

Table 5.3. A Comparison of Hindu and Village Goddess Jatras.

Hindu Jatras	Village Goddess Jatras
Cosmic Hindu deities whose power and authority extend through the universe.	Village goddesses who live on earth and have power only in the territory of a village.
Gods are married, and males are dominant.	Goddesses are unmarried, and females are dominant.
Gods are good, and demons are evil. The two are sharply differentiated and are in constant battle in which good ultimately triumphs.	Goddesses are amoral, both good and evil. They are capricious, helping those who placate them, bringing disaster on those who neglect them.
Brahmin and other high caste priests.	Barber, Washerman, Leatherworker, and other low or untouchable priests.
Vegetarian sacrifices of milk, grains, butterfat, flowers, coconuts, incense, and fire.	Blood sacrifices of chickens, goats, and water buffalo.
Caste order is observed and reinforced. Each caste carries out its caste duties in the ritual.	Caste order breaks down as villagers of various castes unite to restore order.
Outsiders are welcome to attend.	Outsiders are forbidden to attend.
Held in a temple, often in the middle of the village or town.	Held at the village navel stone or at a field shrine where the goddess resides.
Focus: triumph of good over evil fertility and the renewal of life	Focus: restoration of order over chaos power (mana), success, and well-being

Table 5.4. Folk Religion in South Indian Villages.

	Regional Hinduism	Village Deities
Sites:	- temples, shrines, household altars, pilgrimage centers	- village naval stones, rocks, trees, rivers, mountains, small shrines in fields and forests, ritual boundaries
Personnel:	- priests (<i>pujari</i>), ritual specialists (<i>purohit</i>), gurus, sadhus, sannyasins, bards	- low caste and untouchable priests, magicians (<i>mantrakars</i>), sorcerers, diviners, soothsayers, those with an evil eye
Texts:	- Puranas, Vedas, other sacred texts, Hindu rites, bardic lore, street dramas	- oral lore, local rites, books on magic, medical lore associated with the goddesses