



Holi, the festival of colour is celebrated on **Phalgun Purnima** comes in February end or early March. This colourful festival bridges the social gap and renews sweet relationships. On this day, people hug and wish each



other '**Happy Holi**'. It is a popular Hindu spring festival observed in India, Guyana, Trinidad, the UK and Nepal. The festival starts with lighting up of bonfire on the **Holi** eve. Numerous legends & stories associated with **Holi** celebration makes the festival more cheerful and vibrant. This year the festival is going to be celebrated on **March 1st**.

THE LEGEND

Holi is an ancient festival of India and was originally known as '**Holika**'. Historians also believe that **Holi** was celebrated by all Aryans but more so in the Eastern part of India. In some parts of India, especially in Bengal and Orissa, **Holi Purnima** is also celebrated as the birthday of **Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** (A.D. 1486-1533). However, the literal meaning of the word '**Holi**' is 'burning'. The most prominent legend associated with demon king **Hiranyakashyap** whose sister **Holika** died this day, as she entered fire. She was full of evil and this day she paid a price for her sinister desires. Thus, the festival celebrates the victory of good over evil and also the triumph of devotion.



Legend of Lord **Krishna** is also associated with play with colors as the Lord started the tradition of play with colours by applying colour on his beloved **Radha** and other **gopis**. Gradually, the play gained popularity with the people and became a tradition.

SIGNIFICANCE

Playing **Holi** has a very significant role in our day to day lives. Ranging from socio-cultural, religious to biological there is every



reason why we must heartily enjoy the festival and cherish the reasons for its celebrations. It is said that playing **Holi** helps us to get rid of all sorts of contaminated diseases all over the year. Besides, **Holi** is celebrated at a time of the year when the fields are in full bloom and people are expecting a good harvest.

This gives a people a good reason to rejoice, make merry and submerge themselves in the spirit of **Holi**. In the evening people visit friends and relatives and exchange gifts, sweets and greetings. This helps in revitalising relationships and strengthening emotional bonds between people.

CELEBRATION

Days before the festival people start gathering wood for the lighting of the bonfire called **Holika** at the major crossroads of the city. Next day, is the main day of **Holi** celebrations. The tradition of playing colours is particularly rampant in north India. Celebration of **Holi** in **Mathura**, **Vrindavan** is also very famous. In **Maharashtra** and **Gujarat** too **Holi** is celebrated with lot of enthusiasm and fun. People take extreme delight in spraying colour water on each other with **pichkaris** or pouring



buckets and buckets of it. Singing Bollywood **Holi** numbers and dancing on the beat of **dholak** is also a part of the tradition. Children particularly enjoy the festival as they throw water filled balloons at passersby.



Another important attraction during the playing of **Holi** is mouth watering **Holi** specialties like **gujiya**, **malpuas**, **mathri**, **puran poli**, **dahi badas** etc. along with glasses full of **thandai**. In some states there is also a tradition of breaking the pot full of buttermilk which is hung high on the streets.

After a wild and eventful day, evenings are celebrated in a dignified manner by visiting friends and relatives. People exchange sweets and hug each other conveying the warm wishes for **Holi**. These days there people also participate and organise **Holi** Meets and enjoy the festival till late in the night.



CELEBRATION IN ORISSA

People call **Holi** in Orissa **Dola Purnima**. Instead of placing the idols of **Krishna** and **Radha** on the swing they place the idol of Lord **Jagannath**. This is so because of the famous temple of



Jagannath at **Puri**. Besides, **Jagannath** is only a synonym of **Krishna**. Though the festival is meant for “milkmen” or **gwala** caste people, all section of people enjoy it. Games such as **Dandi Khela** are also played to mark the occasion. The following morning of **Dola Purnima abeer** is applied of the idol of the lord. Thereafter, people relish the special delicacies of the occasion such as **pethas**, **laddoos** made of puffed

rice and sesame seed and play with colours. Towards evening, idols are given a dip in a pond and taken back to temple.

SAFETY TIPS

Holi is meant to be a rough festival with tradition of applying colors. But one should always be on alert while playing **Holi** because; there are maximum chances of accidents during the play. Some precautions should be taken while playing **Holi**.

- The best option would be to play with natural home made colours. Chemical colours should be avoided.
- Make sure that your face is well creamed before and after the play.
- Make use of hat or caps to protect your hair from being coloured with hard-to-rinse dyes.
- Make sure that powder or any other product does not get inside your eyes. Use a sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Put on your worst clothes so that you won't have to take on the hassles of an immediate washing.
- When traveling keep the car windows thoroughly shut.
- Take a bath much later after the entire Holi celebration is over.
- If you are prone to skin allergies, avoid playing with gulal altogether.
- Avoid running on jumping on wet floors, so that you don't slip and injure yourself.
- Avoid over indulgence in bhang, drinks or food.
- Do not drive if you are high on alcohol or bhang.

