



Festival and its Symbolic Interpretation: An Anthropological Study of the Karma Festival of the Oraons in Ranchi District of Jharkhand

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ABSTRACT

India is a country with a rich tribal culture across various states. The Oraon tribe, which is one of the fifth-largest tribes in India, resides in the Chota Nagpur region and has a unique cultural identity. The tribe's festivals are an essential part of their socio-cultural life, and the Karma festival is one such festival. It is a harvest festival celebrated annually on the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight of *Bhadrapada*, which falls between August and September. The festival is dedicated to *Karam devta*, the main god of the Karma festival.

The Karma festival is celebrated with various activities and rituals, including worship, dance, folklore, folktales, sacrifices, and ancestral worship. Special food and local beverages are also traditionally prepared during the festival. The festival plays a vital role in preserving the Oraon culture and identity. In this paper, the researcher explores how the Oraon people create opportunities to strengthen community relations in their daily routines. The study is based on primary data obtained through interviews observations and FGDs, secondary data from books, libraries, and government databases.

The research involves interpreting people's actions through symbols and decoding their meaning according to native perspectives. The study sheds light on the rich cultural practices of the Oraon tribe and their festivals, which are an integral part of Indian society.

This anthropological study examines the Karma Festival of the Oraons in Ranchi District, Jharkhand, and its symbolic interpretation. The study delves into the rich traditions and beliefs of the Oraon people, providing valuable insights into their cultural heritage. This festival is more than just a celebration; it is a significant event that showcases the Oraons' deep-rooted traditions and customs.

Keywords: Oraon, tribe, festival, culture, Symbolic interpretation, Sacrifices

I. INTRODUCTION

India has a rich cultural heritage throughout history, Festival is one of them. Festival celebrations serve to unite communities in celebration, spread peace and joy, and alleviate the monotony of daily life. Festivals are celebrated globally, with each country boasting its unique traditions.

Festivals are typically marked by symbolic events that adhere to the religious or communal traditions of the participants. These events are characterized by a series of actions that strengthen community members' bonds. Each culture has a set of ceremonies that symbolize different aspects of human experience and existence. Through these ceremonies, communities establish their place within the universe and their relationship with the natural world. Festivals worldwide mark important transitions in human or collective life, such as coming of age, marriage and harvest time during celebrations, people usually follow certain rituals to help them transition from their daily responsibilities. These rituals can be a way of taking a break from their usual routine and enjoying the moment.

Turner emphasizes the importance of characters and acting during festivals. Beautiful costumes, rituals, music, and dance often serve as effective symbols and reveal deeper meanings and values in the culture.

India is famous for celebrating a lot of festivals, making it one of the countries with the most festivals. Studying Indian festivals is essential because it showcases the culture of tribal communities. Festivals provide an opportunity to display and preserve traditional art forms that are vital to tribal culture. These festivals play a crucial role in preserving the culture of tribal communities



by ensuring that future generations continue to practice their traditions.

The Karma festival is a significant cultural tradition celebrated by various tribes across India, each with its unique way of observing the occasion. The Oraon Tribe of Ranchi, Jharkhand, highly regards the Karma festival. The festival celebrates the harvest season and serves as a connection to their deity. The tribe participates in various rituals, sacrifices, and dances to worship their God, also creating a sacred and unifying atmosphere. The Oraon Tribe offers prayers for a fruitful harvest in the upcoming year and seeks divine blessings. The oldest work related to the Karma festival is mentioned in S.C. Roy's book 'Oraon Religion and Customs'.

Roy, S.C. (1915) in his book **The Oraons of Chhota Nagpur** describes the history, economic life and social organization of the Oraon\kurukh tribe living in Chotanagpur and elaborated on the culture of the Oraon tribe and the importance of karma festivals among them.

Roy, S.C. (1928) in his book **Oraon Religion and Customs** says that the Karma Festival is a joyous occasion that celebrates the bountiful harvest and is traditionally observed by women, particularly maidens. However, male villagers also participate in certain aspects of the festivities. His book provides a comprehensive guide to the rituals and traditions associated with the festival, as well as the fascinating origin story behind it. Furthermore, various methods of observing the Karma Festival are also featured.

Vidyarthi, L.P. (1981) in his paper **A socio-cultural profile of the Oraon of Chotanagpur** analyzes the cultural significance of the Karma festival among the Oraon tribe. It explores the festival's origins, customs, and rituals, as well as the tribe's cultural practices, beliefs, and values that are intertwined with the festival. Additionally, the paper delves into the economic structure of the tribe and the impact of government policies on their economic well-being. The report offers valuable insights into the cultural and economic aspects of the Oraon tribe.

Ghosh, Abhik (2006) in his book **The World of the Oraon: Their Symbol** has done a remarkable job of interpreting the symbolic significance of the Oraon community's socio-cultural aspect.

Ekka R Raj. (2008) in this paper **The Karma Festival of the Oraon Tribals of India: A Socio-**

Religious Analysis elucidates the sociocultural and religious significance of the Karma festival as celebrated by the Oraon tribe. His research aims to establish the linkages between the festival and the Oraon way of life, with a particular emphasis on its religious and social implications. By delving into the intricate details of the festival, his study sheds light on the diverse practices and customs inherent in the Oraon culture.

Pandey, Keya. (2014) In her work **Keeping Traditions Alive: An Introduction on the Tribal Dance of Uttar Pradesh** has left no room for ambiguity. This study is a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the cultural practices of various tribes in Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh, as they celebrate the Karma festival.

Behera, Lipika (2017) in his study **Major Festival of Mayurbhanj** elaborates on all major festivals celebrated in Mayurbhanj of Odisha by different tribes and has explained the procedure and mythology of all festivals and has also analyzed the importance of festivals in people's lives.

Biswas, Chinmay (2017) in his paper **The Festivals of Urban Oraons: An Anthropological Study** focuses on the two types of festivals - traditional and modern celebrated by the urban Oraons.. Traditional festivals include Kharian, Dangri, Veloafari, Sahrul, Sohrai, Murgipaithya, Maghe basis and Karam. Modern festivals include Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Jagadhatri Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Sitala and Saraswati. The festivals can be classified into three categories - Family, Clan, and Community festivals. The study focuses on changes and modifications in Urban Oraon's festivals.

ABOUT THE AREA:

Jharkhand is a captivating state located in the eastern part of India. It is also known as the Land of Forests, and its provisional capital is Ranchi. The state was formed by separating the southern part of Bihar on 15 November 2000, after the Indian parliament passed the Bihar Reorganization Bill on 2 August 2000. Jharkhand shares its borders with southern Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south, and West Bengal to the east. It covers an area of 79,714 km², and much of the state lies on the Chota Nagpur Plateau, through which several rivers flow, including Damodar, North Koel, South Koel, Sankh, Brahmans, and Subarnarekha. Jharkhand is the 15th largest state in



India by area and the 14th largest by population, with an Oraon population of 1,716,618. The official language of the state is Hindi, and there are currently 24 administrative districts in Jharkhand. Some major cities in the state include Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, and Deogarh. Jharkhand is home to breathtaking waterfalls, hills, and several significant religious sites such as Baidya Nath Dham, Parasnath, and Rajrappa. The state also boasts diverse biodiversity, rich cultural heritage, and tribal arts.

Jharkhand has a humid subtropical to tropical wet and dry climate, with three distinct seasons. The period from November to February is the most enjoyable time of the year due to the chilly weather. In December, high temperatures generally range from 10°C to 20°C. The hot weather season extends from spring to mid-June, with May being the warmest month, and the temperature typically ranges from around 37°C to 20°C. The southwest monsoon season, from mid-June to October, brings most of the state's annual rainfall between 40 to 60 inches. The coastal areas generally receive heavier rainfall than the plains. July and August are the wettest months. Jharkhand has abundant surface and groundwater resources, fertile land, and a moderate climate that has greatly contributed to the growth of its agriculture sector. The most comfortable time to visit Jharkhand is from November to February due to the moderate climate.

ABOUT THE ETHNIC GROUP

The Oraon tribe is considered to be the native tribe of India according to the Indian constitution. In their book, "The Tribal Culture of India", L.P. Vidyarthi and Binay Kumar Rai have classified the languages spoken by Indian tribes. They found that the Oraons of central India speak languages that belong to the Dravidian language family. History reveals that they are one of the oldest tribes in India, with the oldest form of language called *Kurukh*. This language is classified as an offshoot of the Dravidian language and they generally speak Hindi, *Kurukh*, *Sadri*, *Odia*, and *Konkani*.

Dr B.S. Guha has classified the Indian population into six major racial types based on

anthropometric measurements. According to Guha, the Oraon tribe belongs to the Proto-Australoid group. This group is characterized by a dolichocephalic head, a broad and flat nose (platyrrhine nose), short height, dark brown to nearly black skin colour, wavy or curly hair, and prominent supraorbital ridges.

Traditionally, the Oraons relied on the forest and farms for their ritual and economic livelihood. However, in recent times, some of them have become mainly settled in agriculture. The village-level political organization in Oraon village is called *Parha*. The society of the Oraon people includes *Dhumkudiya*, *Parha*, *Akhara*, *Saran*, *Masna*, *Pahan-Pujar*, *Mahato*, and *Kotwar*, among others, each playing a particular role in religious ceremonies, festivals, and dispute resolution. This kind of traditional system is also described by S.C. Roy in his book "Oraon Religion and Customs". These age-old traditions are still practised by today's Oraon tribe which is seen by researchers during field work.

Dhumkuriya is the traditional informal educational institution and dormitory for Oraon youth. *Dhumkuria* structure and function were described in Oraons of Chota Nagpur by S.C. Roy. Other than this, a detailed description of *Dhumkudiya* was given in the "Oraon Sarna dharma aur Sanskriti" an excellent work of Bhikhu Tirki.

The Oraon people worship natural objects and believe that there is a creator of the universe named *Dharmesh*. They celebrate the "*Dandakatta*" ritual dedicated to *Dharmesh* God. The Oraon people follow the *Sarna* religion, and the Supreme god/deity of the Oraon people is the *Sarna Mata* or *Challa Pachho*. The Oraon people have a rich range of festivals, dances, folk songs, and traditional instruments. They are energetic and sweet-natured, and always ready for dance and celebration. **Table no. 1** represents the annual festival calendar celebrated by the Oraon tribe. These kinds of religious deities, rituals and festivals are given in the book of S.C. Roy titled "Oraon Religion and Customs" and Bhikhu Tirki's work titled "Oraon Sarna dharma aur sanskriti".

Name of the Festival	Celebration Months (acc. to the Hindu calendar)	The month of celebration (acc. to the Gregorian calendar.)
<i>Hariyali pooja</i>	Ashada	June-July
<i>Savan pooja</i>	Shravan	July-August
<i>Teej</i>	Bhadrapada	August-September



<i>kadlota</i>	Bhadrapada	August-September
<i>Karma tyohar</i>	Bhadrapada	August-September
<i>Sohrai / Deepawali</i>	Kartik	Oct-Nov
<i>Devthan</i>	Kartik	Oct-Nov
<i>Phaggu</i>	Phalgun	February-March
<i>Sarhul/ Khaddityohar</i>	Chaitra	March-April

Table no. 1: Annual festival calendar celebrated by Oraon tribe.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the study, several social science methods and techniques have been applied. These include both primary as well as secondary sources of data collection. The primary source of data collection includes in-depth interviews, observation, schedules, FGDs, group discussions, case studies, and other participatory techniques. For the preparation of interview questions covering various aspects of festivals; their history, significance, ritual performance, special food and preparation, folk music, dance, and musical instruments include. The secondary sources of data collection include library resources, journals, and government reports. For this study, random sampling and purposive sampling were applied.

III. DISCUSSION

The *Karma* festival is an annual harvesting festival that is celebrated on the Ekadashi tithi (eleventh day) of the lunar fortnight in August or September according to the Gregorian calendar. One of the famous books of S.C. Roy "Religion and Customs of Oraons of Chota Nagur" also illustrates that the celebration of the festival is on the same day.

This festival is dedicated to the worship of *Karam devta*, also known as *karma raja* or *Karam daal*, who is regarded as the god of power and youthfulness. *Karma* festival is celebrated by the Oraon, Munda, and Santhal tribal groups of the

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, and the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh.

The *Karma* festival begins three days after the sighting of the moon in the month of *Bhadrapada*, specifically on *Krishna paksha Tritiya*. On this day, unmarried women plant a type of grass called Jawa. Dr. Narayan Bhagat in his excellent work on Oraon "Chota Nagpur Ke Oraon Riti-Riwaj" has mentioned the Jawa Phool Planted by maiden women. Early in the morning, they collect sand from the nearest river and add it to a basket containing nine types of seeds, such as maize, wheat, barley, and millet. They then pour water mixed with turmeric onto the roped Jawa seeds, which helps the Jawa turn yellow instead of green, giving it the appearance of a yellow flower. The basket is then kept in a place with no sunlight for nine days, during which unmarried women must follow certain taboos, such as avoiding non-vegetarian food, pouring turmeric water only after taking a bath and refraining from touching it during menstruation. This act symbolizes the ability of unmarried women to give birth to new life. After nine days, the seeds grow into a bunch of yellow flowers, which hold symbolic importance in the festival and are offered to Karm devta as a sacred flower. Growing *Jawa phool* is considered a sign of happiness and prosperity in the home. If the *Jawa phool* (the stem of nine seeds sown) does not grow properly, it is believed to be inauspicious for the household. The preparations for the Karam festival begin with the planting of Jawa (Fig 1)



Fig 1 Sacred Jawa Phool

The *Jawa Phool* is a symbol of love and devotion deeply ingrained in the cultural and religious traditions of the region. It refers to the stem of nine seeds, which are offered to the gods and distributed among the community. The *Jawa Phool* serves as a tangible representation of the community's gratitude for the blessings they have received, reminding them of the importance of generosity. Its significance is not limited to its

religious and cultural connotations, but also to the values it embodies.

The second most important part of the festival is the making of rice beer, locally known as *Hadiya*. This is an essential element of the festival and it wouldn't be complete without it. To make the rice beer, special types of rice (known as *usna* rice) and herbs (such as *ranu*) are required, as shown in **Figure 2**.



Figure 2 A Usna Rice



Figure 2 B Ranu, a local herb used for Hadiya

Usna rice is a variety of rice that is cultivated and prepared in a certain manner, with the specific purpose of being used in the production of rice beer. This type of rice is particularly favoured for its unique characteristics, which are essential in achieving the desired flavour and texture of rice

beer. The rice undergoes a meticulous process of preparation, involving soaking, steaming, and cooling, before it is ready to be used in the brewing process. Locally referred to as *Usna* rice, it is a crucial ingredient in the production of rice beer.



After fermenting rice and herbs, the liquid separated from the rice and beer is ready to be served. This rice beer, called *Hadiya*, plays a significant role in the festival, making it important to prepare it properly. It is used in ancestor worship and during the worship of karma devta and is

typically consumed by festival-goers on the first or second day of the karma festival. For the Oraon people, drinking rice beer (*hariya*) is an essential part of the celebration. **Fig. no. 3** shows how fermented rice and separated rice beer looks like.



Fig 3; Fermented rice

The festival day is filled with joy and excitement. In the morning, everyone cleans and decorates their houses and prepares a special traditional breakfast called *chhilka roti*, made of a liquid mixture of rice and lentils, along with vegetables. Unmarried girls fast on this day, while the village men, *Pahan* (priest), *Pujar*, and *Panbhora* (helpers of *Pahan*) go to the forest with the *Mandar* (musical instrument) and *Nagada* (drum), singing and dancing. Once in the forest, they select a Karam tree that has not yet been worshipped and cut down three branches from it after performing a worship ceremony. They then return to the *Akhra* (a place where people gather for social purposes) with the *Mandar*, the Karam branches, and more singing and dancing.

At the *Akhra*, individuals spread cow dung, carry out rituals, and practice worship by placing the Karam branch at the centre of the *Akhra*. They then head back home to prepare for the evening's worship and festivities. Table No. 2 lists the components necessary for the religious

revelation process, which are then carefully placed in a bamboo basket covered with *taro* leaves. During the ceremony, women wear a traditional dress called *Laal Phat Saree* with a red border and white base, while men wear a white cotton cloth known as a *dhoti*, a white cotton undershirt called a *banyan*, and a white cotton towel called a *gamcha*, with embroidery on the lower side.

As a prelude to their journey to the *Akhra*, the senior woman of the household conducts a sacred ritual and presents *chhilka roti* and *hariya* as an offering to their departed family member, or *pittar*. This is a customary practice that is steeped in tradition and reverence for the deceased.



S.N.	NAME IN KURUKH	NAME IN ENGLISH
1	Tokari	Bamboo Basket
2	Kheera	Cucumber
3	Arwa Dhaga	Cotton Thread
4	Arwa Chaur	Rice
5	Kanse Ka Lota	A Small Container for Water Made of Bronze
6	DhoopDhuan	Incense Smock
7	Bhelwa Ki Daar	Branch Of Bhelwa Tree
8	Jawa Phool	Stem Of Nine Type Seeds.
9	Ghas Phool	Wildflower
10	Diya Batti	An Oil Lamp Made from Clay or Mud with A Cotton Wick Dipped in Oil or Ghee.
11	Sindoor	Vermilion
12	Arpan	Rice Flour Batter
13	SootiKapra	Cotton Fabric Cloth

Table No. 2: Ingredients required for the process of religious veneration.

The *Akhra* place is centred around the Karam tree, where a circle is formed by the gathered crowd. In the inner circle, unmarried girls who observe a fast participate in rituals with the guidance of the *Pahan*. The festival focuses on the worship of the deity Karam, and the *Pahan* performs a chicken sacrifice as a symbol of protection against any potential misfortunes. The Oraon tribe places great faith in these rituals, believing that the sacrifices will avert any calamities that may come their way.

Worshipping the karam tree is a powerful way to connect with the divine. *Pahan* knows this and has chosen to devote himself to this sacred practice. The karam tree represents a symbol of God, and through his worship, *Pahan* can tap into a higher power and experience a profound sense of peace and purpose.

Afterwards, the *Karmaitin* (Unmarried women who had fasted) prayed to the Karam deity for happiness and prosperity. The *Pahan* guides the *Karmaitin* on how to worship Karam Devta. First, the *Karmaitin* offers sacred water, followed by oil and vermilion to the Karam Daal, which symbolizes their welcome to the Karam Devta. Then, they tie a cotton cloth and *arwadhaga* in the daal, which is a symbol of wearing a cloth for the Karam God. Next, they offer *Khera* (cucumber) to the Karam Devta, symbolizing the offering of their child to the Karam God for blessings. After that, they offer a lamp of clarified butter to the Karam God. Lastly, they give *jawa phool*, which means they share a symbol of love and friendship with the Karam Devta. Finally, they seek blessings from the Karam God.



Fig 4; Pahan is worshipping the karam tree, which symbolizes God



Fig 5; Girls circularly sitting around the karam tree.

After this, *Pahan* narrates the story of Karam devta as follows, things are offered one after the other to the deity.

Once upon a time, there were seven brothers, all married but without much money or land to farm. They decided to travel abroad to earn a living, and after some time, they earned enough to return home. On their way back, they stopped at a distance from the village and sent their youngest brother to inform their wives of their arrival. When the brother didn't return, they sent another brother and continued in this manner until all seven had gone. However, none of them returned, so they proceeded to the village where they saw everyone dancing around the karam tree. Angry at their wives for not coming to welcome them back, one of

the brothers uprooted a branch from the karam tree. The villagers were concerned about the consequences of this act of disrespect towards lord karma. When the brothers returned to collect their belongings, they found out that everything had been stolen, including their money. They were left with nothing.

After some time, the Karma brothers resumed farming. Despite their crops growing well, the elder brother's field remained barren. One day, the younger brother planted paddy in his elder brother's field without informing him and proceeded to harvest it with his wife. Later, he invited everyone in the evening for a feast but intentionally excluded his elder brother. This saddened the elder brother, and he went to



confront his younger brother. In a fit of anger, he uprooted the paddy growing in his brother's field. Upon reflection, he realized that all the paddy fields had been replanted.

As he witnesses the event, he feels a deep sense of shock and realizes that his actions have offended the god of karma. He understands that everything that has happened to him is a result of his past deeds. Feeling remorseful, he goes to the place of the karam deity and humbly apologizes. He promises to offer karam dal and perform worship on the day of the karma festival to make amends for his mistakes.

The Karma festival was approaching and a man set out to collect karam dal. After walking some distance, he felt thirsty and saw a pond nearby. He approached the owner of the pond and asked if he could drink the water. The owner permitted him, but when he took the water in his hand to drink, he noticed that there were many insects in it. The owner stated that the water was clean earlier and he didn't know what happened. Feeling thirsty and hungry, he continued walking and came across a fruit orchard. He started plucking fruits and, upon cutting them, discovered insects inside. He informed the owner of the orchard who asked him where he was going. The man replied that he was going to collect karam dal for the Karma festival. The owner suggested that he should ask the karam raja why there were insects in the fruits. Feeling both thirsty and hungry, the man continued walking and saw a cow. He approached the owner and asked for some milk, but was told that the cow kicks a lot, making it difficult to take milk from her. The man told the owner about his journey to collect karam dal for the Karma festival. The owner suggested that he should ask the karam raja why the cow did not give milk. He finally reaches the river, feeling thirsty and hungry. As he looks out over the water, he spots the karam tree in the middle of the river. He's now uncertain how to reach it. He prays to the karam raja, asking for guidance on how to reach the tree. Seeing his hard work and dedication, God sends a crocodile to help him. When he sees the crocodile, he politely asks if it could take him to the karam tree in the middle of the river. The crocodile agrees and takes him on its back, and they begin to move toward the tree. As they move, the crocodile tells Karma the story of the people he met on his journey. The crocodile then explains why these things happen to certain people. For instance, there was an insect in the pond because the people passing by were not allowed to drink water from it. Similarly, the fruits in the garden were infected

with insects because the owner of the garden did not allow people to eat the fruits. The crocodile also tells Karma about the cow whose owner used to mix water in the milk, which is why all these things happened.

The man is taken by the crocodile to a Karam tree. Once they reach the tree, the man pours three pots of water and circles the tree three times. He then applies oil and vermilion on the tree three times and offers arwa rice to the Karam tree three times. He pays his respects to the Karam deity, cuts three daals, and returns to the village.

When he returned, he met with all the people and explained to them the reason for their troubles. Upon learning the reason, they felt regretful for their actions. He went on to advise them to worship Karma Daal during the Karma Festival as a solution to their problem. He also implored Karam Raja to forgive him for a mistake he had made. He assured them that by following these steps, everything would be resolved.

Now, on the day of the Karma festival, Karma brings back all the stolen money and plants the branch of karma in the middle of the house. He performs a ritual to worship Lord Karma, listens to the stories of Karam Raja, and takes prasad. He also offers jawa to everyone present. As a result of these actions, Karma's stolen money was recovered, and the crops in his field started growing well. Finally, Karma starts living happily ever after. The book 'Chota Nagpur ke Oraon Riti Riwayaj' by Dr Narayan Bhagat presents a distinct account of the karma festival from the story at hand, owing to the influence of regional nuances.

The symbolic meaning of narrating a story is that people will remember their God and the importance of their culture. It also serves as a reminder of the value, nature, and importance of the Karma Festival. By sharing this story, people raise awareness about ethical and moral values and rejuvenate the significance of this festival and the Karam God in their lives. They also pass on this tradition to the next generation.

At the end of the story, the Prasad is distributed, and the puja concludes. After completing the rituals and worship, a program of singing and dancing begins, where the karma dance holds immense significance in the karma festival. People join hands to form a circle and start moving in a circular motion. This dance symbolizes the connection and togetherness among people and represents a bond of solidarity. The performance showcases gender equality, with both males and females participating together. The grand dance



continues throughout the night, as depicted in **Figure 6**.

In the morning, the pahan worships the deity Karam, and the Karam branch is then taken to the nearby river. Upon reaching the river, the

branches are immersed in the water. This act makes them sad, and they sing melancholic songs while praying to Karam Devta to come soon the next time.



Fig 6: After worshipping the Karam tree, people perform a traditional dance known as the Karam Dance around the tree.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the celebration mentioned above, researchers have concluded that Oraon festivals are closely tied to the surrounding nature and agriculture. The *karma* festival is celebrated by the Oraon people to ensure a good harvest and a better life. It is also a way for them to break free from the monotony of everyday life. During the festival, they perform a variety of rituals, which hold significant symbolic importance in their lives. These rituals serve as a means to maintain their mental and physical stability, especially in the face of stressful situations such as fear, anger, and greed. The people believe that through devotion to these rituals, they can fulfil their purpose and seek protection from their deities, who are seen as powerful protectors of the people and their land. Through these ritual performances, the ordinary world is connected to the supernatural world, and the social and spiritual worlds of the villagers interact to ensure the protection of their land, people, forests, and agricultural fields from the harmful effects of bad spirits.

The rituals of the Karma festival hold great significance in the lives of the people who celebrate it. The festival aims to commemorate their history and origin, demonstrate the notion that those who do wrong will always receive their due, instill faith in the power of God to overcome any

difficulties and educate the younger generation about their cultural heritage. Unmarried girls also observe fasts during this festival with the hope of giving birth to healthy and virtuous children.

The story serves as a reminder of the value, nature, and importance of the Karma Festival. By sharing this story, people raise awareness about ethical and moral values and rejuvenate the significance of this festival and the Karam God in their lives. They also pass on this tradition to the next generation.

The celebration of feasts and festivals is a way to honour cultural traditions and pay tribute to supernatural deities associated with daily life and work.

During the festival, the Oraon community strengthens their bond through performing rituals, and activities, and enjoying music, song, and dance performances.

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