Amrit Snan in the holy confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and invisible current of Saraswati. And People are still engaged in making plan to visit Prayagraj to visit as well as getting spiritual touch in their lives. As per Sanskrit Grammer Mela means assembly, meet & union and Kumbh means Pitcher/ jar/ pot. Therefore, it is clear that Kumbh refers to the pitcher of nectar. As per vedic text, when partial or full revolution of planet Jupiter and when Sun enters in the Rashi Makar (Capricorn) and become Uttarayan then every year in the Hindu Month of Magha Mela took place at prayaraj and people used to come there to take holy Dip in River Ganga. In this sequence at every six year there is Ardha Kumabh and every twelve year Maha Kumabh festival is celebrated.



There are number evidences in Vadic as well as ancient texts of India, where this festival has been praised. As per epic tale of Puranas, once deities and demons were decided to churn ocean for nectar that`s made them mortal and they started

doing this then Dhanvantri, deity of medicine, had come up with nectar pitcher in his hand. Then there was a struggle had started between deities and demons for distribution of nectar, then Jayant, son of deities king Indra, had fled away with the pitcher and during this some drops of nectar had fallen on Earth at four places i.e. Prayagraj, Kurukshetra, Nasik, Ujjain and Haridwar. That's why there is celebration of Kumbh mela on these places after every twelve years respectively. And also the picture of Kumbha Mela had been drawn beautifully in 644 A.D. by the foreign traveler Hiuen Tsang at the time of King Harsh of Kannauj. According to Hiuen Tsang, King Harshvardhan had went to Prayag at the time of Kumbha and did the charity towards saints and Sadhus. This was depicted in the records of Hiuen Tsang and he was there with King Harsh Vardhan. He narrated that with full hands the King had distributed wealth, cloths and food to saints and other pilgrims who were there to take holy river Ganga in Hindu Month of Magh. Similarly, in 1117 A.D. Albaruni, Arabian traveler, had come to India with Mohamad Gajnavi, had mentioned kumbh festival in his book "Kitab-ul-hind" that at this festival the people were jumped into River Ganga from Patal Puri Temple and end their lives in aspiration of salvation (Moksha). As per Buddhism text, Adi Shankaracharya had reorganized Sadhus sects (akhada) and categories them which is still followed by the Sadhoo tradition of India.

Mughal Empiror Akbar had made a fort (1574- 83) and barrage named after him Buxi Bandh and reorganized the Prayag city and named it "Illahabas" which became Illahabad during Shahjahan rule and again became Allahabad during British regime and finally in the year 2018 BJP Government has its name and re-established ancient name "Prayagraj". Akbar had inspired from the confluence of Hindu sadhoo, who would collected from all over India every year as well as every 12 year at Prayagraj, not only for taking bath into the holy confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, but also made debates on religion, spirituality and goals of life and decided to establish "Ibadatkhana" at Fatehpur Sikari, capital of Akbar, in 1575. As per historical documents, Prof. Heramab Chaturvedi said that During the period of Aurangzeb, there were instances of donation to Somoswar Mahadev Temple at Arail, Prayagraj, Bala ji Temple (Chitrakut), Mahakal Temple (Ujjain), Govshamies of Vrindavan, Jangam Badi (Kashi) at Allahabad, this indicate that there must be some occasion like Kumbh.



Fig : 1/2

Source: google

In 1801, Britisher had have their control over Allahabad and turned Akbar's fort to military base and then Kumbh and Magh mela has been celebrated under the control of Indian British Army. Due to such celebrations, British Government of India had made an agreement with Pandas of Prayagraj in 1860. In 1888, When Author Foa had written to Government regarding the nudity of Naga Sadhoos and demanded to banned such Sahi Snan and celebrations, then the Government had rejected his appeal on the basis of 1860 agreement with Pandas. Mahakumabh held in 1895 was fully and elaborately described by famous author Mark Train and Sydney Lo, who visited India with George Fifth, also described the event and said that this was a very ancient religious happening of Hindu culture that took place at every 12 years. During British period the kumbh was celebrated with restriction imposed by the then British government, but continuity of this religious maintained and hook and crook Indian has celebrated this event. After independence, Indian Government has given financial as well as administrative support to conduct this festival, but the clever of Kumbh 2025 is something different and this event become a global event due to the support of the state as well as Indian government. It is assumed that approximately, 66 crore people has arrived to Prayagraj through road, train and air transport and has taken holy dip in the confluence of holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and invisible Saraswati. This is going to registered in to Guinness book of world records and because it will be the greatest and biggest gathering of people. On 26th feb,2025 on the occasion of Shiv Ratri festival, the last amrit Snan, this festival was declared to be finished with success. The world has enjoyed this gathering and accepted the faith, belief and strength of Sanatanism.

2. Social Impact:

Emile Durkheim is pioneer of the development of Sociology of religion and he has developed his views regarding religion after his intensive studies of Aurunta Tribe of Australia and he mainly emphasized over the mob collected around the bone fire and then behalf of this he stated that society is God itself. Here in Prayagraj, we have noticed the huge mob gathered on the bank of River Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati to perform holy Amrit Snan, listen the preaching of Saints, performing Pitr Yajna, bestow and so many other rituals. It can be said that they have performed virtually similar rituals and customs related to Sanatan Religion. So, at this time the directions and preachings are followed by rest of population when they returned to their respective place. That is to say that what they have directed in the mob of Kumbh, these are guidelines for their future life. It means when individual mind is under group mind then it follows each and every direction of group mind without any condition. Whereas science told us that there is nothing like group mind, but still notice such thing that group mind works and things are demonstrated by group mind. As per Durkheim this huge collection of people may be assumed as counsellor or mentor regarding daily happening and religious rituals rather than God. This is only because they returned from Mahakumbh type National folded festival. This type of festival must have influenced prevailing social system and rituals, therefore, it must have social impact, is wreath to be discussed.....

- (a) **Cultural exchange:-** the people from all over India has attended such festival, therefore, it is not only the confluence of holy water but also the confluence of people and their culture too. Food culture, dress culture, language, literature, daily life rituals and customs are on the ground for exchange. For example, the priest community of north are used Lungi in place of Dhoti is due to impact of south India, the people on south are using lungi in their daily routine of life not only in houses but also used it in professional setting too. Lungi has been used by Muslims but in religious acts the use of dress in actually adopted from south Indian Hindus. Similarly, the popularity of south Indian cushion is also due to pilgrimage travels. Idle and Dosa are most popular south Indian foods in north India. In Kumbh festival, Saints are made their Pandals where they told the devotees regarding way of life and also solve the questions asked by devotees on directions given Sanatan texts. It is assumed that after taking dip in Ganga they washed their all sins and become fully pure.
- (b) **Exchange of Thoughts:-** the saints has installed their campus and pandals discussed the things related to social life with other saints and give clear thought and exchange their with common followers and the new resolution has propagated in whole Sanatan community. For example, the reestablishment Ram Mandir matter has been discussed by the Saints at every Magh mela and Kumbh mela and they created plebiscite regarding Ram Mandir and now the Ram Temple has come into existence in year 2023. Therefore, role of such festivals are very crucial in making plebiscite and turn the whole thought process of country. Therefore, we can say that these festival are having great capacity to social change as well as cultural change.
- (c) **Experience of life:-** since it is actually the confluence of people from whole country people are not only interacted to saints but also interacted to each other and shares own views regarding Agriculture, trade & commerce, political system, household and other field of social affairs. Therefore, these things are very favorable in the field of innovations in social life. Therefore, people have also learnt from the experiences of others regarding the techniques of leading good life. For one month of magha people used to reside at mela kshetra in camps, this is called Kalpa Vaas, have developed intimacy with fellow dwellers and talk to them on different topics related daily life. In that course they has learnt a lot with the experience of others and later used those discussed ideas at their place for own and their families betterment. Therefore, this is fruitful use of experience of others in tasks of own life and make their life better. For example, if some guys are not growing the crop of gram due to attack of mavericks, then some guys told jhatka trick to save their crop from maverick or use other type of seeds whose leaves are not good in test therefore, cattle do not eat it. Such type of experience has been shared during Kalp Vaas and people are benefitted with experience of other and lead prosperous and happy life.
- (d) **Solve the issues of daily life:-** during such type of festivals people go to their spiritual gurus camp and discussed their homely issues with him and getting suggested by their gurus and get benefitted by resolving their issues. There are so many problems in household such marriage of children, chronic diseases, lack of prosperity, lack of happiness, mental stability and so many in the list. The saint told them regarding real goal of life and solve the problems household people by their religious or spiritual tricks. Today's life style is very fast and people are searching for emotional support and mental peace, then these gurus told them path of spirituality to enhance themselves and achieve mental peace and emotional support too.
- (e) **Reorganization of Institution:-** At MahaKumbh, the council of Saint also sessions to discussed the matter of present scenario and Sanatan Institutions like family, caste system, marriage, status of women in society, system of prayer and organization of temples, cremations and other sacraments, education system and lack of morality in the society and so many other issues related to Sanatan Institutions. We are facing the great changes in our

sacrament pattern in last two decades. For example, in marriage system there are so many has been noticed since last 25 years. Such as now this institution became the matter of two families rather than the matter of whole society. Now a days, the Jaimala system is one of the most significant ritual of Hindu marriage and traditional portion of marriage has been neglected. Not only the families are taking interest in this ritual but even bride and groom are also showing their keen interest in this ritual and other traditional portion has been taken for granted. Similarly, in death ceremonies has also been changed with time, now people are wrapping up whole 13 days programme into 3 days. There is reference of such type ceremony in the Hindu Dharmashastras, but people are doing this very commonly and society's sanction is there. So all these has been condemned in the council of Saints at National level festivals. Saints are also discussing regarding the awareness of whole Sanatan mass about the glory and standard of our tradition and ritual and they also discussed the rituals on scientific backgrounds such as Abhay Singh or popularly known as Iitian Baba, has told in one interview that advanced physics of today's i.e. Quantum Physics has been discussed in old Indian text such as Vedas and Kalp Literature. Similarly, Satguru has told regarding the Verses of Kanad Muni said in Vasheshik sootras that what is in Atom lies in whole Universe. He says the Kanad Muni had said this many years before than modern science. Role of Yagyopavitra is also proved on both science and medical science. Therefore, it can be said that these type of festival also very useful in strengthening our ancient institutions and rituals. Our Astrology has been followed by the foreigners from very ancient time and they have respect for this Indian art and mathematical calculation of stars. Our Hom practice is also very popular world wide and followed by the people global village community.

3. Economical Impact

Economy is very much integrated with social system from the very early time with the development of Humankind and played very significant role in the evolution of society. Fundamental requisite of human being to lead their lives depends on economic activities and economical infrastructure of the society. Actually, these fundamental requisite as discussed by Malinowski in his Need theory, are the base for the development of human as well as society. Malinowski has divided the need into two parts i.e. the first is basic needs which is fundamental for the survival of human being and the other are required for the survival of society. His concept need has having three divisions of needs i.e. basic needs, Derived needs and then Integrative needs. Basic needs are seven such as Metabolism, bodily comfort, reproduction, safety, movement, growth and health. These are must for the survival of human. Similarly, the other two are must for the survival of society i.e. Derived needs (requirement of maintenance of cultural apparatus (economic system), regulation of human behavior (Social Control / social system), Socialization (education system) and exercise of authority (political system)) and third one is applied part of the first two segments. Therefore, we find here that economic system is closely associated with social system. In this religious event the economic system has also been affected which we discussed in the following headings such as

- (a) **Exchange of wealth/ money:** today's time it is ok, but in ancient time currency was different state were having different money, there were exchange of money in olden era. But since, whole country has its unique currency, therefore, there is no need of such exchange, but such festivals and Pilgrimage tours are fruitful in rotation of money. Since, Indian women are specially good savers, they put some money in their kitchen out of sight of the whole family and these household women are overt their treasures on such occasions like pilgrimage tour or religious functions, therefore that damp money has got on flow once again. They are very religious and God fearing as comparison to Indian men. In such pilgrimage tour they are habitual to perform donate money and other articles like food grains, cloths, Utensils, etc. this is positive act for trade & commerce. Therefore, on such occasions not only experiences and thoughts are exchanged but the money and wealth are also exchanged.
- (b) **Innovative ideas of trade & commerce:** people across the country has come together to celebrate religious festivals like Kumbh, then they also came to that place with their food culture, cloth culture and other required item in their daily life article. Therefore, at pilgrimage place, the local people are ready to welcome them with their food items and other required articles of their daily uses. These items are exported to place from all over the country. That why, the people from south India has their dosa and idli in north India, there are so many restaurants are there for their food required to the people. At every pilgrimage station of India there must be a Marvari Bhojnalaya which provided Hindu pilgrims food without onion and garlic. For example, at chitracut there is a Jaipuria Restaurant which provide food without onion and garlic to people visit that place. Food culture is the most significant culture which travels with the travelers. If some people visited Rajasthan, then they bring many items of rajasthan such as Lac Bangles, Jaipuri quilts, Jaipuri suits for men and women. This also works a lot in bringing unity in diversity of India which is praised world wide. Besides, that in old time, some people were stayed at those places and open there food corner and other such Banarsi Misthan Bhandar at Ujjain, Madarasi dosa at different places in India. It means the started their business at those places. Therefore,

traditional as well as innovative ideas regarding business are also spread out with the religious travelers. Therefore, such religious festivals and place are having contribution in expansion of trade & commerce of the country.

- (c) **Exchange of fashion:** similarly like food culture cloth culture are spread around whole country with religious travelers. For example Lungi culture belongs to south India, but now it can be noticed in North or east or west India too. Similarly, Banarsi Sarees are very article among women all over the country. At the same time, Kanjivaram silk and Madurai silk of south India and Tant sarees of eastern India is liked by women of whole country. Now a days, Punjabi Suit is very much popular among the young women of the country. Therefore, fashion also travels through out the country and these type of function are playing very important role in the propagation of fashion too.

Therefore, economic structure of India have all the colors of the country because of the essence of unity in diversity, which in our culture and religion. Our ancestors had have a very good work on this issue to make our integrity strong from south to north and east to west. This uniqueness of ours has been deep rooted in our unconscious mind through socialization system managed by our Sanatan religion. Such national folded festivals like Kumbh are playing very vital role in the process of socialization.

4. Spiritual Impact:

Indian spiritualism is unique and integral part of Sanatan religion or we can say that both are complimentary to each other. i.e. if whole society is matter of consideration, then it is Sanatan religion and if there is matter of individual enhancement then spiritualism comes on the first sight. If we are talking regarding the goal of life as per Sanatan religion then it unique and apart from whole that is the life goal of a Sanatan follower is to attained the state Moksh (Salvation), which is surely non materialistic or not belonging to this world, whereas the rest of world is behind materialistic achievement. The goal goal of life as per Sanatan Dharma is completely defer from rest of world's concept of goal of life. There is no disparities regarding self enhancement in Sanatan Dharm, therefore, each follower can achieved it through follow one's Dharm as directed by Sanatan Dharm. Therefore, every guys belonging to this sect can tried for attaining the last goal of life. Clean hearted man can achieved it through his equal behavior to all i.e. Sambhav. These festivals in Sanatan Dharma are giving equal chance to everyone. Saints and Sadhoos are giving their preaching regarding this subject to all people who have reached to their camp in Kumbh. Same thing happen in the Prayagraj Kumbh too. Many different saints are reported by National and international media who are doing their to best to find the last goal of life. For example, Ittian Baba who has completed hid B.Tech degree from IIT Mumbai and has got placed to very handsome salary in a multination corporation, but he has left his job and stepped into the field of spiritualism to attained the last and final goal of life. He has explaining the philosophy of Sanatanism through Scientific logics. Many other saint are their who has have top class degree from respectful institution of India and left their bright & glamorous future for search of truth of life and devoted their whole life for this shake. Sanatan festival and Places are helping the people of India to make their lives proper and adequate for existence of lives on the planet, since it is not preaching to attained materialistic goal besides it motivate people to get familiar with absolute truth of life. Therefore, we can say that Sanatan Dharm is advocating for sustainable development which is now the whole world's verses.

(I) **Role in Nation Building :**

Rastradharm is the most important out of all Dharm according to Sanatan Dharm. India is a very versatile country is all respect of life and society such as different language, literature, food culture, dress culture and even all happenings of daily life. It is very obvious to notice diversity in all round of her citizen's daily life events and rituals. But during these National folded festivals and Pilgrim stations are playing very significant role in developing unity out of all present diversities. This unity of India leads Her to be a leader of whole world community. In ancient era, India was considered to be Vishvaguru for whole world because it was the source of civilization and the whole world had followed the path and led themselves from barbarian stage to civilized stage. Philosophy, Mathematics, Astrology, literature, physical science, life science, chemistry and all possible required scientific and technological tricks and methods. Now, the fifth revolution of civilization has been controlled by America, but behind the stage there is role of Indian. The whole system of silicon city has been under the control of Indians who are migrated there to earn their livelihood. Now India has on her leg after facing two hundred years slavery of Great Britain and technologically become so strong that has been comes out from Moon mission of India under the supervision of ISRO. USA and Russia are the poinear Nations in the race to step into space, in 1964 Niel had put his feet on the land of Moon, but in Her first attempt India has successfully made operation the south pole of Moon which has not been made by any other nation of the world. This is possible because of the unity of whole country. Therefore, we can notice the role of such events in the Nation building.

5. Conclusion:

Here we discussed all aspects of Sanatan festival like Mahakumbh, we can say that there is very significant role such mythological events in the development of one nation out of many diversities. As per Government of Uttar Pradesh approximately sixty six crore people have reached Prayagraj and taken holy dip in confluence of Ganga, Yamuna & Saraswati. This must be the most populated confluence of people in the whole world. There are many countries whose population is less than the people gathered at Prayagraj. Very well managed event beside one or two incidents has taken place, in such gathering possibilities of mismanagement would be there but the government U.P. has administered the whole event very efficiently and very efficient officers are deployed there to look after the happening of Mahakumbh. Political parties are very but the role political parties in a democratic state is not much better than what we have.

Some scholars are also throwing light on Kumbh as the power of Sanatanism or Hindu religion to whole world. But as far as my view it should be considered as narrow mindedness. This successful happening of Kumbh is actually the victory of belief and devotion of followers of Sanatan religion and spiritualism. The strength of ours is that the whole world community has admired the belief and faith Sanatanism. Not only but they have attracted towards it and joined the event of Mahakumbh with Hindus. Some foreigners have accepted Sanatanism with Maheshanand ji Maharaj, Sadguru, Avadheshanand ji Giri, swami Shree Avimukteshwar nand ji Maharaj & many other Naga Sadhus and these gurus have performed all rituals to convert them from Christianity to Hindu Dharma. ISCON group has previously been doing the task of advocating for Sanatan Dharma worldwide. The power of Sanatan religion and philosophy has been accepted by whole world. Such type festivals like Kumbh have introduced the whole world with religious, philosophy and spiritual power and capability of Sanatan Dharma.

As far as, intrareligious requirements are also met out in Kumbh type National level festival. Saints and scholars are collected there and make debates on the issues related to common follower and other social institutional irregularities are put on discussion and solutions are preached by these saints and scholars of Sanatan philosophy to common followers. Such way societal reforms are made by scholars and reorganized the Sanatan religion for the future. Due to this Sanatan philosophy has continued with time and prove its name Sanatan i.e. Eternal or constant. Breaks and flaws are maintained and repaired by these festivals of Sanatan Dharma. Since aim of life as per Sanatan Dharma is not worldly but spiritual and we are reorganized and restructured time to time through such festival like Kumbh and from the ancient time we maintain our religious base line for whole world i.e.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः । सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः । सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु । मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ ..

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