5.01: Introduction:

Social life cannot be completed without festivals and celebrations. It is a part of human nature and is related to the environment. The Oriya people also celebrate as may be called 'thirteen festivals in twelve months'. However, if the festivals, fairs and celebrations of the all races among them taken into consideration the number will be much more than thirteen.\textsuperscript{402} 

Festivals and Celebrations may be distinguished as inter-village or regions. Fasting one of the important observation of the celebrations in contradistinction to the fairs and festivals are undertaken by individuals in fulfillment of personal vow either for one's personal interest or in the interest of one's loved ones. For example, 'Shiva-ratri' involves a fast for fulfillment of certain desire, and at the same time, a fair drawing people from various areas around a popular Shiva temple. Similarly the fast on the occasion of Durga puja easily combine the festivity. The 'Car-Festival' in honour of Lord Jagarnath is a fair celebrated almost among all the Oriya population.

The Oriya people in Assam, those who are under the Hindu fold, equally engage themselves with the festivals and celebrations of other Hindus. There are very little differences found in their celebrations which could be differentiated from the others. But the plantation environment left very deep impressions on some of their traditional celebrations. For example, \textit{nuā-ḵāi} is a festival falling on the 9th day of the

\footnote{op.cit., Das K.B. & L.K.Mahapatra: 1993 p. 96.}
solar month of September. If this day falls on the working day (between Monday to Saturday) they shift it to the following Sunday. The other celebrations like Durga-puja; the date of which cannot be changed, is also made some alterations; and it was found that during the dashami, which is the last day of the Durga-puja; holiday is permitted; and the workers miss the main puja of astami and navami. They also miss the dashami, if it falls during the morning hours. So, the Oriya people, though serious in religious celebrations; oust from celebrating this calendar festival with interest. Another obstacle appears in celebrating these calendar festivals is the plucking season in the tea garden, which engage the whole of the tea garden population in round-the-clock works; especially manufacturing.403

The festivals associated with life circle are also affected by the plantation works and one has to compromise with the existing rituals. In relation to the seasonal or agricultural festivals the rituals are observed in a convenient day keeping the month or season intact. The symbolic agricultural festival karam, one of which falls on the eleventh day of the solar month of August-September, may be celebrated within any day of the month.404

5.02: Festival:

Moments of special significance, occurring regularly on a particular day or season, filled with the celebrations, are called festival. Festivals may associated with celebrations of any kind responded by the people at large. In Indian condition, most of the festivals are associated with religious observations like

403. Sri Udey Nayak on 8.7.2007
the legendary day of birth, incarnation, home coming, personal attachment or winning of a war by a hero or god. Though they are ceremonial acts, the rituals are dedicative, directive and pre-requisite in nature which the festivity very often undermines. The religious festivals in India associated with dedications still retain some of the original form and meaning. This happens due to the written form of literatures available in classical languages.

The Oriya people celebrate the festivals occurring at regular intervals in the calendar year. Here we should consider those festivals which are held occasionally with social gathering and involve rituals. The ceremonies for propitiating the goddess of smallpox or the goddess of cholera or deities of the other calamities can hardly be called festivals as it involves no gaiety, but rather the somber foreboding of doom. The Oriya people follow the lunar calendar and when we are discussing, determination of dates for the festivals and rituals are considered accordingly.

5: 02:1: Calendar Festival:

The moments of special significance called festivals of a group or community are celebrated in special moments; sometime within a season and sometime on a particular day. The festivals which are celebrated on a particular day called calendar festival. In India, most of the calendar festivals are associated with the planetary positions. Astrology is practiced in India since unknown time. Most of the festivals associated with gods and goddesses are of some important events attached to them took place on certain tithi. The festivals

associated with the *tithi*; such as *ekadasi, purnima* etc. are directly related to the planetary system which cannot be changed. Most of them are religious rituals associated to the gods and goddesses.\(^{407}\) There festivals originated in the later years are associated with the events of importance accepted and celebrated by the people as a whole or groups are associated with the Gregorian Calendar. Most of them are influenced by the western celebrations. For example, Independent day celebration with flag hoisting ceremony associated lecture of a leader is not known in ancient festivals.

The Oriya people as one of the sections of the country are also part of all these celebrations. Besides, a number of festivals they observe are regional and even concentrated to a particular area only. The celebrations common to most of them with little differences region wise are discussed here. Most of them are observed by the Oriya origin in the plantation of Assam.

1. **Ratha Jatra**: ‘Ratha-Jatra’ is also known as ‘Car Festival’ in some of the areas in Orissa celebrated on *suklā-dwitiā* of the month Āsāḍā (June-July).\(^{408}\) It is observed in Assam by the tea garden Oriya people where they dominate the population. In Tinsukia district the ‘Car-Festival’ of Lord Jagarnath is called ‘Ratha-Jatra’ which in almost every village in Sambalpur district in Orissa is observed. The Oriya people in the tea gardens of Tinsukia district are mostly from the district of Sambalpur, thus observe it centrally in a place dominated by them and surrounded by several tea gardens. The district has three distinct centers in which the Car festival is observed. The eastern tea gardens like Tongnagaon, Philobari, Bordubi,

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\(^{407}\) ibid., p.96

\(^{408}\) op.cit., Bora, 1983, p.55.
observe this festival in Koomsong, which is in the centre of these tea gardens. The second celebration takes place in Doom Dooma, covering the tea gardens of Dighaltarrang, Baghjan, Deamooli, Rupai, Daimukhia, Beesacopie, Hanchara, Raidang, Samdang, Pabhojan, Dheodam etc., In Doom Dooma the Bengali speaking people take special interest. The third celebration takes place in Tinsukia which, however, organized by the Oriya people of the adjacent tea gardens like Kochujan, Hokonpukhri, Betjan, Nimuguri, Gelapukhri, Dhelakhat etc. and the people from Makum to Panitola participate. The Oriya people from Powai T.E., Dihing T.E. and Margherita T.E. join in any of these centers. There is also another group mixed up of tea gardens and village, participate in the celebration at Kherjan T.E., which is under Dibrugarh district but on the western boundary of Tinsukia district.\textsuperscript{409}

The legend behind the 'Rath-Jatra' is the annual visit of Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balabhadra and their sister Subhadra to the temple called Gundicha Mandir; sometime referred as Maushima Mandir. In Puri the legend of Lord Jagarnath's 'maushi-ma' (maternal aunt) is a goddess about halfway along the car route. It is said that Gundicha, the queen of the King Indraduiymna, was responsible for unfinished form of the images of Jagarnath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. Gundicha had been deified and to her temple the divined trio retire every year during the rainy season.\textsuperscript{410} When they return after staying for eight days under the care and hospitality of their aunt, goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and the

\textsuperscript{409} Informant: Sri Bisu Deep (58) on 11.6.2008
\textsuperscript{410} op cit Bora, 1983. p 70.
consort of Lord Jagannath, does not open the door easily to let the truant husband and his brother and sister in. At last of course, she yields and the deities resume their normal position.

In Puri the ‘Ratha Jatra’ is organized elaborately. The required wooden chariots and ritualistic materials supplied by different castes of different regions in Orissa. Here it should be noted that the chariot making is associated with the Sobor tribe and they are found in plenty among the tea garden people of Assam.\textsuperscript{411} The chariot is drawn by pilgrim devotees both on the onward and return journey. The chariot is one way moving and without steering.

In Tinsukia district, the woods used for the chariots are symbolic and the same chariot is used more than one time. A nearby temple is prepared to use as Gandicha’s temple in which the images kept for eight days. And same method is applied when bringing back the images to the main temple. On their return local people try to block the entrance of the three images in the main temple symbolizing goddess Laxmi’s dissatisfaction. The images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and sister Subhadra however, brought from Puri and not made locally.

The tea garden - Oriya people take part in this celebration with full dedication and festivity. New clothes after taking bath are put on. With coconut, banana and pithā (rice bread) also dedicated to Lord Jagannath, his elder brother and sister. The materials received by the pujāri or pāndā in charge of the rath who returns them towards the people after dedication and the people receive it in full dedication as ‘mahā-prasād’\textsuperscript{412}

\textsuperscript{411} Ibid, pp. 29-41.
\textsuperscript{412} Ibid. p.85.
The tea garden Oriya people, though participate the Ratha Jatra with full dedication, hardly know the legend behind this celebration. They simply say that it is the occasion of Mahā Prabhu Jagannath to proceed to his aunt’s house with his elder brother and sister. A few know the name Gandicha as mashi-mā (aunt). But they touch the rath; pull the rope with full dedication as feeling them most sacred.

‘Ratha-Jatra’ is celebrated by people of all ages and without any discrimination of sex. This is a festival of unlimited participation and open to all. But due to the busy hours in the plantations the workers are unable to cope with the time. Only a few of the old women among the Oriya people, though illiterates can count the lunar month in which day of the ‘Ratha-Jatra’ is falling and participate.413

2. Deul Jatra: ‘Deul-Jātrā’ is a religious festival celebrated on the full moon of the lunar month of phālgun (February-March) an occasion to carrying Lord Krishna and Radha from the (Vaishnava) temple to some important centers of congregation with chanting bhajan and kirtan. While carrying the images on vimānas people put red abir on each other and make the situation festivity. Such procession pay visit to every house in the tea garden lines and receives homage and offerings from the devotee. The fair involve chanting, singing and dancing with spiritual songs of Bhagawat accompanied with khol and tāāl when the procession moves from one house to other.414 Some time males disguise themselves as Radha and Krishna and participate in dancing at the centre surrounded by other dancers with songs, khol and taal. The Oriya people in the tea gardens of Tinsukia district and whose forefathers were belong

413. Informant: Sri Suresh Das (58) on 9.7.2008
414. Informant: Sri Anand Tanti on 17.3.2005
to the western parts of Orissa ceremonially inaugurate the first use of beans, mango and some of the jungle fruits offered to the deities and starts use after this ceremony.

‘Deul-Jātra’ however, completely assimilated to the popular holi festival in Assam, especially among the tea garden Oriya people. Holi the all-India festival is celebrated with gusto and hilarity on the full moon day of the month phālguna (February/March). To begin this festival, in the evening of the former day a bonfire is made out of combustible heap or a temporary hut. An offering of vegetables and grains thrown into the bonfire, which is known as āngirā among Oriya people is kindled to burn the demoness Holika into ashes. Holika was the aunt of Prahlad according to the legend of Bhagawat. She is believed to be the goddess of measles and small pox. It is also believed that the village lying in the direction in which the bonfire leans is blessed with good crops in the next season.

The youths of Oriya origin in the tea garden offer their first ābir in this bonfire and observe chanting of kirtan with khol and tāl making a ring of the bonfire called holika-dahan. This is the beginning of the holi or phāguwa; as they call it. They play abir of various colours, put on each other on the next day. The holika-dahan is participated by the males only though females are not restricted. The event takes place at night for which the females do not take part.

3: Phāguwa festival: ‘Phāguwa’ is a popular Indian festival participated indiscriminating of caste, tribe and religion. The tea garden Oriya people, as one of the members of the Indian society observe this festival in accordance with the rituals and

416. Informant: Sri Tanti on 17.3.2005
the social behaviour originated in the environment of the tea
garden of Assam. Observation of Holi, which they also call
phāguwā or fāguwā (a word derived from the phāguwā meaning
colour in their forefather's land) saw many changes in respect
of celebration in the plantation atmosphere of Assam. This is
due to their attachment with the other castes and tribes in the
new environment of the plantation. They still retain some of the
rituals which are common to the other races also. Special
identification of them as Oriya origin is hardly possible. The
main feature of the festival as one of the great Indian tradition
is however, continuing with very little alteration. The rituals of
the individual culture are the later imposed according to
individual choices. Very few such altered rituals related to
Oriya tradition, however, could be traced if carefully observed.
The period of beginning and ending of the festival is similar to
all, but the behaviour in celebration seems more ritualized
which are rarely found among other societies.417

The ritualized taboos which are not found in other Indian
societies, at least among the castes and tribes in the
plantation, are unidentifiable even among the caste or tribes of
the Oriya origin itself. The result is, though the Oriya people
observe the rituals strictly cannot claim to be their own.

Preparation of phāguwā among the Oriya people starts
with the first day of the lunar month of phālgun (February-
March). The young boys including the teenagers starts making
procession every evening singing religious songs which
continues till the morning of the day of holi in the full moon.418

The day before the phaguwa or holi; the holika-dahan

417. Sri Tanti
418. Sri Tanti
ceremony is observed during the evening hour. Young boys and teens collect logs from their own houses or from others; gather in a central place of the village or line; and burn holika till the logs turn into ashes. A few edibles, strictly vegetarian, are used by the gathering during the occasion.

After burning of the holika they put the ashes on each other’s face during the morning. They also use mud, cow dung, water etc. as first day play during the morning. Then they left for their houses to take bath or to be cleaned.

‘Phaguwa’ playing gets exciting with the ‘in laws’ as it is allowed socially to play holi during this day among the in-laws without restriction and there is no areas restricted to put abir on the whole body making the play a fun. Thus the excited young boys sing some songs when playing it with his in laws: “-- fāguwā re fāguwā tin dānguwā; bhouji-bhātār ghore moī āguwā.”419

The above song is the indication that the person who is singing the song expresses that he is the first to put colour on his sister-in-law or brother-in-law. The song is a generalized form among the people of the tea garden. Some of the Oriya people still keep their traditional songs of phaguwa. One of them is as following: - “Phuguno māsore phāgu khelonti, phāgu guḍā e kapura mesāi, phāgu kheluichhonti mor dālkhai, jadu gosāi ki mor dālkhāi re…”420

419. Informant: Sri Giridhar Nanda
420. Informant: Smt Panpotro Tanti
This is a small split part of a phāguwā song sung by the Oriya people who dance with the music against it. The version says that—“during the month of phāgun phāguwā is played; phāgu mixed with kapur jadu-gosāi(Sri Krishna) is playing phāgua.” The elders as well as the young make into groups and play open ‘nāṭ’ (drama) disguising themselves into different gods and goddesses; moving from one house to another; playing, singing and dancing when they are offered with some money or raw edibles from the houses which they visit.421

The next phase of the phāgwu starts after bath and by putting on new or clean clothes. They take ābir (powdered colour), dedicate it in their place of worship; offer ābir to the elders in the house on their feet and take blessings from them and start playing the dry ābir with others for the whole day. During evening hours and before taking bath they play with the water colour and stop playing at night.422

Putting abir or coloured water on others has some special features. General playing of holi takes place among friends of equal age, in-laws and with unknown persons. Putting of abir on some special parts; first on legs than may be on face or on forehead etc. of a respectable person with full respect and dedication is allowed. The respected person in return gives āshirvāād (blessings); and if available in the house, offers some special edibles to such young players of. Some special edible items (vegetarian) are prepared to receive such guests in the phāguwā. Some time such holi players sing, act a drama on the site to attract the people. This kind of drama has no choice of a special subject. The Oriya people generally, play the split parts of the religious dramas, most of which is related

421 Sri Anand Tanti on 17.3.2005
422 Sri Tanti
to ‘Radha-Krishno-lilā’ and of Rām-lilā, but in all forms they start it first in the village temple or in the courtyard of the village elder and than roam into the village.

By evening they stop playing for the day and again start in the next day till every house are visited. With the gathered raw materials they make collective feast after completion of the naat and the cash, they save to purchase some materials related to that kind of nāāt to make it more interesting and attractive during the next year.

The naat performance during the holi is felt sacred and restricted to alcoholism and non-vegetarian food among the participants. But now-a-days due to living together with multiple societies, the restrictions are influenced by common interest. The Oriya family, however still keep vegetarian and non-alcoholic items during phāguwa in their houses.425

4. Mahā Shivaratri: Maha Shivaratri falls in the month of phāgun (February-March) and celebrated in the different temples of the tea garden areas in Tinsukia district. Almost all the tea gardens in this district have one or more Shiva temple in which Oriya people with others; participate in full dedication. Before the dawn people begin competition for first pouring of water or milk on the linga of Shiva in which, females take part in majority. The pouring of water is followed with dedication of bel, dhoturā, tulsī, bhāng etc. including some fruits like coconut, banana, apple, sugarcane etc., with scented smoke and oil candle which after dedication by oneself or by a priest; a part is taken to home as prashad.424 The people who pour water on the linga keep fasting, take bath early in the morning

423 Sri Tanti
424. Informant: Sri Pahlad Gowala (55) on 5.3.2002
and participate in this dedication. About all the people who are Hindus participate and the situation becomes festive with the males and females gathering in new, clean and coloured clothes and by the setting up of small market for materials for dedication. Among the Oriya people in the tea garden almost all the females dedicate water on the linga during early morning and only after this they leave for their garden work, if it falls on a working day.\textsuperscript{425}

In the Tinsukia town which is also headquarter of the district; has a Shiva temple in some ten acres of land at its eastern entrance. People from all around gather here for their dedications and those who have already dedicated water on the linga in their tea garden or nearby Shiva temple also gather here to enjoy the festive environment around the temple. Market inside and outside the boundary, hotels, etc. are installed at least few days before the actual festival. This festival lasts for three to four days as people continue visiting before and after the Shiva-ratri day. As the district is surrounded by more than hundred tea gardens the people from these tea gardens are one of the main visitors. The Oriya people, who are in majority on many of these tea gardens, are one among them. The celebration gets more festive if Shiva-ratri falls on holiday i.e. on Sunday. The young boys and girls, who are not engaged in regular jobs, are one of the major visitors in all of the days in this festival.\textsuperscript{426}

\textit{Linga} or phallic worship symbolizes marriage and thereafter production of healthy children who are capable to keep life healthy and prosperous. The Oriya people in the tea garden do not know this fact and their worship is only a

\textsuperscript{425} Sri Gowala
\textsuperscript{426} Sri Nidhi Patnayak on 20.5.2007
dedication towards the usual God they worship.

5. Bol-bom Mela: Another festival observed in this temple for a period of a month, specially the four Sundays and Mondays of the month sāwan (July-August) in which fair and festivity continue. This dedication takes place starting from the first Monday of the month sawan (July-August) and ends in the last Monday. In this celebration on every Sunday of the month people go to collect water from Brahmaputra river in Dholla(Saikhowa-ghat) 60km away with their earthen pot; dressed in saffron coloured clothes, walk barefoot with the water in their pots which they pour on the image of Shiva before dawn on the Mondays. Every Sunday and Monday of the month people go for the dedication till the last Monday.

The Oriya people in the tea gardens, especially from Dholla to Hookanpukhri on the NH 37; and from Betjan T.E. to Ledo on NH 38 walk barefoot on this occasion for 60 km. The people come from Ledo collect water from the river Burhidihing, a tributary to Brahmaputra.

It is believed that taking water from far away river; walking while chanting bol-bom without stop throughout the way and pouring the same on the ‘linga’; washes out all the sins and whatever prayed for is availed. The people who help the walking devotee by supplying drinking water, minor food or accompany some way on chanting the bol-bom also bestowed by Lord Shiva. The festival is common participatory, so security measures are taken by the administration during these occasions.427

427 Sri Patnayak
6. **Durga Puja:** Durga puja is one of the most important festivals in the eastern India. The tea gardens of Assam are mostly influenced by this festival. This is due to the four day celebration with full participation of all the communities of this area. The common participation attracts the tea garden community as they get one or two days holiday on the navami or on the dasami day. The festival becomes more ceremonial as the tea garden owners provide the annual bonus to the workers and other employees before some days before the festival and as they demand.

Like others the Oriya people are also not spared affected by this festival. Due to cash in hand of the bonus, new clothes are purchased and the festival is enjoyed with much interest. Almost all the large tea gardens in Tinsukia district celebrate Durga Puja in common platform of the garden to which all the Hindus and even the Christians, in some respects, contribute. The four day celebrations are attached with public cinema-show in the garden field for at least two nights during the puja days. The campus is gathered by thousands of people of all age groups to attend the shows. Canteens, hotels, pānghumtis etc. are installed as the people who come to attend the shows stays for the whole night.⁴²⁸ There are also gambling parties gather in one of the corner and interested persons their luck sometimes at the risk of losing what ever they have in their pockets. Selling of native wine is common in this occasion. People, who for some reasons can not dedicate the devi, attend the mandapa atleast once to feel fortunate having the little prashād offered by the pujāri or his disciple.

⁴²⁸ Nowadays after easy reach of the T.V. and V.D.O. the tea garden cinema show becomes unpopular.
Sometimes in the tea garden, preparation for ‘Durga-puja’ starts even a year before so that the contribution of the workers may be deducted in small sums without affecting their family economy. Committee is formed with the membership of the workers, employees and even sometime the management and occasional meetings held to decide on the matters of the actual ‘puja’ and other festivity.

The Oriyas, who are in majority in most of the tea gardens in this district directly participate in this festival as some of them become members of the ‘Puja-Committees’. The families do not dedicate anything at home, but on asthami and navami they dedicate duck to the devi in the common alter which they take home as prashad.429

Tinsukia district has towns surrounding with tea gardens. All these towns organize more than one celebration in their own areas. In Tinsukia town only such celebrations sometimes crosses 50 in number.330

After Tinsukia, Doom Dooma holds second position with celebrations of 20 followed by Digboi, Makum, Margherita, Talap, Dholia, Tipuk, Tingrai, Bogapani, Panitola, etc. which organize more than one celebrations. These mandapas, with its festivity attract people from all the ways and competition to show more attractive is on the process. The tea garden people, as they get at least one day holiday for Durga Puja, flow into these celebrations in masses and the whole occasion becomes colourful.

Few years ago, when TV and visual systems were not

430 Sri Bisu Deep on 12.3.2006

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within the reach of the tea garden labourers, the same process was applied to create festivity celebrating Kali Puja in a convenient day in the tea gardens. Two night cinema show with festivity followed in most of the tea gardens which are unable to organize the four day Durga Puja. Such tea gardens in the district were Baghjan, Daimukhia, Beesakopie, Samdang, Raidang, Hansara, Pabhojan, Dheodam, Tippuk, Daisa etc. Almost all the tea gardens surrounding Doom Dooma tea town are mostly populated by the Oriya people. Kali-Puja can be celebrated on any day during the dark half of the lunar month Kartik (October-November). So this festival is seasonal and the tea garden people believe that once celebrated publicly, can not be stopped without completing at least a continuous three years of celebrations.431

7. Diwali: ‘Diwali’ or deepāwli is a calendar festival and of common participation. The Oriya people celebrate it as a day of goddess Laxmi; keep fasts and go with vegetarian. Dedicated prashad and house-hold prepared delicious items are offered to the visitors. If one has cattle, special treatment with home-prepared rice cakes, vermillion, new rope etc. are offered and their shed is illuminated with earthen oil lamp. Children use crackers unlike other people and light the house yards on the few pairs of banana tree installed temporarily on the courtyard. The occasion is felt with sacredness and the houses are kept clean, decorate with different signs and symbols with rice paste for the occasion, believing that goddess Laxmi will visit the house making the house wealthy and prosperous.432

The Oriya people also believe in demons, dāhins etc. who roam in search of their sīkār in this dark night of diwāli, and to

431. Informant: Sri Ezra Tandia (58) on 17.9.2002
432. Smt Panpotro Tanti on 23.2.1996
save the house from the evils people hang jāḍā-pātā at the entrance and every corner of the house. They also hang shackles and pieces of old nets on the entrance to avoid evil eyes of the dāhin. When they go out they put a piece of the root of the bosh fastening on their cloth they wear by a safety pin. They believe that new girls and women complete their training of dāhin in this night so they need dedication of human blood and the bone.⁴³³

Sahrāi or Jāhli prevalent among some castes and tribes among the tea garden people are not celebrated by the people of the Oriya origin. They however dedicate their cattle in this occasion.⁴³⁴

Diwāli is a calendar and common participatory festival celebrated for the betterment of the house. Now-a-days gambling in this night began to be believed as ritual and the Oriya males are not spared by this.

There is a tribe originated from Orissa called 'Joypuria'. They celebrate Diwāli after fifteen days from the actual calendar celebration. The belief behind this celebration is that the 'Joypuria' people are the tribes living on the hills of Joypur. Once when they came down from the hills to exchange their materials against their useful commodities; saw the celebration of Diwāli with light everywhere. They returned to their homes which took fifteen days. After reaching their homes they celebrate Diwāli though it had already passed fifteen days of actual celebration. Since then, the 'Joypuria' tribes began to celebrate this festival fifteen days after the actual day of celebration.

⁴³³. Smt Tanti
⁴³⁴. op cit., Kurmi (Ed) 2001, p. 86
8. Nua-Khai: ‘Nuā-khāi’ is observed in relation to the first eating of the new fruit harvested. The chief food of the Oriya people is rice and eating of this item observed very carefully. The Oriya people remember their deceased parents, forefathers in this day to whom they dedicate the items first and only after they take. A day before they began to observe certain rituals like fasting, inviting the forefathers etc. The observation gets festivity due to their seriousness in the preparations. They take new clothes for whole of the family and only with this they dedicate their forefathers. No outsiders are allowed to participate in their observation. Even the girls at home are not permitted to participate in some of their rituals. It is a festival of individual family and is fix-dated. It is observed on the fifth day of the dark moon of the month Aswin (September).^{435}

The Oriya family under a particular *kutumb* usually celebrates it on the same day as decided by the *kutumb* convenience to all the families in the *kutumb*. So, different *kutumb* may decide on different date; but within the ritual period of the month. In a number of tea gardens like Samdang, Kochujan, etc. *nuā-khāi* is organized collectively participated by all the families of the locality in a single platform. This type of celebrations gain festivity for its gathering of the members of each family in a particular spot selected for observation.^{436}

There is a ritual behind the *nuā-khāi* that the family dedicates different type of delicacies made out of new seeds to their forefathers. This is an individual family matter. But the relation with the agriculture to consume new seeds with festivity given more importance and taken to the common

435. Sri RajaramTanti on 13.9.2006  
436 Sri Bisu Deep on 12.3.2006

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platform. The families which like to worship their forefathers in their houses are felt individual matter and one can participate in the common platform after such dedication.

9. Karam Parav: ‘Karam’ is a seasonal festival associated with agriculture. Planting and growing of the jāwā by young girls keeping sacredness is the main features of this festival. After five, seven or nine days of growing the saplings they are placed on the same altar on which the ‘karam’ tree branches are planted for dedication. The jāwā plants with the ‘karam-branches’ is worshipped in the name of ‘Shiva-Parvati’or ‘Karma-Dharma’ and the plants are taken as symbol of bestow of their dedication. The dedication starts with attending the ‘Karma-Dharma’ episode, dedications and the whole night jhumoir continuing with the immersion of the plants with the branches in the morning.437

The ‘Karam’ festival is celebrated on sukla-ekadasi of the month bhado (August-September). ‘Bhado-Karam’ is also called ‘Rāji-Karam’, is a calendar festival become more popular among the tea garden people that the tea garden Oriya people also equally participate in this festival. The festival is now celebrated in common platform and most of the performances like jhumoir etc. are played on stage. The whole night performances of myth telling and jhumoir attract all kind of people and the environment becomes festive. The Oriya people who did not know about ‘Karam’ now engage themselves with direct participation in this festival.438

In Tinsukia district there are a few centers where Karam festivals are organized on central basis participated by

all kind of people. The Doom Dooma and Makum Central Karam celebrations can attract thousands of people from all castes and tribes around. The Karam organized centrally are open to all castes and tribes of this community and named it as *Chah Janajati’s festival*. Being termed as *Chah Janajati* the Oriya people also includes who sometime direct participated claiming the ‘Karam’ to be their own. Originally, this festival was a religious ritual of certain family or group. The celebration in a particular day now shifted to the convenience day beginning from 11th solar day of the month *Bhado* to the end of the same month.⁴³⁹

10. Chutria: The *Dandonāta* performed in a fair in first twenty days of the month *vaisākh* (April-May) of the eastern Orissa is called *Chutriya* or only *Jatra* in the western Orissa. The Oriya people of the tea garden in Tinsukia district are majority from the western part and thus called this festival *Chutriyā* or only *Jātrā*. This is a worship of certain gods or *devta* which comes to the *diāri* who is the sole performer of this festival. The *diāri* keeps fasts and follows certain rules by himself and his family few days before the actual celebration. On the exact day of celebration the head of the *kutumb* with a few colleagues arrive early in the *morning* to the *diāri* house and after some dedications music of certain tone is started and with the music the *diāri* begins to dance. After some moment the *devta* comes on him and the music turned to a rapid tone which continue for sometime and the *devta* on the man satisfied and calms down. In this condition the *devtā* guide the *pujāri* what to do the next. Generally the *devtā* on the man is taken to the *pujā* spot (erected in the western corner of the line or village) where the dedication are made. After the dedication the *devtā* visits every houses of the *kutumb*, guides the family what to do or not,

⁴³⁹ Informant: Sri Biren Koiry (45) on 30.6 2003

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identifies the secret mischief in the house with the remedy and proceeds to the next house. When the devta moves from one house to other he usually run with the sickle, cane, or the things the devta usually keeps. The pujari accompanied with music, run after the devta house to house and at last return to the original pujā spot. In pujā spot the devta usually swings on the nail seat; walk on fire etc. and hold hands of the people who want to seat on the iron nails or to walk on the fire. By evening the fair gets an end after retreat of the devta from the body of the diārī.440

A certain devta is worshipped by a certain line, village or kutumb of the Oriya families. The devta is means for safeguard of the people in the kutumb from evils, epidemics, etc. for what he is worshipped annually. During this occasion other spirits also try to enter in the society through some person which is asked about its identity and requested to leave as there is already one whom the kutumb worships. Sometime the devta itself test the stranger with physical torture to leave from the place.441

The Oriya people who are not under the Vedic fold or having mixed customs respect this kutumb devta as their family god and whenever fall in trouble ask the diari to invite the devta to solve their problem.

11. Gram Puja: Gram Puja or the collective dedication for the betterment of a gram or line or village is a limited participatory festival which is observed during the first half of the month Ashada (June-July). The objective behind this festival is to save the village so dirt and wastes collected from the houses of the village, smoked and taken to a place outside the boundary

441. Sri Mahanandia
of the line or village where all these things are left burn and smoke. The males of the village play active role and after collecting the waste materials from the village observe a feast on the spot where the gram devta is worshipped. The edibles of the feast must not be taken to the village or home and the spoils must be buried on the spot.

The women who bring out the dirt from the house which include the old materials like broom, bamboo basket etc., put on the ground through which the procession of the males passes. They take away the dirt while passing when she should keep the doors and windows close. On return the males take bath on the way and reach their homes, their feet is washed, wiped with mustard oil, smoked and then allowed to enter the house.442

12. Kartik Purnima: Some of the Oriya people like the Kondhrias in the tea garden of Assam observe Kartika Purnima by reciting the eighteen purans with full sacredness in a place selected by the bhaktas or personal courtyard for personal and public benefit which continues for eighteen days, each day reciting one puran during the night till morning. The person who recites the purans needs to keep fast, taking only one vegetarian meal and keep abstinence during this observation. The Oriya people and others gather in every evening to listen the Puran; the last of which falls on the full moon day of the month Kartika(October-November).443 Each night during the recitation some oblation is made and the parshad consists of coconut, banana and other fruits is served to the devotee. The person who recites the puran is to continue every night if once starts. As it is a continuous practice for eighteen days; in the

442. op.cit., Kurmi (Ed) 2001. p. 93
443. Informant: Sri Udey Nayak on 8.7.2007. (Most of the rural Oriyas call the month 'Kartika' as 'Dial-mash' as Dewali is celebrated during this month)
environment of the tea garden line it is reduced to seven, five and three days observations, in which the first few days engage in recitation of the seventeen and on the last day the eighteenth puran is to be completed. The wife of the person equally goes on fast and lives in limited one time vegetarian food. Sacredness and cleanliness of both the husband and wife is strictly followed.\textsuperscript{444}

The people originated from the North-Eastern region keep the last day floating banana-stem made boat with paan and tamul in the river or pond.

13. Push Punji: The Ganda, Bhuyan Kond etc. among the tea garden Oriya people observe this festival on the full moon day of the month pusha (December-January). This celebration made for the satisfaction of the mosquitoes, ants, insects, spiders etc. which unnecessarily trouble in the house, are worshipped. Punei means purnima or full-moon. The celebration is followed with preparation of different kind of traditional cakes which after dedication in the evening hours enjoyed with guests and visitors. After the feast the young boys in the house collect broken pan which is spotted with vermillion and fill it with bhursi (lasting fire under the seed husks) place on the court and the female in the house throw the wastes, spider web and dirt in the corner in which mosquitoes and insects live. The young boys from other houses join and the group with their bhursi moves from one house to other placing it on the courtyard and the female of the family through the household dirt on it.\textsuperscript{445} They are presented with the traditional pitha, rice or cash which they distribute or organize a feast after

\textsuperscript{444} Sri Nayak  
\textsuperscript{445} Sri Giridhar Nanda on 16.1.2007 (Deoram Tasa describes 'push* as the mother goddess of the mosquitoes and other insects-Kurmi (Ed) 2001 pp 96-97).
completion of the tour in the line and burying the bhursi at a three roads connecting place. Young boys also sing a song as—
- Jhirki jhipā – pānjrā chipā, bhol pārāke jāre gudiā bhus bhus;
- cher cher cherā."
(O’ mosquitoes and insects, you go to the villages of the high castes and leave us).

The young boys of other villages or lines, if the caste is there; perform the same activities. Sometimes groups of more than one village or line join the celebration making it festivity. After the feast in a spot joining three roads the festival gets end.446

14. ‘Ushā-brāt’: ‘Ushā-brāt’ is a fast rather than a festival. Generally, the Oriya women; specially, from the neighbouring Bengal observe this fast as sun worship. The observation is made on the first day of the sukla-pakhyā of the month Māgh (January) and in the very morning when the sun is rising. The place of observation is the nearby river or pond. Dedication to the sun god is made with scented smoke, earthen light, different type of home made edibles, flowers, fruits etc. After the dedication the edibles are taken by the people present.447

15. ‘Dhuni’: Alekha Mohima Dharma is a religious sect under the Hindu fold. The devotees of this sect do not believe in idol worship. Certain mantra or prayer to the Supreme god is made four times a day with no material dedication. They use bān (saffron) clothes and do not eat before sunrise and after sun set. Vegetarianism is strictly followed. The compulsory

446 ibid.
447 Informant: Sri Jyoti Pusti (42) on 15.3.2003. (‘Usha-brat’ is popular among the females of the Eastern part)
observation of this sect is to perform dhuni(fire-sacrifice) on the fourteenth of the day of the full moon in Magh and Baisakh(January and April). In this occasion pobitra taking is compulsory. Dhuni performance invites huge gathering for the whole night and the occasion becomes festive.\textsuperscript{448}

16. Tushu Puja: Tushu is a myth related to certain woman gave her life for the sake of her husband prevalent in Bengal area. The woman later got prominence as devi 'Laxmi" among the and began to be observed the day of the makar-sangkranti as her day. She is known as devi Tusu and become the symbol of chastity for the young girls. She also becomes the devi of prosperity. The Oriya people in the neighbouring of Bengal under their influence habituated to observe the day and in the atmosphere of plantation where they live together with the people of Bengal origin began to observe the day. The Tusu is celebrated on the full-moon of the month Magh (January) so it is a calendar festival observed by the Oriya people in the tea garden.\textsuperscript{449}

17. ‘Bodo-din’: Among the Oriya people in the tea plantation bodo-din (most important day) means the Christmas day. The tea garden management allow holiday in this day on the 25th December for the Christians in the tea gardens. The Christian attend prayers at mid-night on the previous day and the next day celebrates Christmas. They attend the main Church, which is mostly far away from the tea gardens where the priests organize mass or mass prayers. The places around Churches get festivity due to gathering of huge number of people, tea-stalls, hotels, shops for religious materials etc.

\textsuperscript{448} Informant: Sri Prodip Hari (60) on 24. 5.2006
\textsuperscript{449} op.cit., Kurmi (Ed) 2001. pp. 82-85
Vehicles from different areas gather carrying people for the church which leaves only after the prayer in the church completes. Even after the prayer the Christians indiscrimination of caste and tribes sings the X-mass chorus, which they call bhajan and dances with music altogether. The festivity continues till the 1st of January, next year which is celebrated as New Year Day by the Christians. Even after their garden work the men and women gather in the evening for the chorus with music and dances. This dance and music seems like jhumoir or Karam but not because the songs are directly related to Christianity and the dances and music do not bear the jhumoir character. For the Christians, Christmas is a festival associated with Jesus birth and they enjoy this festival in open mind. Delicious foods are prepared at home and special traditional pitha offered to guests and visitors.

18. 'Paska': 'Paska' is the 'Easter' festival of the Christians which is celebrated in the memory of the reincarnation of Jesus after death on the Cross. The death occurs on Friday after lent of forty days and the reincarnation takes place on the preceding Sunday. So the three days of Sacred Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday are observed sacredly by the Christians. Protestants give more importance to Friday, when Jesus died on the Cross praying day and night. The Catholics observe the Friday keeping fasts, confess their sins to the priests and they enjoy the Easter Sunday in remembrance of the reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

Unlike Catholics the other Christians also gather in a central church altogether for prayer and attending mass where

450 loc cit., Kujur
451 Informant Smt Probha Surin (28) on 30. 1. 2006 (25 December was observed holiday prior to the seventies of the last century).
452 Smt Surin.
due to the gathering a festive situation is created. The Catholics attend mass in a central church in Saturday night and after the church at midnight the next morning starts with celebration of Easter with songs and dances in glory of the God. They also prepare delicacies in this occasion.

'Paska' unlike Christmas is unrestricted participatory but the confession of sins to the priest and taking of communion after the confession during the mass by Catholics is restricted to others.453

19. 'Natun Bachhar': 'Natun Bachhar' or the New Years day in the plantation observed by the Christian Oriya people by collective prayer during the morning and the rest of the day they enjoy with feasts in friends houses. They believe that in this day the baptism of Jesus was done by John the Baptist. They pass the day preparing feasts out of the edibles they have collected by dancing 'bhajan' in their fellow families since the 25 December.454

20. Other Calendar Festivals:

The fixed dated festivals are called calendar festivals. This may be the day of national, regional or society related. The Oriya people usually observe such days of national interest with simple individual participation. The Independent Day and the Republic Day in the tea garden is observed with festivity in a certain central spot so that the whole population can participate. The flag hoisting ceremony, the games etc. are organized. People those who are interested participate in them.

453 Informant: Sri Nicolas Lakra (55) on 23.3.2007.
(Only the Catholics observe the confession for their sins)
454 Sri Lakra.
The Independence Day on 15th August is the time for paddy cultivation. So, the people who possess some land leave for their paddy field instead of attending the flag hoisting. This is of course not negligence but the utility of a holiday working in the paddy field instead of playing and enjoying in their objective. This is also the time of the plucking season and a few workers even need to engage in the tea manufacturing in the factory.\footnote{Sri Udey Nayak on 22.2.2005}

The Republic Day falls on off season and most of the nearby people of the celebration attend the flag hoisting and other activities. In some tea gardens the garden staffs with their families participate and take part actively and the workers feel neglected becomes causes of their absence.\footnote{Sri Nayak}

The Calendar festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Dewali, Phagua, Saraswati Puja, Vishwakarma Puja, Janmastami, Laxmi Puja, Bihu, a few Karams like the Raji, Dasai, Budhi, Tushu, Manasha, Sahrai, Sahrul, Christmas, Paska, May month observation etc. are participated unrestricted and some of them observe one or the other with personal interests. Festivity of these festivals depends on the communal participation. Such as Durga Puja which is rarely observed by the Oriya people in their families but they are participating the festivity equally like others. They also offer duck to the devi and cook it to use as curry. Likewise, Kali Puja they do not observe customarily but influenced by group they attend the puja. The dewali and phagua which are the all India festivals are participated by them and the ritual they observe for the occasion is followed.
Saraswati, Laxmi, Viswakarma etc. are mostly observed by occupational groups. The schools organize the Saraswati puja so the student indiscriminating of caste and community participate. Those who possess some cultivable land observe the Laxmi puja and the Oriya people who are non Christians observe it by cleaning house, wiping with cow-dung, symbolizing different birds, flowers, animals on their walls by pasted rice and at least light an earthen lamp on this day.\footnote{Informant: Sri Bijoy Nayak on 8.7.2007}

*Bihu* is a calendar festival, the stage *Bihu* is participated directly or indirectly by the Oriya people in the tea garden. The socio-cultural behaviour of Assam, they feel; matches with their own. There are some tea gardens celebrating Bohag-Bihu as ‘Bihu-Sanmilan” in which their children participate and get prizes. They also observe other rituals of Bihu; like taking different kind of vegetables in this occasion.\footnote{Informant: Sri Suresh Tanti (52) on 31.3.2004}

The few calendar Karam festivals are participated only in group observations. No individual family among the Oriya people observes this ritual. The very few found among them observing the ritual. This is the result of the neighbourhood with whom they are living for a long time.\footnote{During my fill work I came into contact with two Oriya families, one in Sealkoti T.E. and another in Bojaloni T.E. who celebrate this ritual.}

The *Sahrai* which is also called *Jāhli* falling on the day of *diwali* is observed by tribes like Uroan, Munda and Santhals and some castes like Kurmi, Karmakar, Gowala etc. The Oriya people dedicate the cattle in the shed on the day of Laxmi puja.

*Tushu* and *Manasha* puja both associated with myths is
observed by the few castes which originally belong to Bengal; the Oriya people living with them are influenced by them. Mostly they are the people of Eastern Orissa.

5: 02:02: Seasonal Festival:

Seasonal festivals must have appeared for the periodic times of leisure from work; time in which they can be joyous together. In India most of the seasonal festivals are associated with agriculture. So, they may be also called agricultural festivals. The country is agrarian in nature. But agriculture in this country was seasonal prior to the irrigation system was developed. The Indus valley people knew agriculture and the irrigation system. But the demography was scattered so it was very limited and according to the need of the local situation. The tribal people, who were living in the high plateau and hilly areas, habituated with shifting agriculture and they did not require an irrigation system. Insufficient irrigation system led the society to depend upon the rains to come and to fill their cultivable lands with water. The geographical location of the country offers a good rainfall during the summer season by the South-Western monsoon. But the South-Western monsoon is effective only on the few areas such as the two coastal regions, the extreme south in the Nilgiris and the North-Eastern regions. Sometime these regions also suffer from excess rainfall creating another problem as flood. The middle India is full of hilly tracks stretches from the Bindhya to the highlands plateau of West Bengal in the east needs high level irrigation system. The Hirakund and Damodar multi-purpose projects are located in this region. The North Indian rivers never dry due to the regular snow melting of the Himalayas.

The people brought to the tea plantations of Assam are mostly from the middle Indian regions comprises of both hilly tracks and plains of Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. The Oriya people in the plantation of Assam specially, of Tinsukia district, are mainly from these regions and thus most of their celebrations are seasonal.\textsuperscript{462} The seasonal festivals generally observed are discussed here.

1. **Trinath Mela**: The word trināth means the trinity of Brahma, Bishnu and Moheswar and mela means the festival. It is an open worship of the trinity organized by an individual family but can be participated by any person. The worship is completely religious of the Hindu belief telling of the episodes related to the story of some persons in trouble and their help by the trinity. With very limited dedicative the ritual is performed for the betterment of the family and those who participate the occasion. Before starting of the episode there is a ritual that the person in the family is to invite the people by making three loud speeches as'aso-he Trinātho' from the courtyard where the observation is taking place. The celebration undergoes certain rituals. The family has to keep fasting for the day, keep chastity, abstention from non-vegetarianism, keep the house clean etc. The observation takes place in the evening hour after the cattle enter their shed and to be completed before the dinner hour. Once observed; three, five, seven or nine time to be repeated within a lunar year. The observation however restricted during the month of Push and Jeth. If the earlier observations were in light manner the last one should be organized as an open melā. The observation is seasonal as it could be observed only during the sukla-paxiya (moon light fortnight) of the months.\textsuperscript{463}

\textsuperscript{463} op. cit., Kurmi (Ed) 2001. p. 121.
2. **Man-bosa:** The Oriya people being farmers in their previous land; observe the day of filling the barn in limited festivity. The container of measurement of the peddy is called *mān* and the reservoir of the paddy is called *purā*, made out of the straw of the seeds. Entrance of the *purā* inside the house is usually made on Thursday or *gurubār* which they observe as the day of goddess Laxmi. Goddess Laxmi is fickle and takes the earliest opportunity to depart, if dissatisfied. The day as well as the paddy is considered as Laxmi and special care and sacredness is observed on this occasion. The oblation made to goddess Laxmi does not partaken by the girls in the house as they are to become members of the other families. Minor feast is arranged which is enjoyed by all the members in the family and guests. Thus the household environment gets festivity.464

3. **Pāḷā nritya:** *Palla* is specially observed in the *phāguwā* festival. This is a dance with music attached with songs related to the epics, *purans* and of Upanishads, but split. The leader sings the song and his disciple follow it with music of *khol* and *taal* and dancing for few minutes. Again the song repeated from where it was stopped and after some singing the disciples follow their leader accordingly. When singing and dancing; the movement in the dance and the music is slowed down. This way, to complete an episode of the religious story, it takes hours; sometimes the whole night.

   The *Pāḷā* singer is an expert. He can sing the whole episode of the religious texts though split and personal inclusions in some of facts are distinct. The party with the leader put on ritual costumes, with special identity of the leader. In one *palla* party there may be five to fifteen persons. Generally two or more *palla* party participates in a single

464 op cit, Das & Mahapatra 1993. p.106
celebration and when one party performs the other takes rest. This way the public could identify the best party in the performance some time for a prize. *Pāllā* starts with the *phāguwa* and may be invited to play in other days also. But to play it, at least two parties are necessary, so that one can take rest when the other is playing. Huge population gather around it as it is an open drama with songs and music related to epics and *purans*. The place of *pāllā* celebration gets festivity and fair for its huge gathering.

*Pāllā* is a festival with limited participation of selected experts. The audience is the indirect participant only to listen and enjoy the performances. They can request the performer for repetition of a certain episode.465

4. Karam: The seasonal karam is the *Bambā Karam* which is celebrated after the *Raji-Karam* (bhado Karam) and to be completed within the same month. No ‘Karam’ branches are required for this karam but the whole night *jhumoir* ends with the symbols of cattle made out of *jhinga*, *gongra* etc. which after dedication immersed in the nearby river or pond. This festival is directed to the agricultural activity that the saplings in the field already beginning to grow would not be attacked by the unnecessary insects or ants. In the plantation the tea garden workers engage in full time work for the tea production and they rarely get time for cultivation of paddy. But the habit of celebrating this Karam for festivity it offers attracts them to celebrate it collectively in common platform. Now-a-days the platform began to be used for racial identification as tea tribes.466

465 Informant: Sri Nidhi Kumhar (58) on 10 6.2008
466 op cit., Aind (Ed), 2000. p. 24
5. **Cock fight:** Cock fight is a gambling of the cocks putting them on fights. The owner of the cock which succeeded to defeat the opposite's cock is the winner and he gets the deceased cock in return. Cock-fight is a natural sight in every Sunday of the winter season from Āghon (November-December) to phāgun (February-March) in one of the corner outside the line, or occasional garden market in a tea garden.

The cock-fight organized with festivity as the gambler as well as audience gathers on the spot of cock-fight. Tea shops, chānā-bhājā, pakori and also light foods are sold and the alcohol, specially the haria is a usual scene in the site of ākhḍā (cock fight). Although it is limited participatory of males, females selling ḍia at some distance from the ground is not restricted. The situation gets festivity due to huge gathering and most of the men take it as recreation.

6. **Festival of the Tribes:**

There are some tribes originated from Orissa, claiming to be Oriya and speak the regional language though in their homes they use their dialects. They observe certain common important festivals prevalent among the Hindus but also perform a number of rituals which do not directly conflict with the Hindu customs and deities, by eschewing sacrifice of cattle, kids and fowls with offer of wine or partaking of those oblations. One for example the Oraon originated from Sundergarh district of Orissa ceremonially sprinkling the blood of sacrificed chicken when sowing of the seeds. This custom is similar to the ‘Kondhs’ and many Oriya castes.467

The tribal festivities connected with sowing, harvesting and consumption of the first fruits. They also observe ceremonial collective hunting in April-May often believed it to be contributing to the success to their agricultural efforts. The Santhal, Oraons, Kharias and the Mundas celebrate Sahrul festival during this time with full gaiety and participation of young boys and girls to promote good harvest in that year. They also worship the family God, collectively with brothers and sisters of a single family at least on fifth or twelfth year, which is restricted to others participation in the family feasts. 468

5: 03: Celebrations:

Celebrations are those observations which are not rituals or religiously connected or related to some mythical god or goddesses. They are simply an occasion of some special event, day, occasion or a day of heroic incident etc.

Celebrations are related to certain events or individuals are sometime fix dated and sometime of seasonal. There are also some celebrations which observed only once. This may be of a person's individual occasion or of some event. The celebration of birth or death could be celebrated only once. But in all cases they may not associated with rituals. The Oriya people in the plantation have very limited celebrations. This is due to their busy plantation work. Most of their celebrations, their fellow brothers observe in their previous State are not known to them or they have already forgotten. There are also instances of mixing up of the celebrations of one area with the others for their common living in the plantation. 469

469 Informant: Sri Gulap Tanti on 24.6.2006
5: 03:1: Fix Dated Celebration:

The fix dated celebrations are called calendar celebration. A few of them though restricted participatory most of the celebrations are of common participatory. There are a number of celebrations characterized by large group celebrations simply by virtue of being a member of a community; indeed, it is often a man's participation that confirms him as a member. The celebrations are intentionally decided by most of the members of the community to observe it on a particular date of the year.

National days: The National days are celebrated on fix dates of National importance. They may be the day when the country gets independent from the yoke of some power not traditionally related to the country. They may be the occasion of declaring some popular method of administration or a new theory beneficial to the general people or the day of birth or death of a National hero. In the plantation situation National days are observed lead by the trade union committees with the help of the management. The Oriya people being one of the part of the Nation participate in those celebrations sometime with full interest and some time very seldom assemble together to celebrate. Both the Independent day and the Republic day were participated by them with great interest few years back. But nowadays they do not take much interest in these celebrations as they become rotation programmed of every year. Though they participate, it is not individual participation of the Oriya origin but a common participation with the others. They are also unaware of the importance of the independence. This is due to their isolation from the rest of the society for a very long period.470

470 Informant: Sri Ezra Tandia on 17 9.2002
Kali-Puja celebration in Tea Garden: Kali-puja, which is a calendar festival observed on the darkest night of the month Kartik (October/November) is celebrated on a convenience day for the people in the tea garden. This is because the plucking season in the garden still on its full swing to meet the target of the year. However, they try to celebrate it within the ritual month.

Other Celebrations: The Nuwa-khai, which also a ritual of the Oriya families and is a calendar festival, some time publicly organized to celebrate on some other day collectively within the ritual month. In this case the family rituals are either avoided or left on the participating members. All the family rituals of restricted participations are not followed and the celebration becomes open participatory.

The calendar festival Karam, some time observed publicly for special interest of awareness building among the tea garden people and the Oriya origin are not spared from participation.

'Bir Birsa Munda Divas', as a martyr day, is celebrated by some of their organizations, generally on the day of his birth. But, some time, it is observed only to organize people for some social reason. The Oriya people equally participate in this celebration.471

The Catholics in the tea garden observe the month of May as the month of Maria Auxilorum Christianorum (Mary Help of Christians). They visit every house of the Christian families during this month where they organize collective prayer.472


472. Informant: Sri Nicolas Lakra on 16.4 2008
There are a number of celebrations which appear incidentally, some time once or several without having a calendar or seasonal background. Most of the social organizations; for their organizational interest, celebrate this to attract people towards them. Such is the ‘Utkal Samaj’, which in real sense has no existence; but some time appears as active only to attract people.\textsuperscript{473}

Some time individual family under the ‘Alekha Mohima Dharma’ invites their \textit{kumpotia-sadhu} to organize \textit{dhuni} on their behalf. Such occasions become festive for the disciples gather on this celebrations.\textsuperscript{474}

\textbf{5:04: Rites of Passage:}

\textbf{5:04:1: Limited Participation Festivals:}

The limited participation festivals are the festivals of the committees, smaller or more exclusive groups like occupational groups like craftsman, fishermen, now-a-days political and social committees, the business scholars’ convention, festive interaction in bars, hotel rooms, entertainment places the conventioneers may discover or the group periodically comes together to interact ceremonially and festivity.

Limited participation festivals are of the genetic kinship groups, in which participation is limited mainly to members of a fragment or extended family. Most of these celebrations are associated with formalized transitions of individuals from one stage of life to another, and thus are occasional, not periodic. One’s life, in most cultures of the world, is not only a simple

\textsuperscript{473} Informant: Sri Bisu Deep on 12.3.2006
\textsuperscript{474} Informant. Sri Prodip Hari on 24.5.2006
biological progression from birth to death but also a social movement from passing one such stage to another. The occasion of passing one such stage to another is marked by special ceremonies and festivities, by ‘rites of passage’. In most cases, each of these celebrations will be directed toward any given individual only once in his life, but he will participate in such celebrations any number of times.

Among the Oriya people the gram-puja, *chhati*, some of the rituals of the marriage, puberty ceremony, death ceremony, a few of the agricultural observations, some manual works like *madaid*, before delivery of a child etc., are the limited participatory occasions which sometime gain festivity.

**Chhathi or Sasthi:** The woman, after birth of a baby felt *chhutuk* (dirt) and is not allowed free movement and touching of things in the house till the naval string of the baby fells and the *chhathi* ceremony takes place. On the sixth day after the naval string falls the woman and the baby are bathed by the help of the *dhāi-buḍhi* and smoke of the oil candle on cow dung and rice ball is puffed on the mother, baby and the near relatives in the house as symbol of turning out the dirt, is called *chhathi* or *sasthi*. This observation is purely female participatory though the husband of the woman is also to be puffed by the smoke through the *dhāi-buḍhi*. On twenty first day of the birth the function of *norta* is arranged in which passage of the family in the society is completed by a feast enjoyed by the neighbours and *kutumb* so it become open participatory. After this, free movement of the woman with the baby is allowed.

476 Infromant: Sri Udey Nayak on 8.7.2007
477 Informant. Smt Hemo Nayak on 8 7.2007
**Puberty Rite:** Puberty of a girl is felt *chhutuk* or unclean in Oriya society and this first menstrual cycle is completed ceremonially. Since the first day, the matter becomes purely feminine. No male, even the father is allowed to see the girl during her first menstruation. The father's duty is to invite the village astrologer, and to check the omens of the occasion of the first menstruation and to enquire for the remedies of the evils. The women accordingly bathe the girl on the said day with the materials required and after the bath the father and the *diari* could go to the bathing place and complete the rituals as directed by the astrologer. A feast is also arranged for the women and girls who participate in the occasion since the first day. Among some of the Oriya people the first menstruation is called *phul-sădi* and is observed similar to a mini-marriage.478

**Marriage Rites:** A few rituals of the marriage ceremony, like ceremonially bathing of the bride, offering new clothes from the father-in-laws' house, etc. are female participatory but are not rites of passage.

Among the Oriya people 'rites of passage' according to their custom is compulsory. Consideration of low cost or by financial help of the relatives or the *kutumb* may be allowed. But no reason is considered to a lapse. The consideration only may be allowed only if the related party confesses of neglecting the social norms and forfeited by the decision of the *kutumb*.

The initiation ceremony among the tea garden Oriya people is more effective in case of females. Initiations from puberty and after birth of a baby are felt with much seriousness. In case of males, the initiation after death felt a serious occasion. The Christians avoid this ceremony.

478. Smt Nayak
Death Rites: After death of a person the initiation ceremony of the family on the third and tenth day. The Oriya people among the Hindus follow the ceremony with certain restrictions. No female is allowed to go to the burial ground. Only the male perform the burial or funeral rituals. Similarly, the female only offer rice and turmeric massage on the dead. The rituals of the third and tenth day are also performed by the male only. The chhāir-ānā or māsān-dhukuā ceremony is fully restricted to the male.479

5:04:2: Open Participatory Festival:

There are some rituals which are observed in certain reserve condition. Among them some are observed only by the females and some are only by the males. But most of the rituals are observed only by both males and the females. These rituals are open participatory observations. The rites and rituals are observed sometime with limited participation only by males or females and some are not restricted to either of them.

Birth and the chhathi or sasthi: After birth of a child the mother and the child is felt chhutuk (dirt) and are restricted to be touched or movements in the house. After being cleaned by the chhathi or sasthi on the twenty one day a feast is offered to the kutumb or the neighbours which is open-participatory.480

Puberty Rites: After ritual cleaning of the girl after her puberty a small feast is offered by most of the Oriya families to the kutumb and friends of the girl which is enjoyed by both males and females. So during this time it becomes open participatory.

479 Sri Udey Nayak on 8.7.2007
480 Informant: Smt Hemo Nayak on 8.7.2007
Marriage Rites: The marriage rite is over all open participatory. Only some of the rituals are restricted to males or females. But most of the rituals and other performances are participated by all.481

Death Rites: Death is an occasion of sorrow and there is no restriction of participation on this occasion. But among the Hindu believer every occasion is associated with some rituals. On death of a person the women washes the death, give food, wash mouth with water and turmeric and accompany up to a few distance to the funeral but never go to the funeral ground. Burial or funeral of a dead is male duty. The other rituals like keeping of vrat, inviting of the spirit etc. are also his duty. The women in the house are only to help him in some respect. But the overall situation of a death occasion is open-participatory. Accept a few of the rituals most of the performances including some rituals are open participatory.482

5:04:3: Common Participatory Rites of passage:

There are some initiation ceremonies which are of common participatory. A family or person, who has violated the kutumb code but accepts the guilt, are initiated in the kutumb after certain fine decided by the kutumb is common participatory rite of passage.483

481. Smt Nayak
482 Sri Udey Nayak on 8 7.2008
483 Sri Nayak
A 'mangal-jatra'

A ring ceremony

'Mu-juwa' of the bride
Oriya marriage

Lotapani for marriage

A mego for marriage