



## DHURWA'S NATURE SPIRIT COMPLEX IN BASTAR

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2019  
Received in revised form  
26<sup>th</sup> August, 2019  
Accepted 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019  
Published online 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2019

#### Key Words:

Religion and rituals, Nature,  
Spirit, *jatra*, and Festivals.

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### ABSTRACT

The tribal communities are basically worshipers of nature. They worship trees, plants, stones, hills, and rivers in some form of supernatural gods and goddess. Therefore, each tribe believed in the existence of supernatural forces and it is transmitted to generations orally. It is remembered through observance of festivals every year as per the fixed month and date to commemorate their supernatural objects. The tribes of each region have close relationships with supernatural powers in two ways. First one is controlling the problems through supernatural powers through techniques and chanting which is known as magic. While the second one deals with worship of Gods and goddesses through prayer, *bhajan*, *kirtan* and sacrifice for each festival or festivities and it is known as religion. By which they wish to fulfill their desire with the gods and goddesses for example good crop, good rain, happiness, prosperity etc. Similarly Dhurwa of Chhindawara in Bastar possess such type of beliefs and practices that are catalytic in management of land, water and forest resources. With this backdrop, the present paper highlights the Dhurwa's annual and life cycle rituals which reveals the complex relationship of their social organization, nature, and their supernatural powers. Further, an attempt is made to test the Vidyarthi's man-nature spirit complex in the context of Dhurwa tribe of Bastar.

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Citation: Bindu Sahu, 2019. "Dhurwa's Nature Spirit Complex in Bastar", *International Journal of Development Research*, 09, (10), 30491-30497.

### INTRODUCTION

In India, diverse tribal communities are inhabiting. They are Abhor, Aapatani, Badaga, Baiga, Bhil, Bhot, Bhotiya, Chakma, Chenchu, Gaddis, Garo, Gond, Gujjar, Jarawa, Khasi, Kol, Kota, Kuki, Lepcha, Lusia, Muria, Mikir, Munda, Naga, Oraon, Onge, Santal, Shompen, Toda, Urli, Warli, etc. According to the 2011 census, the total population of India is 1,210, 854,977. There are 623,724,248 (51.5 percent) of the males and 586,469,174 (48.4 percent) of the females. From this, it is known that here, the number of women is less than men. Similarly, people of different tribes live in different areas of Chhattisgarh State, like Agaria, Andh, Baiga, Bhaina, Bhumia, Bhatra, Bhil, Bhilala, Bhunjia, Biyar, Binjhar, Birhor, Dhanwar, Gadaba, Gond, Halba, Kamar, Korku, Khairwar, Kharia, Kondh, Khond, Korwa, Kodaku, Majhi, Majhwar, Munda, Nageshiya, Oraon, Pardhan, Parja, Saharia etc. According to the 2011 census, the total population of Chhattisgarh State is 25,545, 198. There are 12,832,895 (50.2 percent) males and 12,712,303 (49.7 percent) are the females. From this, it is known that here the number of women is less than men. Bastar district of the State of Chhattisgarh is popular for tribal population surrounded by forests, hills and rivers. Bastar lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17°14' and 20°14' north,

80°15' 82°1' east. Its areas, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still terra incognita to nearly all British officials and travelers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypur zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new Province of Orissa. To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even large number of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simple, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Bastar is main tribes in this region are Bhatra, Gadaba, Dorla, Abujhamaria, Bison Horn Maria, Muria, Dhurwa and Halba. These tribes can be seen differently of culture and identity. They live obtained using natural objects from nature. Apart from this, they are identified on the basis of their works. The primary resource of tribals collection of agricultural and secondary resources forest produce. They work to sow paddy, *mandia*, *kodo*, *kutki*, wheat, corn, *til*, *urad* and vegetables in their fields, and they collect

forests fruits, flowers, vegetables, firewood, leaf, bamboo, mushroom, *boda* (mushroom) etc. In every year, they organize various festivals associated with nature, according to the period, month and time of festival and festivities. According to the 2011 census, the total population of Bastar is 1,413,199. There are 698,487 (49.4 percent) of the males and 714,712 (50.5 percent) of the females. Hence, for the present study, Dhurwa tribe of Bastar is selected for understanding their religious beliefs through ethnographic perspective. Dhurwa tribe is known as the glorious heritage of Bastar and live in isolated hamlets in hills, valleys and forests to protect their culture, customs, traditional institutions and systems. As a part of this, they have unwavering faith and belief in their traditional gods and goddess. They are mainly *Bharwa Dokra* and *Bhandarin Dokri*, *Hinglajni Mata*, *Pardesin Mata*, *Tiranta Mata*, *Jalini Mata*, *Son Kuwar-Van Kuwar*, *Bheemsen Dokra*, etc. The main purpose of worship of such gods and goddesses is to protect crops, fields, villagers, and their health etc. They organize festivals every year on different months and dates. They address the festival as *Tiyar* in their language. In which they are organized for *Amus* (Haryali), *Naya Khani*, *Deeyari*, *Amannuva*, etc, festival wherein they offer worship and sacrifice. At present, a cross section of Dhurwa are got assimilating into neighbouring Hindu caste communities. Despite of this fact, still they are following their traditional customs, traditions, and beliefs. Under these circumstances, an effort is made to understand their religious beliefs with special reference to Bastar region.

### Dhurwa Tribe

Dhurwa tribe is a minor tribe of Chhattisgarh. It is a branch of Gond tribe known as *Parja*. The etymological meaning of Dhurwa is to carry burdens. It is believed that in ancient times, Dhurwa used to migrate from one place to another to work for kings to carry ghee, milk, curd and honey by *Kawad* (sling). Apart from this, they carry the princes on *Doli* from one place to another. From this, it appears that they considered themselves as *Parja* of kings, because they always worked as a servant of the king. In relation to it, it is said that the kings brought the ancestors of Dhurwa from Orissa to settle in Bastar. Their mother language is *paarji*. Their physical features are black skin colour, nose flat, lip thick, strong body and simple stature. And they are having emotional tendencies. According to 2011 census, total population of Darbha Block is 79,360. There are 38,971 (49.1 percent) of the males and 40,389 (50.8 percent) of the females. From this, it is known that there are more women than men. As per 2011 census, the total population of Chhindwara village is 4385. In which the number of men was 2162 (49.3 percent) and the total number of women was 2223 (50.6 percent). From the village census, it is known that the number of women is more than male. Chhindwara village is situated a distance of 35 kilometers towards the direction of Jagdalpur tehsil. This tribe has been residing in the mountain and forest from the beginning. This tribe inhabits most of the Darbha block in areas like Chhindwada, Mamadapal, Chandragiri, Bispur, Kelaur, Katekalyan, Teerathgarh, Kamanar, Neganar, Chhindpal, Mawalipadar, Kesapur, Chhindabhar, Tapawada, Karkapal, Kotlipal, Sautana, Ukanar, Okawada, Koleng, Chingur, Darbha, Dilmili, Chitapur etc. These tribes primarily live on nature, using living things from natural objects and forests. This tribe is mainly dependent on nature and forest, So they live life using natural things. It appears that their entire life has evolved with nature. Because of which they consider

themselves associated with superhuman powers, and depend on superhuman powers and nature to protect own culture.

### Objective of the Study

Main objective of the study is to highlight the Dhurwa's annual and life cycle rituals which reveals the complex relationship of their social organization, nature, and their supernatural powers. Further, an attempt is made to test the Vidyarthi's man-nature spirit complex in the context of Dhurwa tribe of Bastar. Besides, an attempt is also made to highlight the continuity and change among the existing beliefs.

### Study Area

For the present study, the researcher selected Dhurwa tribe from Chhindawada village of Darbha block of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh State. There are total of 16 *para* in this village like Mundapara, Junapara, Rampal, Kawaras, Padarpara, Mendabhata, Gonchapara, Permaras, Kokarras, Litipal, Koyanapara, Manjhigudapara, Uparras, Dhurras, Jaamgudapara, Dhapanipara etc. In this village people of other castes also live in addition to Dhurwa tribe. The distribution of study hamlets and communities are mentioned below to understand the demographic scenario of the area.

**Table 1. Name of the Dhurwa Para (hamlets) of the Study Area**

S.N.	Name of the Para	Community	House	Number of House
1	Munda Para	Dhurwa, Sundi, Mahra, Maria,	25+3+6+6	40
2	Juna Para	Dhurwa, Mahra, Maria	25+40	65
3	Rampal	Dhurwa, Mahra, Kalaar	90+10+1	101
4	Kawaras	Dhurwa, Mahra, Sundi, Gond	80+5+11+20	116
5	Padar Para	Dhurwa, Mahra, Dhakad	14+4+11	29
6	Mendabhata	Dhurwa, Mahra, Gond, Brahman	35+25+25+1	86
7	Goncha Para	Dhurwa, Raut	28+4	32
8	Permaras	Dhurwa, Gond, Raut	40+15+4	59
9	Kokarras	Dhurwa, Raut	76+4	80
10	Litipal	Dhurwa, Raut	25+1	26
11	Koyana Para	Dhurwa, Maria	30+2	32
12	Manjhiguda Para	Dhurwa	20	20
13	Uparras	Dhurwa, Mahra	10+9	19
14	Dhurras	Dhurwa	45	45
15	Jaamguda Para	Dhurwa	25	25
16	Dhapni Para	Dhurwa, Mahra	20+4	24

**Table 2. Details of Different Ethnic Groups in the Study Area**

Sl. No.	Community	House
1	Dhurwa	588
2	Mahra	103
3	Sundi	14
4	Maria	8
5	Kalaar	1
6	Brahman	1
7	Gond	60
8	Dhakad	11
9	Raut	13
	Total	799

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is mainly a micro level anthropological study based on both primary and secondary data. The traditional anthropological techniques such as observation, questionnaire, schedule, interview, key informant interviews are used during fieldwork. For secondary data, libraries of different universities and research organizations, *Gram Panchayat* records, census department, etc., are visited. Further to understand the demographic scenario, a household survey is conducted in the area.

## Dhurwa Religion

The tribe has a strong faith in the supernatural power of God. Being dependent on nature, they have traditionally considered natural god-goddess from generations. They considered their chief god-goddess *Bharwa Dokra* and *Bhandarin Dokri*. Both are related to each other through relation of husband and wife. They believe that *Bharwa Dokra* is god of earth and *Bhandarin Dokri* belonging to the goddess of the crop. They worship their god-goddess at different times like earth god is worshiped in first Sunday of May in every year which is known as *mati tiyar* (earth festival). Since human beings get so many things from the earth and protect the village from the evil spirits, it is worshipped. Their main goddess is *Bhandarin Dokri*. Their relation is the protection and cultivation of the village. Because this goddess is known for blessing good harvest. For this, Dhurwa organize *Jatra* in the *Gudi* (temple) every year in May for the prosperity of the village. Apart from these main deities, other clan deities known as *Kuldevi* such as *Pardesin Mata*, *Hinglajin Mata*, *Tiranta Mata*, *Kankalin Mata*, Water goddess such as *Jalni Mata* or *Gangadai Mata* and forest deities such as *Sonkuvar* and *Vankuvar* are also worshipped on different occasions. *Kuldevi* is worshipped *Amus*, *Navakhani*, *Diyari* and *Amanuva* worship to protect of the farm and the house, happiness-prosperity and prosperity of festival. Every year of water goddess together with all the villages worship together to cross the river safely with good rain and boat, and two gods reside in the forest like the *Sonkunvar* is the god of cow and bull, and the *Vankunvar* is the god of forests. Every year, the *Sonkunvar* god is worshiped to protect cow-bulls. In relation to this god, it is also said that by worshipping this god, the cow-animal never wanders in the forest, whereas *Vankunvar* god is worshiped for attaining good prey during a soil festival. They worship all these god-goddesses according to different months and dates such as every year, by the head of house.

### Bhadarin Dokri Jatra

*Bhandarin Dokri* is considered as their chief deity who protects their fields as well as village. For the better yield, Dhurwa observe *Jatra* during the first Sunday of May every year. It is celebrated for three days continuously. Prior to fifteen days of the *jatra*, the *mati pujari* visit twelve *para* (hamlet) and invite their *Sirha* for the ensuing *jatra*. For this, he offers one bottle *mahua mand*, rice, a coconut along with oral invitation. *Kotwar* communicates the message to all the villagers regarding the *Jatra* which is decided by *mata pujari*, *mati pujari*, *Sirha*, *mukhiya*, and villagers. At first instance, one Dhurwa family clean the temple (*atpahariya*) with cowdung and water. While doing *puja*, *matipujari* offers vermilion, rice, coconut, and *mahua mand* is sprinkled twelve times in the temple indicates that originally twelve *paras* are existing in the village. After sprinkling 12 drops, the remaining *mahua* is drunk by *maati pujari*. *Bhandarin Dokri* like some of the colors white, black, red, and *chitkabara* (mixed color). Based on this colour, pig and hens are sacrificed. In the first day, all the villagers of *para* and *Sirha* carry *dal*, *murga* (cock), *chaval* (rice), *mahua (mand)*, *landa* (rice beer) in a *munda* (*tokri* or basket) and keep in a temple. They also carry ornaments, since they got possessed during *puja* along with *devlot*. After *puja*, the material is returned to them by *pujari* after sacrificing the fowl. The blood of the sacrificial hen is sprinkled three times on the floor of the temple. The head of the sacrificial fowl is kept by the *pujari* and the rest of the

body is given to the villagers. Since it is considered as *devi ka hissa*. The sacrificial meat is cooked near to the temple and consume there itself. They do not take it to their residence. The next day, they carry rice and *dal* to the temple. The villagers contribute money and purchase one *suvvar* (pig). After worship of the deity, the *pujari* sacrifices a pig in front of the deity. Similar to the first day, the head of the sacrificed pig is kept in *Gudi* and the meat is cooked near the temple. On the third day, the head portion is cooked and consumed by *mati pujari*, *sirha*, *patel*, *Kotwar*, *atpahariya* as a symbol of farewell. In this, the role of *Patel* is performed by the *Nag gotra*. He extends all help to *mati pujari* during the ritual. *Kotwar* belongs to *Mahara* caste to look after the *puja* material and dissemination of knowledge. Women are prohibited to entry in this temple and it is taboo for them to touch the seeds. Apart from the above worship, each year Dhurwa organizes festivals related to their *Kuldevi* for the protection of the fields and the happiness of the house. Their main festivals are *Amus*, *Nayakhani*, *Diyari* and *Amanuva*. For this, all the villagers together decide the month, date and day during the meeting

### Amus (Kunnel Tiyaar)

This festival is organized in *Saavan* (August) on Monday. On this day, the priest or head of the house (family priest) offer worship to their *Kuldevi* with *sindhur* (vermilion), rice, *hazari* flowers, an egg and *mahua mand* (liquor). The *mukhiya* offer worship to their goddess by dropping *mahua mand* (liquor) three times from the *Siyaadi* leaf. It is also known as the festival of cow-oxen. On this day, the cattle herder brings *rasanaa* (a type of wild medicinal herb) from the forest and distribute it into every house of the village. Then the family priest grinds the *rasanaa* with stone and mix it with tamarind and feeds to cow and oxen in *Siyaadi* leaf. By doing this once in a year, their cattle does not get sick and maintain good health for the next one year. It is also believed that if cow or bull is lazy, the heated iron is kept on the mouth of cow or bull to cure immediately.

### Nayakhani (Koltel Tiyaar)

This festival is organized in *Bhado* (September) on Monday. On this day, the head of the house or the family priest brings new paddy crop from his field. On this day they use *sindhur*, rice, *hazari* flowers, egg and *mahua mand* (liquor) in worship. After that, the new paddy is kept in the new *handi* locally called *Chivda* (*Chaangul*). The son's wife has the rule to break *chivda*. Then the family priest mixes *chivda* with jaggery (*Gud*) in the *Kansa* (bronze) plate, and distributes it to all the members of the house in the form of *prasad* in *gudai* leaf. After taking the offerings, they throw the leaf in the house roof. Then they propitiate their goddess to make their harvest good.

### Diyari (Dilvel Tiyaar)

This festival is organized in *Magh* (February) on Friday. On this day, the head of the house or the family priest offers worship to their house Goddess with *sindhur*, flower, rice, egg and *mahua mand* (liquor). This festival is mainly celebrated to ward off evil-eye for cows and oxen. On this day, village cattle herder (Yadav or Rout) visits every house and make the *geta* (rope) from *Kudaal* tree and tie it to cow after worshipping the goddess *Bhandarin Mata's gudi*. After this, the herder goes to every house and binds cow, bull or house in the *geta*, and if any one does not have a cow or bull, then the *geta* is tied to the

door of his house. In relation to the construction of the *geta*, it is said that it protects cow and bull from the attack of magic. After completing this process, they feed the cattle with *khichdi*, made from *chaval*, *kumda* (pumpkin), potato, cabbage, *urad dal*. After that, the herder is given a *supa* (winnowing fan) of paddy, double rice and a desired amount of money by every house.

### Amanuva (Medie Tiyar)

The festival is celebrated on the occasion of *Baishakh* (May) on Sunday. On this day, the village priest (*mati pujari*) goes to eastern side of his farm and offers worship to *Maati Dev* which known as *Bharva Dokra*. In this worship, the priest sacrifices a chick (*Chiyaan*). This festival is known as earth festival. Here the main role of *mati pujari* is to complete the work related to earth and to sacrifice animals. On the second day after the worship, the villages together organize *Amanuva* festival. On the day, the first *maati* pujari offers worship to the village *Bhandarin Dokri* at *Gudi*. The *maati* priest also sacrifices the animal after worshipping the new mango with *sindoor*, rice, egg and *mahua mand*. After that, all the villagers goes to hunt after worshipping *Kuldevi* of their houses. It is believed that the head of the house goes on hunting in order to please the goddess. The hunted animal is dedicated at the feet of the goddess, by making request to protect their village and home.

### Life Cycle Rituals

Each community has its own culture and transmitted from generation to generation. It is kept alive during life cycle and annual rituals of the Dhurwa community in the form of customs and traditions. The following life cycle rituals related to birth, marriage and death of Dhurwa are described to understand its nexus with religious beliefs.

#### Genom (Birth)

Childbirth is considered as auspicious in Dhurwa community and they observe different types of rules before and after the child birth. They are mainly

##### 1. Nangartoli

It is a local term for childbirth known as *jachki*. The pregnant woman is assisted by the elderly woman (*Suin Dokri*) of the village for safe delivery of the child. She is known as *Dai*. In case of expecting women, a room (*Kholi*) is given separately woman to avoid pollution of childbirth. It is known as *paayalin dera*, and she is given a large earthen pot (*Kundari*) to clean herself and cloth. A pit is dug-out in *kholi* for pregnant woman. It is called *Saar Bodra* in their language. In this, the pregnant woman puts the water in the pit after bathing, and after eating the food, she puts the utensils (*dona pattal*) made of leaves in the pit. It is done to protect pregnant woman from someone's evil-eye. This process continues since from childbirth to cutting of baby's umbilical cord. When the baby's navel fall, then woman puts the baby's navel into the pit, and then cover the pit with soil. This is done to avoid the black magic of the child. Then she washes his clothes with boil water and ashes in the earthen pot. They believe that it completely eliminates birth related pollution.

##### 2. Medichagga Aalkurana

It is known as *Kasa Paani* in Hindi meant for the house purification. After delivery, the head of the house brings water

in a *Kasela* and mixes the tamarind (*Tamarindus Indica* L.) and mango (*Mangifera Indica*) tree bark, and this purified water is sprinkled all over the house. This rule is called *Kasa Paani* in local language. After this process, they give the mat made of bamboo to sleep and sit for the woman, and eat rice, papaya, *Basta*, *Chapada* (red ant) and various types of green vegetables to give strength to them.

### 3. Kavarchandana

This is called naming or *chhathi* in Hindi. In case a boy is delivered, then he was named (*chhathi*) after nine days, and if the girl is born, she would be named in seven days. But this practice is not followed now a days because when the baby's navel to fall, then the program is organized by setting one day for the *chhathi*. In these, the head of the house invites his relatives a week ago. After the invitation, the sister's brother and the father sister's husband bring bangle (*Chhinduk*) made of iron for the child. It is weared to new born child to protect from the evil eye. Along with this, the relatives bring the rice beer, *sulfi* and *mahua*. Then all relatives put one drop a *mahua* in the mouth of the child, and gives child the blessing. The child's mother to remaining was given drink. On the same day, the head of the house feed the elderly woman (*Suin Dokri*) by making cock or goat. After that, the head of the family gives farewell with kitchen accessories, saris and money. They believe that after doing this rule, *chhoot* ends. On this day naming ceremony is performed with the name of the child.

### Choorcha (Marriage)

At first instance, the relatives of the boy i.e., *mukhiya*, *mama*, *chacha*, two other elder relatives visit the girls house for negotiation. They carry three or five *paiyali* (each *paiyali* consists of 2 kg) *chaval*, two bottles of *mahua mand* in a *gapa* (bamboo basket). In this, there is a tradition of going three times to the girl's house for finalization of the marriage. The betrothal is known as '*Mahala Karia*', '*Sangai Mahala*' and '*Mangani Mahala*'. The elder person or *mukhiya* who initiate the proposal is called as "*Wadipittar*" or *Siyani*. In their journey, they drop five to seven drops of *mahua mand* in front of the *gudi* and pray the *Mawli mata* for a good and mannered *buvari* (bride) who can do domestic work perfectly. When they reach the girl's house, they offer *juwar* (*pranam*) to girl's relatives and inform about their visit. In case the marriage proposal is agreed to a girl, then she touch the *mahua* bottle in front of all the relatives. Otherwise she stays back in her room. After completion of negotiation, the relatives of both sides consume the liquor in a *sargi* or *mahua* leaf. After the confirmation of relationship, boy's relatives return to their village. It is a rule to *Dhurwa* to go for *sagai* in the month of *Karthik* (October-November) on Wednesday. During *Magh* month especially Monday, the boy's parents along with their relatives visit the girls house. They carry one small basket full of rice (5 *paiyali*), *landa* (2 *handi*), *mahua mand* (5 bottle) and *lai* as a part of offering to deity of girl's house. It is known as *Sagahi Mahala* (*Janti Chegachendana*). After this final visit is made boy's side and it is known as *mangnimahala* to fix the marriage date. This is considered to be the largest *Mahala*. All the members of *kutumb* goes to the girl's house. In this day, on the name of girl, they give two *paiyali* rice and on the name of boy they give three *paiyali* rice and one bottle *mahua mand*. It is considered auspicious to marry on month of *Push* (December-January) on Monday. After that they start the rituals of marriage.

In this, the program of marriage (*Choorcha*) runs for three days. On the first day, every member of family both men and women of village, *mati pujari* visit forest by carrying small *handi* full of *mahua mand* and axe. It is a custom to bring *mahua* and *Semar* wood from the forest. The members drop three to seven drops of *mahua mand* near the plant of *mahua* and *Semar*. After that they do *fera* (*pradikshana*) for seven times around the plant. Then they cut the wood of *mahua* or *Semar* tree. They tie the wood seven times from the thread and cover the wood with white cloth and bring home. The main reason behind this is that the plant doesn't attract evil-eye. Then they implant it in their *badi* (garden) as it is believed to increase the generation of the family. Thereafter, they bring water from the river or pond by tying the small *handi* as cover with the *Sargi* leaf. It is kept on the Goddesses room. On this day, the boy's family apply turmeric and oil on boy's body and goes to take the girl. After that they put turmeric and oil on girl's body and let her to take bath. After this, they put the *tika* on both boy and girl and then take the girl to her in-laws house. After that, it is a custom to put turmeric and oil to the couples together. It is a customary to apply turmeric and oil on both bride and groom on the *mandap*. It is known as *Jodi Tel*. Then the bride and groom is taken to the garden where they had planted the *Mahua* or *Semar* plant and offer *puja* by *mati pujari* by keeping the river water at the place. It is known as *Neer Chaprana*. After this, it is a custom of combined dinning for both bride and groom. Then there will be a ring ceremony in which groom will give ring to the bride and enter in the house. In both the house they drop *mand* and do the *puja*. Then they put *tika* on both bride and groom forehead on *mando*.

#### **Chaayend (Death)**

In case of natural death among Dhurwa, they take their dead body on *Bendri* Bamboo, and if the pregnant women die they take the dead body on *Kanta* Bamboo. They bury the dead body in the ground, but now a days they are burning it. But it is customary to bury the pregnant women's dead body otherwise she will become witch. As such they bury the dead body after crossing the pond or river, so that she cannot cross the river. If any person dies with an accident or due to some illness, their dead body is burnt on fire. And if any child dies their dead body is also buried under the ground. After disposal of the dead, all the relatives, villagers including family members take bath in the river and then enter to the house of the person who died. Later on, purification (*Kasapani*) of the house takes place by giving the *tora* oil (made from *mahua* seeds). The head of the family fill water in a big vessel and add bark of mango tree. This water is sprinkled with mango leaves to purify the house. The ashes of the dead are immersed in the river after three days. No fixed day is observed for funeral rite as it can be done on third, fifth, seventh, fifteen days, or a month or whole year. Dhurwa now a day's construct *Mathh* for the dead. It is made by the *Mathh Siyan* (Old Person) who is known as *Sirha*. *Mathh*. It is made up with mud or cement by the masons two days before the natural death. It is believed that until the person is alive he need a house to live, similarly *Mathh* is required after the person's death, so that the soul of that person rest in peace. The *Mathh* is made in the same place where the body is buried or put on fire. The mason is given money, new cloths, one *paiyali* rice, one *handi landa*, 2 to 3 bottles of *mahua mand* and one hen and mat made up of bamboo. After that they perform funeral rites known as *Nahni* or *Deenkriya*. On this day, they give *chivda*, *lai* (*Pana*) and jaggery water which is known as *Pana* water to the relatives.

They think that by giving *pana* water to the relatives they could purify their house. Then they feed all the relatives with the *landa* made up of rice and food and bid them farewell. Dhurwa has a great tradition of worshipping the natural god and goddess, the village goddess and the *Kuldevi*. Main clan deities of the study area are *Pardesin Mata*, *Hinglajin Mata*, *Tiranta Mata* and *Kankalin mata*. The head of the family performs *puja* every year to protect the farm, house and self. Besides their clan deities, they do offer worship to natural resources such as rivers, forests, rain, and earth since their livelihoods are closely associated with it. The worship of *Jalni Devi*, *Bhima Dokra*, *Vankunvar* and *Sonkunvar*, etc., demonstrates Dhurwa man nature spirit complex.

#### **Worship of Jalni Devi (Water God)**

Dhurwa cross the nearby river very frequently on different occasions such as visit to weekly market, relatives, attend socio-religious ceremonies, etc. As such, they offer worship to *Jalni Devi* or *Gandadai Mata* on the bank of *munda* or pond by *Mata Pujari*, *Maati Pujari* and all the villages in the month of *Jeth* (June-July). They keep one anthropomorphic stone or sand idol which is considered as *Jalni Devi* and perform *puja* by offering *sindhoor*, *agarbatti*, *hazari* flower and coconut. They prey this goddess for protection of families and village from the natural disasters. To organize this festival, the village headman collects money from each house of the village. In this worship, the main role of *Mata Pujari* is to worship the village and clan deities whereas the *Mata Pujari* officiate the animal sacrifices. Dhurwa believe that the *Jalni Devi* like white color and hence white cock, pig, or goat are sacrificed.

#### **Worship of Bhima Dokra (Rain God)**

The puranic *Bhimdev* is considered as rain god by Dhurwa. In Bastar, he is known as *khetihari Dev* (farming god). It is believed that with the impress of ploughing work of *Bhima Dev*, Indra Dev pour water in the form of rain. In case of no rain in the village, Dhurwa perform the marriage ritual of *Bhima-Bhimin* to please Indra Dev. It is observed every year in the month of *Bhado* (September) on the Tuesday in *Bhima dev gudi*. For this *puja*, *Mata Pujari* offer *sindhor*, coconut, incense sticks, egg shell and flowers. After formal worship, the *mati pujari* sacrifices goat, pig, pigeon and cock. It is observed for good rain and harvest. If there is no proper rains in the year, the village headman organize a meeting with *manjhi*, *mata pujari*, *sirha*, *mati pujari*, *kotwar*, *patel* and all the villagers and decide the month, date. A big *Bhima jatra* is observed once in three years by contributing generously for three days. Besides this, Dhurwa offer worship every year for good rain and harvest from *Bhima Dev*.

#### **Worship of Sonkunvar and Vankunvar (Forest God)**

Dhurwa consider *Sonkunvar* and *Vankunvar* as their forest and hill deities. Among them, the *Sonkunvar* is worshiped to protect cow-oxen during grazing, while the *Vankunvar* is worshiped to protect the forest. Every year, the worship of these two deities is done based on their seasonal calendar. The worship of *Sonkunvar Dev* is observed on *Diyari* and *Amus* or *Haryali* festival. The main objective of this worship is to protect their cattle and could not stray into the forest and safely return to house. While *Vanakunvar Dev* is worshipped during earth festival for availability of game in hunting as well as protection from the attack of wild animals. Further, they also

request the *Vankunvar* for better availability of forest produce such as roots and tubers, wild vegetable leaves, honey, resin, *chapda*, mushroom, bamboo, fruits of *mahua*, leaves of *sargi*, mango, tamarind, fruits of trunk, neem leaves, etc. They also pray for good hunt of deer, jackals, birds (*lava*, *pandaki*, *kumut*), wild buffalo, rabbits etc.

### Bastar Dussehra

Bastar is known for two important activities since long such as worship of *Danteswari mata* and wide variety of animistic deities of surrounding communities. Bastar is inhabited by *Halba*, *Bhatara*, *Muria*, *Abhujmaria*, *Gadaba*, *Dorla*, *BisonHornMaria* and *Dhurwa* tribes. Besides them, the caste communities such as *Panara*, *Panka*, *Lohar*, *Kumhar*, *Rout*, *Teli*, *Mahara*, *Dhakad* also reside in the area. The worship of *Danteswari* is a practice followed by both tribal and non-tribal communities in the study area. The caste people such as *Panka* weave the cloth for the deity, the *Kumhar* provide earthen wear, *Panara* collects flowers for the events, *Badai* contributes wood for making of idols and rath. The *Dhurwa* do the cleaning work at the temple. They are called as *Atpaharia* by the local people. Besides, they also work at the royal court. They prepare *katia* (cot) with *Siyadi* rope to the royal family and used to carry the king and queen, and the *Bison Horn Maria* pull the twelve-wheel wooden *rath* (chariot) which is especially made for the event. Raja *Annamdev* of Bastar brought the goddess *Danteswari* from Warangal and installed at Bastar. Since then, the people of Bastar celebrate 74 days Dussehra every year in the name of *Danteswari*. The main objective of this festival is to achieve happiness, good harvest, protection from the evil spirits, etc. It is believed that the offerings made during the celebration will bring fortunes to the person concerned. In this marathon event, different customs, traditions, rites and rituals, worship patterns, and rules and regulations are observed with utmost faith such as *Path Jatra*, *Deri Gadai*, *Kaachan Gadhi*, *Jogi Bitai*, *Mavli Pradhav*, *Bheetar Rouni*, *Bahar Rouni*, *Kutumb Jatra*, *Muria Darbar* are important events one can observe.

The event is begun with the worship of *Saal (Sargi)* tree for the construction of wooden *Rath*. It is known as *Pat Jatra*. After due worship, the wood cutting takes place and the carpenters engage in the construction of *Rath*. Generally, they made two chariots wherein one is having eight wheels and another one consists of twelve. After this, the people of Bastar celebrate *Amus* festival. Thereafter, two poles are erected at two corners of the *Sirhaasar bhavan* as the representatives of deities of Scheduled Castes i.e., *Kacheen devi*, and *Raila devi*. This process is known as *Deri Gagai*. At the end of *Pitromoksh Amavasya* day, the two deities are sat on the iron nail made swing (*kanta jhula*). It is believed that the Bastar Dussehra will not start till this deity say yes through someone in possessive state. It is known as *Kachaan devi Vidhan*. Next day, one *gadda* is dug out at the centre of the *Sirhaasar bhavan* of Raja. One man sits in this *dande* and observe fast till nine days for the safety of the people of Dussehra. It is known as *Jogi Bithai*. After completion of this task, Raja install one idol at *jija derah* which is known as elder sister of *mata Danteswari*. She resides in different clans in Bastar. On the day of *Vijaya Dashmi*, *hawan* (smoke) is arranged in the main temple and an individual belongs to *Rout* caste prepare *bhoj* to the goddess *Danteswari*. It is known as *Bheetar Raini*. On the day of *Yekadasi*, the Raja along with his family members, priests, *Majhi* or *Mukhayaon*, prepare *nayakhana* in

*kumhadaakot* and offer to goddess. In local language, it is known as *nayakhani*. This process is also known as *Bahar Raini*. There after all the deities are worshipped systematically and send off them in traditional manner. It is known as *kutumb jatra*. After one day of *Bahar Raini* the Raja from the Bastar royal family sit in *Darbar* and hear the problems of the *Majhis* and *Chalkis* in *Sirhaasar bhavan*. But now a days, the commissioner, people's representatives, government officials sit along with *Majhiy* and *Chalki* and try to solve the problems. It is famous as *Muria Darbar*.

### Conclusion

*Dhurwa* believe that the world has its origin from *Sarna* religion which include not only human but also all the living and non-living organism such as rivers, hills, forest, streams, sun, moon, stars, flora and fauna, etc. As such, they worship these resources every year in the form of agricultural festivals, rituals associated with rivers, forest, hills, etc. They believe that certain sacred trees, animals, places have supernatural powers and hence appease them by offering sacrifices. As such, *Dhurwa* worship different village, clan, forest deities on different dates as per their tradition. Apart from this they do have belief in the supernatural forces such as spirits and appease them time to time for not creating any harm to them. Since their survival and livelihood is related to natural resources, they are still worshipping *Vankunvar-Sonkunvar*, *Bhima Dokra*, *Jalni Devi*, etc. The mundane life of *Dhurwa* such as protection of family, village, for good crop and rains, and protection from the attack of evil eye and spirits. The above-mentioned rituals supporting the theoretical concept of nature man spirit complex developed by *Vidyarthi* in 1963. In similar to *Sauria Paharia* who are termed as *Maler* by *Vidyarthi*, *Dhurwa* life is also revolving around the appeasement of deities and spirits in the lap of nature. The elaborate rites and rituals are observed during worship of village gods and goddesses like *Mawli mata*, *Bharwa Dokra* and *Bhandarain Dokri*, and *Jalni Mata*, reveals the symbiotic relationship between *Dhurwa* and their habitat including their ecological setting of hills and forest. As *Maler* depend on depend on forest and hills for their livelihoods, the *Dhurwa* also depended on natural springs, ponds, and forests for their survival in the form of drinking water, agriculture, collection of minor forest produce, etc. With their contact with neighboring Hindu caste communities such as *Rout*, *Sundi*, *Kalaar*, *Dhakad*, *Brahmin*, and *Mahara*, and ongoing acculturation process, *Dhurwa* started worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses such as Lord *Ganesh*, Goddess *Durga*, *Shiva*, *Ram*, *Sri Krishna*, etc., and celebrating the festivals such as *Holi*, *Dussehra*, *Deewali*, *Rakshabandan*, etc, with great enthusiasm. Of which *Bastar Dussehra* is important sacred event in the study area wherein tribal gods and goddesses are evoked along with *Danteswari*. Now a days, it is transformed to suit the needs of the local people. It is evident from the functioning of *Muria Darbar* wherein government officials, people's representatives and tribal leaders participate and solve the local problems. As such, *Dhurwa* not only adhere to their age-old customs and traditions, but also practicing the customs of the great tradition.

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