

Utsavas as Sacred Moments: Exploring Radhavallabh's Worship Practices

Pragya Maheshwari

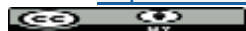
Research Scholar, Department of History, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut

Prof. Krishna Kant Sharma

Prof. & Head, Department of History, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut

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Abstract: *Upasna* (Worship) is the way to *Upasya* (Lord) from *Upasak* (Adorer). There are majorly two popular ways of worship *Saguna* and *Nirguna*. *Saguna bhakti* have different practices as per religion and cults. *Radhavallabh* cult of *Vaishnavas* have a distinct *saguna bhakti* practice. *Radhavallabh* Cult is one of the major *vaishnava* cult of *Vrindavan*, considered out of the four cults (*Chatuha sampradaya*). *Shri Harivansha* is the founder of this cult, who later known as *Hita Harivansha* or *Hitacharya*. After marriage he came to *Vrindavan* with the Idol of Lord *Radhavallabh* and then the *Radhavallabh* cult came in form. Its followers are known as *Radhavallabhis*. This cult has a distinct service practice to the lord *Radhavallabh*, which is called *Utsavas*. *Hitacharya* (*Hita Harivansh*) accepted 'Utsav' as joyous moments but did not accept any social festival into these 'Utsav' such as *Deepawali*, *Dussehra*, *Bhaidooj*, *Rakshabandhan* etc. He extended the meaning of *Utsav* and explained it as 'Ras moments' (Feeling of devotion and love to the beloved *Shri Radha*) which made them celebrate *Utsav* regularly on daily basis. So, it also called 'Nityotsava' (Daily celebration). There 'Utsav' are divided into 'Nityotsav/ Ritu Utsav' and 'Naimittik Utsav' (Social festivals which were added to the celebration later). *Nityotsav* or *Ritu Utsav* includes celebration according to six seasons- Autumn, Spring, Summer, Rain, Pre- winter and Winter (*Sharad*, *Vasant*, *Grishma*, *Varsha*, *Hemant* and *Shishir ritu*). 16th century onward many more *Utsav* gradually added to the *Radhavallabh* culture such as 'Patotsav' (Anniversary of idol consecration or installation), 'Phool Dol', 'Khichari Utsav', 'Sanjhi Utsav', 'Akshayteej Utsav' 'Dutiya ka Ras Utsav', 'Chandan Yatra Utsav', 'Rakhi Utsav', 'Deepotsav', 'Shri Hita Harivansh Nij Mantrotsav' and 'Annakoot', 'Hita Harivansh Janmotsav', 'Shri Sevak Janmotsav'. These all become major *utsav* of *Radhavallabh* cult.

Keywords: *Radhavallabh*, *Utsav*, *Shri Radha*, *Krishna*, *Vrindavan*, *Celebration*.

Introduction: A cult is a social group that follows unusual religious, philosophical, spiritual beliefs to attain a common interest or goal in life. The followers of cults are different from their ancestors. The *Radhavallabh* Cult is one of the prominent *Vaishnava* cults in *Vrindavan*, founder of the cult was *Goswami Hita Harivansh*. His father, *Shri Vyas Mishra*, was a *brahman* of *Devaband* in *Saharanpur* district of *Uttar Pradesh*. *Hita Harivansh* is considered to be an incarnation of Lord *Krishna's* flute.

Hita Harivansha remained at his birth place *Dev vana* till he was thirty-one years old. Then he arrived in *Vrindavan*. He married the daughters (*Krishnadasi* and *Manohardasi*) of a *Brahman* named *Atma Dev* while traveling from *Dev Vana* to *Vrindavan* at a location called *Chirthawal*. From where he obtains Lord *Radhavallabh's* idol from him. After his marriage, he traveled to *Vrindavan* carrying Lord *Radhavallabh's* idol. *Hita Harivansh's* constant devotion, dedication, and loving, personal service to the Supreme Lord as the Divine Consort's Friend provided an opportunity to experience the elixir of *Bhakti-Rasa*. While *Shri*

Radha is the Predominated Counter-Whole Divinity who is the only one capable of supplying the absolute Lord with the greatest delights, the supreme Lord Krishna is simply the predominator and transcendental recipient of Prema. Hita Harivansh demonstrated the method, which is a form of service to Shri Radha.

Thus, Radhavallabhis follows *Seva* (Service) practice which is divided into two categories- **Mansi Seva** (Physiological/ Heartily Service), **Prakat Seva** (Physical Service). *Prakat seva* is further divided into three parts- *Naam Seva*, *Gaddi Seva*, *Chitra Seva*. In *Naam seva* devotees offers service to a name plate of 'Shri Radhavallabho Jayati' or 'Shri Radhavallabh Shri Harivansh' in place of the idol of Lord Radhavallabh. Raas Mandal, Maan Sarovar, Seva Kunj and Vanshivat which were unveiled by Hita Harivansh in Vrindavan, has *Naam Seva*. *Gaddi Seva* has idol of Krishna and *Gaddi* (Seat) of Shri Radha which is significant as *Yugal Jodi*. In *Chitra Seva* as per name use picture for worship and service. So Radhavallabh temple has *Gaddi Seva*. Under *Prakat Seva* there is a proper process of service such as *Ashtayam Seva* and *Autsavik Seva*.

Ashtayam sewa refers to the daily service offered in the honor of Shri Radha vallabhji. Also regarded as 'Nitya Sewa', this refers to 'Ashtayam-Sewa' meaning eight services offered each day. *Ashtayam* literally refer to the eight *pahars* in a day. According to Hindu calendar 1 day comprises eight *pahars*, 1 *pahar* representing three hours. Henceforth 8 *pahars* equals to 24 hours which make a day. Every time interval is compelled with a service which is carried out dutifully by the *goswamis* (priests of the temple). It includes *Mangla*, *Shringar*, *Raajbhog*, *Utthapan*, *Sandhya Bhoog*, *Shayan & Shaiyya*. In a nutshell, these 'sewa' or service offered in the honor of lord are carried out in a orderly manner, the daily routine of service to Sriji is performed with minute accuracy; the lord is hence regaled with necessities and luxuries of life in due succession, even to changing of clothes, offering of cooked food, fruits etc. and Sriji's parting to rest.

Autsavik Seva means offering service as *Utsav* celebration. Although Hitacharya (Hita Harivansh) recognized 'Utsav' as a time for celebration, he did not include any social festivals, such as Deepawali, Dussehra, Bhaidooj, Rakshabandhan, etc., in this concept. They began celebrating Utsav on a daily basis after he expanded its meaning and described it as *Ras* moments—a sentiment of love and devotion to the adored Shri Radha. Thus, **Nityotsava** (daily celebration) is another name for it. The Hitacharya mentions *Ras Utsav* as 'Basant Utsav,' 'Holi Utsav,' 'Holi Dol Utsav,' 'Jal Vihar Utsav,' 'Jhulan Utsav,' 'Sharad Ras Utsav,' 'Van Vihar Utsav,' 'Sanjhi Utsav,' and 'Nitya Vivah Utsav', which is a daily marriage celebration. Even social holidays that are directly associated with Lord Krishna, such as Annakoot (Govardhan Puja), Radha Janmashtami, and Krishna Janmashtami, were not observed. When someone inquired why, Damodarvar ji responded by calling them 'Ras Virodhi,' which is the opposite of 'Ras' because of the incarnation era.

From the 16th century onward, numerous additional Utsav were progressively incorporated into the Radhavallabh culture, including 'Patotsav' (Anniversary of idol consecration or installation), 'Phool Dol,' 'Pawas Utsav,' 'Khichari Utsav,' 'Akshayteej Utsav,' 'Dutiya ka Ras Utsav,' 'Chandan Yatra Utsav,' 'Rakhi Utsav,' 'Deepotsav,' 'Annakoot,' 'Hita Harivansh Janmotsav,' and 'Shri Sevak Janmotsav.' All of these turn into important Radhavallabh cult utsavs.

The celebration of *utsav* is separated into '**Nityotsav/Ritu Utsav**' and '**Naimittik Utsav**' (Social festivals that were later added). Autumn, Spring, Summer, Rain, Pre-Winter, and Winter (Sharad, Vasant, Grishma, Varsha, Hemant, and Shishir ritu) are the six seasons that are celebrated at Nityotsav, also known as **Ritu Utsav**.

Radhavallabh Joyous Occasions (Utsavas)

Basantotsav-

It is celebrated on *Maagh Shukla Panchami* (5th day of bright lunar fortnight, the eleventh Hindu calendar

month, corresponding to January/ February of the Gregorian calendar) to welcome the *Basant*. On this day of occasion, the dress up of Lord Radhavallabh is of Spring yellow. During Shringaar hours little amount of *Abeer* and *Gulal* is sprinkled on devotees as a display of happiness and the upcoming festival of Holi and to celebrate this Utsav in a vibrant manner. The temple is being decorated in yellow shade along with various flowers and balloons. *Abeer & Gulaal* (Colorful powder) is blown the fragrance of rose changes the charm of the atmosphere. In 'Raj Bhog' Mal puas, kesar laddoo, balushahi, Kachori and other savouries are offered which are all yellow in color. In the evening couplets of Holi are sung. These couplets describe that the festival of Holi is about to knock the doors of Vrindavan.

Holi Utsav-

The festival marks its arrival from *Maagh Shukla Panchami* with the *Gulal* (Color) *tilak* to Lord Radhavallabh. Formally *Holi Utsav* is performed from the day of '*Phulera Dauj*'/ *Falgun Shukla Dauj* (2nd day of bright lunar and 12th month of the Hindu calendar, falls in the spring season, corresponding to February/ March) to *Falguni Purnima* (The full moon day of the Hindu month of *Phalgun*, which usually falls in March). From *Phulera Dauj* Lord Radhavallabh resides on *aasan* (seat) surrounded with colorful flowers, abstract embroidered backgraphs and temple is decorated. *Yugal Darshan* (Radha+Krishna) on the day of Holi is the most important darshan. Shri Radha is dressed partially as Krishna and partially as Radha which depicts the actual image of God residing in Vrindavan. During the *shringar* white color dress is adorn to Lord Radhavallabh along with small bag of color is tied to the waist of Lord and smeared to the cheeks as well. Lots of dry color is played between the *Goswamis* and devotees. After Ekadashi (11th day of Hindu calendar month Phalgun) *Pichkari* or water guns heavy in weight and large in length upto twenty-four inches are used to smear colored water on devotees. Holi is celebrated with colors from the day of Ekadshi and at night hours of the temple the marriage of Sriji is performed on the fifteen days of procession, Samaj recites special couplets dedicated to Holi. *Puas* and mangoes are added to the menu as a special bhog to Sriji. Various variety of delicacies are offered to Sriji (Shri Radha) like *balushahi*, *sev*, *matri*, *imarti*, *ghevar* and *shakkar pare*. The whole atmosphere is covered in clouds of colors and temple walls with colored patches with devotees drenched in devotional colours chanting "Radhe Radhe". On the last day known as *Dulhandi* Lord resides in swing of *Maulshri/ Morchali/ Bakul* leaves dressed in red attire during the day it's one of the most beautiful darshan can only be witnessed once in the year.

Holi Dol Utsav-

The *Chaitra Krishna Pratipada* (1st day of dark lunar fortnight of the Hindu month of Chaitra, which usually falls in March) is celebrated in Badgram and Radhavallabh temple as 'Hori/Holi Dol Utsav'. On this occasion the idol of Lord Radhavallabh is taken out from *Garbh Griha* (sanctum sanctorum) and being seated on a swinging palanquin, decorated with flowers, leaves, colored clothes and papers. This utsav is also celebrated in other states of India such as Odisha, Assam, Gujrat and West Bengal etc. This utsav is being celebrated from the time of Hita Harivansh.

Van Vihar Utsav:

In the month of *Jyeshtha Krishna Paksha Dauj* (second day of the dark lunar fortnight of the month of Jyeshtha usually come in May or June). During this day the Vrindavan *circumambulation* performed. The *spiritual rhymes with soulful music known as Samaj Gayan*. Earlier Vrindavan was a dense forest so the *Bhaav* or feeling behind the festival to make Lord Radhavallabh enjoy the natural environment to please him devotees sings devotional songs or *Pada*. The ritual is still performed in present day Vrindavan.

Jal Vihar Utsav:

Jal Vihar Utsav is celebrated in hot summer days to give coolness to the Lord. Majorly it is celebrated on *Jyeshtha Shukla Ekadashi* (11th day after the new moon of *Jyeshtha* month, corresponding to May/ June of the Gregorian calendar). On this occasion the idol of Lord Radhavallabh is taken out and being seated in a boat for the *Jal Vihar*. Previously it was celebrated in the natural way but presently the boat is made in identical mean with the decoration of various flowers. A small pond like structure is being made in the temple, where the ritual of Jal Vihar Utsav takes place.

Jhula Hindola/ Hindora Utsav/ Hariyali Teej:

During the month of *Shravan*, *Hindora* or *Jhoola* (swing festival) starts from *Sawan Shukla Tritiya* (3rd

day of the bright fortnight of Sawan, corresponding to July/ August) which continues till Sawan *Poornima* (Full moon of Hindu month Sawan/ Rakshabandhan). The first day commencing the festivities is known as *Hariyali Teej*, and could be seen daily after *Sandhya Utthapan* to the end of *Sandhya Aarti*, every day with new decoration of natural leaves and curtains as well as garbs of the Deity. The *Sindharo Utsav* (a day before Hariyali Teej), special day on which Lord adorns green garb, 'sindharo' means a collection of items that are adorned by married women like *mahendi* or henna, *sindoor*, *roli*, *attar*, *kajal*, comb, mirror, new clothes, *saree* etc. to be gifted to Shri Radha by the temple and also by the devotees. *Sindharo* and *Mehandi* couplets being sung by Samaj. The last day of *Jhulla utsav*, *Rakhi* festival is celebrated. On the day of *Sindharo* festival sweets and delicacies such as *Feni*, *Ghevar*, *Gujhia*, *Boondi*, *Balooshahi*, *Imarti*, *Laddoos*, *Sakal para*, *mathari* and seasonal fruits are offered to the deity on this occasion. Every day of *Jhulla utsav* *Pua* is offered to Lord as an essential *bhog* (food).

Sharad Raas Utsav:

Ashwin Shukla Paksh Purnima (The full moon day of the Hindu month of Ashwin, which usually falls in September or October), which is also known as *Sharad Purnima*. The Sharad Raas is elaborated in 'Raas Pachadhyayi' in *Dasham Skandh* of Shrimad Bhagavata (29 to 33). On this occasion Lord Radhavallabh wears white dress and the decoration of the temple is also as per the matching with white. Devotional dance is performed by the native performers and devotees. *Samaj Gayan* is performed on every occasion. The divine ambience of the temple and also of Vrindavan is worth gazing. It is believed that Lord Krishna have *Raas* on this day with his beloved Radha and gopis under full moon light. *Raas* is the core concept, the dance itself. It is a joyful celebration of love and devotion.

Byahula/ Nitya Vivah Utsav:

This *Utsav* is a unique feature of the Radhavallabh cult. The marriage ceremony of Lord Radhavallabh (Lord Krishna and Shri Radha) is performed under this *Utsav*. It can be celebrated by any devotee by his/ her willingness (usually after completing the desired wish) after the approval of *Gosain* or on the available date which is given by the temple authority. Proper rituals of marriage takes place as the Lord Radhavallabh appears as groom along with proper dress up such as *Sehra*, Garland, *Gathjoda* etc.. Shri Radha appears as bride. Food and gifts are also the part of this celebration. *Samaj Gayan* is also performed at this event also. It is celebrated frequently as couple of times in a month. Also it is celebrated on almost every *Utsav*. Marriage ceremony on the day of *Annakoot* is fixed to be performed.

Sanjhi Utsav:

Sanjhi Utsav is celebrated for 15 days from *Bhadra pada Purnima* (The full moon day of the Hindu month of *Bhadra pada*, which usually falls in Aug./ Sept.) to *Ashwin Amavasya* (The dark night of the month of Ashwin, corresponding to Sep./ Oct.). This cult can be said *Sanji's* origin centre. The couplets are found related to *Sanjhi* from the time of Hita Harivansh itself. *Sanjhi* is a traditional Indian art form of stenciled paper cutting and making a kind of *rangoli* by this. In Radhavallabh cult *Sanjhi* represents Radha-Krishna leela only. From *Purnima* to *Dashmi* flower *sanjhi* to be made, from *ekadashi* to *amavasya* the *sanjhi* is made with different colors. Couplets of *sanjhi* to be sung in the temple during this period.

Besides these earlier festivals, many more were added later, such as:

Khichdi Utsav:

It is celebrated from *Paush Shukla Dauj* (2nd day the new moon of *Paush* month, corresponding to Dec./ Jan. of the Gregorian calendar) to one month. It is an ancient celebration in the Shri Radhavallabh cult tradition. This festival was initiated when Lord Radhavallabh came back to Vrindavan from Kamvan after long time and established him in the new Shri Hit Radhavallabh Lal Mandir. During the celebration specially prepared *Khichari*, is offered to the deity before *Mangla aarti*. The last five days of *Krishna paksh* and *Shukla paksh* i.e. *Ekadashi*, *Dwadashi*, *Thrayodashi*, *Chaturdashi*, *Amavasya* and *Poornima* are the most important days as Lord Radhavallabh dress like Bankey Bihari, Mansorvar Radha Rani, Lord Shiva, Lord Balarama and Yugal Swaroop (Sri Krishna and Sri Radharani together as one) respectively. The beautiful Lila's of Kalia daman, Cheer haran, Gau charan, Govardhan Dharan and other Baal Lila's are beautifully depicted with props. These beautiful *darshan* are delight to eyes and feast to soul.

Gulab Dol Utsav:

This utsav is celebrated on *Chaitra Shukla Ekadashi* (11th day after the new moon in the Hindu calendar, corresponding to March/ April of the Gregorian calendar). On this occasion Lord Radhavallabh's throne is decorated with the roses in shades of red. *Gulab* means the first blossom of roses and *dol* means swing crafted in dome shape. In the evening hours this swing is crafted with roses and ropes. Lord Radhavallabh also adorns rose color dress, *shringaar* of roses and jasmine. The whole temple is decorated with rose garlands which fragrance cheers up the environment and mood. This is the first *utsav* of year (Hindu calendar new year).

Akshaya Tritiya:

Akshaya Tritiya is celebrated on *Vaishakh Shukla Teej* (3rd Lunar Day of the month *Vaishakha*, corresponding to April/ May of the Gregorian calendar). Special dress dipped in sandal wood paste (Chandan) is offered to *Priyapreetam* (Lord Radhavallabh) and special Chandan is applied on face of lord in shape of *patravali*. As Chandan provides coolness in hot summers. Special Chandan Utsav phrases/ couplets are being sung by *Samaj* in front of Lord.

Shri Hita Janmotsava (Birthday of Hita Harivansh):

Hita Harivansh's birthday is being celebrated as an *Utsav*. It is celebrated on *Vaishakh Shukla Ekadashi* (11th bright lunar day of the month *Vaishakha*, corresponding to April/ May of the Gregorian calendar). The festival is organized in the honor of the birth of Shri Hita Harivansh Mahaprabhu, founder of the sect. A holy procession carrying Lord Krishna and Sri Radha in a beautifully decked chariot took to the streets with bands and musicians, devotees celebrate it by dancing and singing devotional songs starting from the temple and culminate at Ras-Mandal. Passing through the main streets and lanes of Vrindavan it is a blissful site. The procession which starts in the evening becomes a daily routine for four days in accordance of age-old tradition. On the tenth day of the bright fortnight, the deity at Radhavallabh Temple is adorned in royal red garbs, whereas devotees keep awake whole night at Ras Mandal, singing congratulatory devotional songs (Badhai-Gaan) and performs *Dhandhi-Dhandhan* dancing. It was started by the followers of Hita Harivansh after him.

Pavasotsva:

Pavasotsva is celebrated on *Sawan/ Shravan Shukla Ekadashi* (11th bright lunar day of the month of Sawan, corresponding to July/ Aug.). This is an adopted festival. On this occasion Lord Radhavallabh wears *Pavitra* two times in a day. *Pavitra* is basically a silk string or rope of bright colors which looks beautiful while swaying on the swing, where the idol of Lord Radhavallabh is being seated in the month of *Sawan*. On this day the couplets of *pavitra* is being sung by the members of *Samaj Gayan*.

Rakhi Utsav

Rakhi Utsav is celebrated on *Sawan/ Shrawan Shukla Purnima* (The full moon day of the Hindu month of *Sawan*, which usually falls in July/ August). This comes under *Naimittik Utsav*. On this occasion Lord wears Rakhi on her hand. The couplets of *Rakshabandhan* are being sung. The swing is to be stopped after this evening which starts from *Sawan Krishna Teej/ Hariyali Teej*. From this day greetings couplets of Krishna's Birth begins.

Guru Purnima:

Guru Purnima is the day to celebrates the blessings of Guru (Spiritual guide). The Guru is always having first place in Indian culture even before the God. It is celebrated on *Aashadh Shukla Purnima* (Full moon day of the month *Aashadh*, corresponding to June/ July). On this day disciple worships their Guru. Hita Harivansh's Guru was Shri Radha so he used to worship Lord as his Guru on this day, which is still in practice. The lineage of Hita Harivansh (Gosain) is being worshiped on this day as Guru by their disciples. Disciples show their devotion to the Guru and the Lord on this day.

Janmashtami:

Janmashtami is a major festival of *Vaishnavas*. It is celebrated on *Bhadra Krishna Paksha Ashtami* (8th day of Dark Lunar Fortnight of the month *Bhadra*, corresponding to August/ Septemer). It is celebrated as the birth date of Lord Krishna, followed by *Nand Utsav* on the next day. Sometimes it is considered as '*Naimittik Utsav*' and was in practice in later times. Presently it is being celebrated. The

couplets of wishes (Laal ji Badhai) are being sung by the *Samaj*. Lord Radhavallabh is seated in a wall-decorated chariot along with Holy Female companions. Saints of the sect carrying Holy Insignias indicating their Akharas (sub-sects), several band-parties playing devotional tunes, hundreds of devotees from all over the world dancing and singing devotional songs attuned with the beat of traditional symbol and drums, several Jhankis (pictures queue presentation of various themes connected with the occasion), lights comprise the procession, known as *Chav* in the traditional parlance, which moves slowly meandering the main streets and lanes of Vrindavan, reaching Ras Mandal after mid-night. Devotees perform "Aarti" at different places, after every few steps, of the Holy Couple (Deity) is graciously garbed in red royal robes in the temple. "*Dhandhi-Dhandhin*", (Traditional male and female Courtesan-Dancer of the Holy Couple) dance whole night singing congratulatory devotional songs After performance of Shyan Aarti, the Deity is adorned with new ornaments, on the all four sides of *Shayan Mandap* (sleeping palace). The very next day is celebrated with great bang known as Nandotsav. This means the day all sakhis go to Nand baba's house to congratulate and celebrate the birth of lord Shri Krishna. In the morning hours special panchamrit bath is performed. The whole temple is decorated with yellow color. The inner temple is also covered with yellow curtains. Banana leaves and kalash are placed as the symbols of good rituals known as 'Mangal Chin'. Lord Shri Radhavallabh is adorned with yellow attire, bejeweled with special ornaments. *Nandotsav* is followed by *Chhathi utsav* (usually sixth day after birth). The preparations of the birth of Shri Radha is being started from this day.

Radha Ashtami:

Bhadra Shukla Ashtami (8th day after the new moon of *Bhadra* month, corresponding to Aug./ Sept. of the Gregorian calendar). The preparation of the birth celebration of Shri Radha begins with the 6th day after *Krishna Janmashtami* which is also known as *chhati*. A specific dance to be performed in the temple to celebrate the festival is known as *Dhandhi-Dhandhin*. Couplets of genealogy of Shri Radha to be sung. *Chav* ride is performed on the day. It is celebrated as the birthday celebration of guru of Hita Harivansha.

Patotsav: On Kartik Shukla Paksha Teras/ Triyodashi (13th day of bright fortnight of kartik, corresponding to Oct./ Nov. of the Gregorian calendar), the deity (Radhavallabh ji) came to Vrindavan, and seated with all rituals at a high cliff known as (Oonchi Thaur) at Madan Ter on the banks of Holy Yamuna by Sri Hit Harivansh Mahaprabhu. The day is also known as "Vridavan Prakataya Festival" (A Discovery of Vrindavan celebrations). Till then, Holy town of Vrindavan remained disappeared amongst dense forests and cliffs, on this day Annakoot is celebrated at Sri Sewa kunj. The Vikram Samvat was 1564 on which the idol of Lord Radhavallabh was established in Vrindavan.

Dutiya Raas Utsav:

Lord wears Red *Paag* (turban) on this occasion. Which is celebrated on Kartik *Krishna Dauj* (2nd day of dark lunar fortnight of the month *kartik*, corresponding to Oct./ Nov. of the Gregorian calendar). It is also a *Raas* utsav. The couplets of the beauty in red are being sung under *Samaj Gayan* practice.

Deepotsav:

It is Deepawali celebration, which is also known as *Deepmalika Utsav*, celebrated on *Kartik Krishna Amavasya* (The dark night of the month of Kartik, corresponding to oct./ Nov.). During this festival Lord gives *darshan* in silver *Hatri* (small house like structure) and plays *Chaupar* (four board game) both the time. Lord Radhavallabh wears white zari dress on this occasion. *Deepdaan* is performed on this day as this is the festival of light.

Annakoot/ Govardhan festival/ Chappan bhog festival:

This is an adopted festival under *Naimittik Utsav*. This festival is celebrated on the next day of Deepawali on Govardhan on *Kartik Shukla Paksha*. The famous Govardhan leela in which Sri Krishna had picked the mount Govardhan for seven consecutive days on his small finger. *Annakoot* and Marriage Ceremony (Vyahula) of the deity is celebrated with pomp and show and is witnessed by thousands of devotees from all over country and abroad. The preparations for Annakoot are being made much in advance ten days

earlier right from the *Kartik Krishna Panchami* (5th day of dark fortnight of Kartik) on larger scale.

In conclusion, Radhavallabh cult have a strong cultural legacy and different kind of devotional practices which makes it stand out of other cults of Vrindavan. They are preserving their culture and tradition. Their devotion to Shri Radha before Krishna is a different aspect of this cult. They are also called *Sakhi Sampraday* as they worship Shri Radha with *sakhi bhav* (as a friend of Shri Radha). They celebrate each and every day. Many other days are also celebrated besides these main *Utsavas* such as: *Laal ji ki chhati*, *Akshay Navmi*, *Fulera Dauj*, *Yamuna Mahotsav*, *Chaav Savari*, *Rath Yatra*, *Radha Chhati*, *Vijaya Dashmi*, *Ahoi Ashtami*, *Dhan Triyodashi*, *Bhai Dauj*, *Gopashtami*, *Devotthan Ekadashi*, *Vyanjan Dwadashi*, *Basant Panchami*, *Shiv Chaudas*, *Fulera Dauj* and the birthday celebration of ancestors are also celebrated in the temple and related places. On every occasion different kind of dishes are prepared for Lord Radhavallabh, different dress up and appearance, couplets related to particular event is in common practice of this cult. The Radhavallabhis have made considerable contributions across various fields, including literature, music, and the arts, showcasing their cultural impact. The temple is currently managed by the Raas Vansh and Vilas Vansh, who have maintained a commendable administration. However, the historical connections with Naad Kula seem to be weakening with time. It is important to emphasize that this cult has amassed a significantly larger following compared to other contemporary cults, reflecting its deep cultural heritage and ongoing relevance in the lives of its adherents.

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