CHAPTER FOUR

Life Cycle

Man is a mortal being. He is born and passes through certain stages of life to end in death. Such death may also be accidental. The different periods of crises or stages in a man's life are very important factors, as they affect and mould his entire mode of life and behavioural patterns and practices. He develops various interests in this period and his life takes shape according to their impact. In this way, from birth to death, a chain of crises are confronted, attuned and overcome, which is called 'life-cycle'. Geenep (1960:10-11) has called the 'Life Cycle' the Rites of passage and has sought rites of passage as a single category, which under further analysis may be sub-divided into rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation. The life-cycle of individuals among the Rauts has ordained on them observance of a number of norms and rituals from birth to death, based on their experience of life.

Among the Rauts no rites or ceremonies are held, when the boys or the girls attain the age of puberty. When with the flow of menses the girls feel the creative urge, they are considered as youth. Women during menstruation are considered polluted and they are not allowed to enter the kitchen for three days. They do not indulge in sexual intercourse or touch their husbands during this period. When a woman conceives, the flow of menses stops, and she is then alluded by others as "Okar pair bharī he" (her legs are heavy), meaning she has conceived.

Conception:

In Hindu ideological view of life, every thought and action is conditioned by god's blessings. They think that
conception is also a god-created result, which is caused by copulation of the husband and wife. They imagine that the child in the womb is a form of God. Man is nothing but a media to procreate children. If any emblem of an ancestor is seen in the child, such as, a spot or a mole on the body, it is thought that the child in the womb has been supplanting by the fore-fathers seeking rebirth. Mostly the Rauts assume it as the outcome of the divine power.

The woman who is not able to give birth to a child, or if there is any disturbance in the way of gestation, is made to eat the umbilical cord with jaggery. This treatment increases the possibility of child-birth. Umbilical cord is obtained from the suin (mid-wife) who serves the mother after child-birth. The leaves of Jawara which are collected at the time of Navratri from the foreside of the Kalash are also given to the woman, and the flower of coconut (attached at the corner of the endo-carpus) is also fed, at times. All these medicines are used for conception by the Rauts.

Pregnancy:

It is a transitional period for the girls, both socially and physically. When they become pregnant and give birth to a child, they attain the prestige of a "mother" in the society and due to pregnancy and child-birth, a lot of bodily changes occur in them.

Pregnancy is detected by the stoppage of the monthly periods. They believe that the child does not possess soul upto 4th month, so that, the vomiting occurs. In the 5th month, the child gets its soul which increases the appetite of the woman. The child begins to play in the womb at the age of four and a half (girl) and fifth (boy) month of pregnancy. The belly swells out. The body and the face
become yellowish in colour and smooth. Women turn comely.
They believe that if, the desired food is not given in this period, her legs and hands become swollen, which is normalised after giving the desired food.

There are some of the diseases which infect the child just after the birth. So, precautionary measures are taken to save the child from the attack of gathamvan (rheumatism). It attacks the joints of the body and impairs digestion. Reddish patches come out on the joints. To check this infection, herbal medicines are given to the mother in the 5th, 7th and 9th month of pregnancy. The medicine is taken with water or milk or 'charchhan' or stale water for three doses. Jwarah alohi (burnt alohi) and doodh alohi (milk alohi) are other diseases which infect the child. It causes the appearance of burnt and milky itches on the body. They call the witch-doctor, who cures it by jhar-phunk (incantations). They also produce fume of straw, hair, anjwain, amarbel, etc.

In case of first pregnancy, the mother is given tortoise egg, and in case of its non-availability, the meat of tortoise is a must. It is the belief of the Rauts that it saves the child from the attack of rheumatism. Once it is given to the mother, its effect remains for successive births. And, in the 5th, 7th and 9th month, the herbs mentioned before, are given to the expectant mother according to local practice. In the 7th month of pregnancy, among some sections (sub-castes) of the Rauts, Kushali (a sweet preparation of dried milk) is given to the expectant mother to eat. They believe that in the 8th month of pregnancy, the child inside the womb prays to God to get relief from the pain of confinement.

In the 9th month of pregnancy, the ritual of 'sadhouri' takes place. Sadhouri has twofold significance. One is to
let the pregnancy be known to others, and the second is that if the mother does not get the food, she desires during pregnancy, the child will crave for it all through his life. In the Bilaspur District Gazetteer (P-100) the following description of this ritual has been given, "The word Sidhori comes from the word 'sidhor' which signifies the 'craving of a pregnant woman' and the food is supposed to satisfy this". A variety of sumptuous preparations are made on this occasion and are given to the expectant mother. Every member of the family and kins and kiths from different villages, especially from the mother's parent's family are invited to participate in this ritual. On this day, the expectant mother takes bath, which is prohibited in the 8th month of pregnancy.

Two earthen hearths, one gorasi (fire-container), and two thaumas (earthen seats to put earthenware pans) are prepared and the food is cooked on them. Agnates and affinal relatives attend this ceremony. The cooked food is offered to the family deity, and then the couple are fed with these. Thereafter, a general feast takes place. The mother eats all types of delicacies and takes the blessings of the elder relatives.

If any unmarried girl becomes pregnant, she is de-casted and compared with the broken earthen-vessel. Either the man responsible for this adultery is compelled to marry her, or she is married to some other agreeing to do so, or she elopes. Abortion is considered a sin. But on some occasions, they are compelled to do this. For this, they give the pregnant woman some herbal medicines to eat in the earlier period of pregnancy, and her belly is massaged hard, as a result of which the foetus comes out.

On many occasions, it has been found that in the 9th or 10th month of pregnancy, stomach ache starts and the
pregnant woman becomes much restless. The Guniva (the man who practises some occult rites) is consulted in such cases. He examines the presence of any malevolent spirit, or if the trouble has been caused by a sorcerer.

The child should be healthy and properly developed, hence nourishing food is given to the mother and she is freed from domestic works to take rest. She is advised to listen the religious and heroic stories, so that the child may acquire the same virtues in its life.

Birth

The birth of a male child provides greater joy to the household than of a female child. But even if a female child is born, they are not disappointed and celebrate the birth with delight. Often the first birth takes place in the father's house, and subsequent births in the husband's house, but there is no strict rule regarding observance of this practice. Regarding birth customs, Russel (1961:27) says, "Among the Rawats of Chhattisgarh, when a child is shortly to be born, the midwife dips her hand in oil and presses it on the wall and it is supposed that she can tell by the way in which the oil trickles down whether the child will be a boy or a girl". Enquiries in the Chhattisgarhi villages do not support this and the women say that the oil dipped hands are pressed on the wall with a prayer to Parvati to unloosen the knot (Dubey, 1964). The old women, however, say that it can be possible for experienced eyes to ascertain the sex of the child in the womb by the way in which the pregnant woman walks. If she throws the right leg forward, the child may be a male, but if the left leg is thrust forward more than the right, the child may be a female.
In the 5th month of pregnancy, the child gets its full form and takes birth in the 9th month as the country saying runs - "nine woman, ten cow, eleven buffalo and twelve mare", i.e. woman, cow, buffalo and mare give birth to their child in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th month respectively.

In anticipation of the child birth, folk-medicines are prepared in the house. Pepper, piparamol, santhh, anjwain, asgandh, karayar, kaju, kismis, badam, ohhopara, and coconut are purchased from the market and mixed together, which are then pounded and fried in ghee. Jaggery is dissolved in water and the juice is added to the medicine to prepare little pills. This is the medicine to be eaten. In the same way, a liquid medicine is also prepared. 'Bari jari' (great herb) is boiled in water and the water is mixed with jaggery. Thereafter, it is fried with lawang. In this way, both the medicines are prepared before the child-birth and kept ready.

At the time of delivery, some of the experienced women stand there to help the mother. Her legs, hands and body are anointed with oil. Just after the child-birth, the maid is called. The birth of the first child, irrespective of sex, is an occasion of great joy, but the birth of a male child is celebrated more gaily.

The child is massaged with hen egg and the waist of the mother so massaged. The massage is believed to strengthen the body. Then the child is bathed with soap. If the family possesses 'galochan' (it is extracted from the brain of the dead cow), it is applied to the body of the child with oil which saves him from all types of skin-diseases. The Rautes have no objection for the use of 'galochan' because it is extracted from the brain of the dead cow. Then the 'sinkal'
(fomentation) is done. The child is laid on the new cloth, i.e. Sari which is worn by the mother on the day of 'Chhatti' (a ritual celebration on the 5th day of the child birth). The Suin is given a copper coin and a razor or knife to cut the umbilical cord. The cord is thrown away in the manure-pit or buried in the cattle-shed. Sometimes, it is stolen by the Suin and she gives it to a woman who does not conceive.

The mother is kept in a separate room, because she is polluted due to child-birth. The reasons of seclusion are dietary and sexual. The mother is bathed by hot water, so she should not catch cold. The Suin serves the child first, and then the mother. She rubs the whole body with oil. This work can be done also by the elderly women of the family. Everyday, the child is fumed with straws from bird's nest, enjwain, hair, amarbel, etc. In the same way, the mother is also fumed on the 5th day after child-birth. The cause of fuming is believed to save the child and the mother from ghosts and supernatural spirits. The members of the family and other relatives are invited to see the child. They come to see the child and offer some coins as presentation, which are taken by the Suin.

After child-birth, the mother does not take food for two days and on the third day, she takes the medicines prepared before the child-birth, as has been described earlier, at noon, and on the fourth day starts eating rice only once a day. On the fifth day, she is bathed with hot water, and if she does not feel healthy, bathes with water up to 'barahi' (9th or 11th day after child_birth).

The Suin is given a sari, rice, pulse, vegetable, salt, chilli, etc. for her services. She serves the mother and the
child upto Chhatti, but if needed, makes frequent visits to the house. Since birth upto Chhatti, the family is considered polluted. So they clean their house and wash their cloths themselves. The washer-woman collects the cloths from every house of their relatives to fulfil the ritual ceremony, and in this way the ritual of purification is done. The washer-woman is paid for her service.

On the 5th or 6th day (usually on 5th day) Chhatti is celebrated. The barber trims the hair and shaves the beards of the persons attending the ceremony. He comes early in the morning and works upto late noon. He is also paid some money for his services. People are greeted by offering biri, tobacco, areca-nut and oil, etc. Persons from other castes are also invited and this invitation is made through barber. They prepare 'bara' and 'kanke' (liquid preparation) and invite their relatives for refreshment. Rauts also arrange for 'bamboo-songs' at night. They play the pipes and flutes. On this night, they drink and smoke ganja leaves. The recitation of Ramayan is also held.

The boy who is born after three girls is called 'tetara' and the girl after three boys is called 'tetari'. It is considered ashuddh (bad omen) and to ensure fortune, they call the specialist. He makes a ritualistic performance. This is known as 'Thhuwa'. The eldest member of the family turns down the basket and the Suin burns the umbilical cord. The headman then moves round a straw-bundle for seven times, to which he sets fire by saying, "tetara-tetari ke ghar jar ge", i.e. the house of tetara-tetari is burnt. Thereafter an earthen container of salt and a miliya (plate of bell-metal) are broken there. These are given to the Baigihin. After six children, the 7th child in the same sequence is known great tetara or great tetari.
The child which is born in the Sattaiesa Constellation is not seen by the father upto a ritual ceremony is performed by him. Laxminath Yadav (Jheria Raut) of Raipur is working as a watchman in the University. His wife gave birth to a boy in the month of Magha, in the Sattaiesa constellation. The priest suggested him to make a ritual worship on the 11th, or 16th, or 21st day after childbirth. He was instructed to bring the following articles for the pooja (worship) - a dhoti, a scoops, an earthen pitcher, earth from the elephant and horse-shed, earth from both sides of a river, water from the 27 bathing-step of the tank, and earth from the 22 bathing step of the tank. The idol of Laxmi-Narayan is worshipped in this ritual and fire-offering is made. The priest is given a dhoti.

Infanticide is not practised in Raut Caste. The Rauts do not consider birth of twins as inauspicious. They do not think of any measure to control child-birth and bring them up with pleasure.

**Naming ceremony**

The child is incorporated into the family by being named. On the day of Chhatti, the old members of the family name the child. Family members also consult the priest and ask about the name of the child by telling him the hour and day of the birth. The priest calculates and tells the name of the rashi or the first letter of the name. The names of the children are given after caste heroes, gods, day, month and festivals, viz. Bhujbal, Gambheora, Chhaura, Makunda, Teejran, Teeja, Jatiram, Itwara, Shukwara, Chaitram Pushi bai etc. The second name is also frequent among them which is kept as a home-name called in affection. The people are recognised after their village names, too. Most often it is seen that the women or the men who belong to particular
village, such as, a bride from the village Charpara is addressed by the name Charparihin and a bridegroom from Kosmanda is called Kosmandihin. It is considered unseemly to call them by their actual names, so, they are called after their village names.

After child-birth, the mother starts drinking water, so that the breast milk may get diluted. The mother throws out the first spurt or flow of her milk in the gorasi (fire container), and then puts her nipples into the mouth of the child and presses them, so that the milk may start flowing. The child remains dependent on its mother's milk for 5-6 months. If the mother is not able to feed her child, cow-milk is given to it by adding water.

**Anna-prasam**

It is the ceremony of giving the first morsel of solid food to the child. It is also the rite of incorporation. This rite is performed in the 5th and 6th month after birth for girls and boys, respectively. A variety of sweet preparations like, Khir and 'tasmai' are prepared on this occasion. All the kins are invited. They feed Khir to the child and present him some gold or silver ornaments, as well as cash. Among the Thaththwars, a new utensil, milk, jaggery and khichari are essential for this celebration. The mother or the head of the family feeds khichari to the child. Among the Kanaujia and Jheria Rauts, an amulet of gold, kardhan (waist chain of silver), chura, paiyeb, ring, etc. are prepared, with which the child is adorned.

After Anna-prasam, other food delicacies are given to the child to eat. The mother feeds the child with breast milk for one year. When he becomes a year old, he is taken away by the family members to toddle in the yard. This time he starts to walk on his knees. His eyes are daubed with soot,
so that he must be safe from the witches. He catches the fingers of his mother and learns to walk and later on does so by the help of the wall.

Children start to go to 'daihan' (pasture) at the age of 5-6 years with cattle and also go to forest with their fathers to graze them. Girls go to daihan and collect cow-dung cakes. They show much interest in caste occupations than in education. It has become an integral part of their personality. At the age of 12, they generally become aware of their sex. Girls' growth is marked by physical development and sexual maturity and at this stage, they concentrate on household works. They develop shyness. They do not talk much with male adults, but have jest and laughter with children and old people. Boys get engaged in their caste occupations and consider the age of 15-16 as adolescent period. The boys and the girls think that they have acquired the characteristics of full manhood and womanhood.

There are rare chances of pre-marital sexual relations due to giving early marriages of the girls. They lead a satisfactory life in their husband's home and do not think of straying from the path of their caste rules. Infidelity on the part of a woman is strongly condemned. As the families are patriarchal and patri-local, so, the women have to go to their husband's house and spend their lives as an active member of their family.

Marriage:

Marriage may be considered as the most important social institution which controls and regulates the social behaviour of the persons concerned and also determines the status of the child in the family and society. Marriage is a rite of incorporation.
According to Hindu Dharma, marriage is considered a sacred ritual by the Raut caste. They think that without wife, the life of a man is imperfect and vice-versa. Wife is the better half of a man's personality. The main aim of marriage is to beget child to continue the lineage and to ensure performance of the religious activities.

The Raut marriages have not been described in any work so far. The following extract is taken from the description of an Ahir's marriage given by Russell (1916:26-27), "The Jheria and Korsariya Rawats of Chhattisgarh employ a Brahmin only to write the lagan or the paper fixing the date of the wedding and the ceremony is conducted by the sewasis or relatives of the parties......Widow remarriage is permitted and a widow is expected to marry the younger brother of her deceased husband.......Divorce is freely permitted".

Early marriages are seen among the Raut caste. Most of the marriages take place before the age of puberty. Marriages are arranged by the guardians or the senior members of the family.

According to the nature of the marriages, these can be classified into following types—

1) Regular marriage or negotiated marriage.
2) Chnori
3) Marriage by exchange (Gurawat)
4) Junior levirate.
5) Secondary marriage
6) Barandi marriage
7) Darśa Vivah.
8) Paithua marriage.
9) Some other observances.

*It has been published in Folklore (Sonl, 1975) and the revised version of it is being reproduced here.*
Regular or negotiated marriage:

The regular marriage is arranged by the elders. Before marriage the parents of the boy and the girl make a search for the bride and bridegroom and if, liked by both the parties, 'phaldan' takes place. Among some sections of the Rauta, e.g. Menav and Kawrai, 'sukh' is given. When the boy's party goes to see a girl and if she is selected for marriage, an amount of Rs. 5/-, five khandi of paddy grains, vegetables and pulse, etc. are given by the Menav Rauts to the bride's party, and the Kawrai Rauts give seven khandi (3 quintals) paddy and vegetables only. This ritual of giving money and grains before the marriage to bride's party is known as 'sukh' which I gathered at Purena and Katakidabari during my fieldwork.

Phaldan:

On this occasion, people from the boy's side go to the bride's house and on an auspicious day, they call the priest and other respected persons of the village to perform the ritual of phaldan or betrothal. It is also a rite of incorporation.

Among the Jheria Rauts, the bridegroom's party carries ornaments, saris, vermilion, etc. for the bride. Seven small earthen pots are also taken by the bridegroom's party. Fathers of both the bride and the bridegroom sit together, in front of the priest, and one of them keeps his right palm upon the other's left palm. The seven earthen pots are kept upon their hands filled with milk and water, and wrapped with thread. The priest pours it on their hands. This process is repeated for seven times. In this way, the girl becomes the 'wagdetta' (betrothed) of the boy from that day. A goat is sacrificed and the relatives attending the ceremony are given a feast.
Among the Kanaujia Rauts, an idol of Gauri-Ganapati (lord-Shiv-and-Parvati) is made and doobi, coconut, flower and 'kalash' are also collected to perform this ritual. The bridegroom's party carries a couple of ornaments and clothes which are ritually worshipped. The Suwab in shows all the ornaments and clothes to the bride's relatives and presents these to the bride to wear. The priest is offered some ceremonial gifts and a coconut is broken on the deities. Then the date for marriage is fixed. The priest consults the almanac and tells about the details.

Among the Thethhwar Rauts, the bridegroom's party carries two earthen vessels white-washed with lime-paste at the time of phaldan. These are filled with kari-roti (eating preparations). Two saries are also brought which are presented to the bride. The bride's party feasts their relatives with the kari-roti brought by the bridegroom's party. The ornaments given at this time are scota (silver neck band) or tilari (gold); kardhan (waist-chain); pair-patti or kathar or toda (silver anklet); kada (silver wrist-band), etc. Vermilion and bangles are the essential articles for this ceremony. The bride wears the ornaments and new clothes presented by the bridegroom's party and sits for the ritual worship.

Among the Deshaha Rauts, kaldar (necklace), nagmori (earlet) and toda or kathar (anklet) are the essential ornaments to be given to the bride in the phaldan ceremony. After the selection of the bride, Rs. 5/- or Rs. 10/- is given to her as teeka (marriage payment) and thereafter, on an auspicious day, the 'Phaldan' takes place.

The phaldan ceremony of the Bhorathiya Rauts resembles with that of the Kanaujia Rauts. The phaldan of Memav, Darhool, Athhoriya, Bandaiya and Magadha Rauts also is similar to the
above-mentioned Rauts. The Kawarai Rauts do not call the priest to perform the phaldan ceremony, but is done by the head of the respective families with the help of the derhadhin. Among the Kosariya Rauts the work of the priest is performed by a Halba tribal man, who is known as 'Bhandari'. Bhandari comes on the day of phaldan and writes the lagan.

At the time of selecting the girl for marriage, the Kosariya Rauts, in case she is too young, wrap her with a panchha (a piece of cloth) and the bride's parents take a 'kiss' of the boy. In phaldan, they go to the bride's village in a group of 20 to 25. Both male and female members attend this ceremony. They carry bangles, sari, ribbon, two coconuts and jaggery. Five persons of the community sit and worship the 'gaur' (made of cowdung). They break the coconut which is distributed among the children with jaggery. The bride is dressed with the new clothes.

They are then feasted. The bride is brought to the bride-groom's house for marriage. I am giving here a description of the marriage of Kosariya Rauts, because it differs with the marriages of the other sections of the Rauts. This marriage is known as 'Thheeka' marriage or 'Chhote vivah'.

The bride is taken to the bride-groom's house after phaldan. In the same night, 'choolmati' takes place. In this ritual, the women go to the pasture and bring earth from there. Tel (Anointing of oil) is done on the same night by the unmarried boys and girls. On the following day, 'Main' takes place and they bring the 'magrohan' from the baiga's house. On this day, both tel (oil) and haldi (turmeric) are anointed on the body of the bride and bridegroom. On the same day, the bride's party comes for 'chaushiya'. They are welcomed and feasted.
Kankan of mango leaves are tied around their wrist. The parents of the boy and the girl observe fast on this day. Then 'Bhavar' is performed led by derha-derhin, with which the marriage rituals terminate.

The bride's party takes the girl with them and when attains puberty, she is sent back again to her husband's house.

The marriage opposite to Thaaska vivah, is 'Bade Vivah' in which the boy's party goes to the girl's house and marriage takes place there.

Before marriage, all the necessary articles, such as, rice, pulse, vegetables, clothes, utensils and other things are purchased from the market. Relatives are invited to attend the marriage. They come even from distant villages.

Marriages are performed within 3, 5, or 7 days and these are known as tinteliya, pachteliya and satateliya, respectively. Three and five tels (rubbing the spouse with oil and turmeric) are the common customs among the Rauts.

Mandapachchhadan:

On the first day of marriage, mandapachchhadan (erection of marriage-booth in front of the main doorway of the spouses' home) takes place. The male members of the family go to the forest and cut down the boughs of gular, mahuwa, jamun or gasti tree. Before bringing the 'madawa' (local name for the booth indicating boughs) at the house, the women worship and sprinkle turmeric on these. After that, the madawa is brought to home and a shade is made on the courtyard where the marriage ceremony is held. Such a shade is also made on the doorway. Usually, the leaves of jamun (black-berry) are used for mandapachchhadan.

At night, women go to the bank of the tank for 'chool-mati'. The Suwasin bears the parra (bamboo-tray) and the
mother of the boy or the girl wears new clothes. She digs
the earth and brings some clay from there. Female members
of the family go to bring the 'mangrohan' (wooden pole of
doomar tree) from the Baiga's house reciting bhajana and
marriage songs with the accompaniment of music. The mother
or a senior woman (ego's father's elder brother's wife)
keeps on fast on the day before the marriage and after 'tel-
haldi' breaks her fast by taking fruits. On the same night,
the priest initiates the tel-haldi with sacred incantations
in the marriages of Kanajia, Thethhwar, Desaha, Darhoal,
Aththoriya, Bandaiya, Menav and Bhorathiya Rauts, which is
later on continued by the Sadasins.

Deopoojan or Dectalla :

This ceremony is observed on the 2nd day of marriage
among the Tinteliya Rauts and 3rd day by the Pancheliya Rauts.
This ritual is performed by women in co-operation with Baiga
(priest of the village deities). The women go to the place
of the divine deities of the village and offer them tel-haldi.
The remaining part of the tel-haldi is applied to the bride
and the groom.

Hardiyahi :

On the 3rd day, the Tinteliya and on the 4th day, the
Pancheliya Rauts perform this ritual. Whole village is
expected to participate in this ritual. All the relatives
and friends are invited on this occasion. They play with
colours and turmeric paste by sprinkling that on each other.
Specially, the womenfolk take much interest in it. Men are
welcomed and offered pan, biri, areca-nut, etc. Among the
Kanajia Rauts, the houseowner distributes new clothes to
his relatives on this day.

On the same day, the Tinteliya Rauts and on the fifth
day, the Panchteliya Rauts bathe the bridegroom. This is called 'nahdori'. On the same day, relatives are invited to a feast and start for the wedding in the same evening. Often they do not take with them a band-party, but themselves play pipes and flutes. Before leaving the house, the women make arti of the bridegroom. The Deshaha Rauts carry the bridegroom on their shoulders to the border of the village, from where they go to the bride's village by available conveyance. Deshaha Rauts do not use palanquin during the marriage.

Pargahani:

When they reach the bride's village, they are welcomed by the bride's party. But the pargahani is done at night or in the next morning. If, they perform this ritual at night, they have to arrange for feasts thrice, but performance of 'pargahani' in the morning reduces it into two. On this occasion, old and respected persons of the village are invited to welcome the bridegroom's party at a certain place to invite them to participate in the rituals. Both the fathers-in-law embrace each other and go to the bride's home. There the bridegroom is worshipped by waving the oil lamp and the 'baratis' are entertained with pan, biri, etc. They are provided a janavasa to lodge.

Gordhoi:

The derha of the bride's party comes to 'janavasa' and washes the feet of the bridegroom and other members of the party by pouring water. After that 'baratis' are invited for the feast. The bridegroom is sent his meals at his lodging. He does not attend the feast. The feast is called 'doorbhatta'.

In the morning derha is called again. He carries all the materials of nahdori (ceremonial bath). Seven soharis
(wheat flour cakes fried in oil) are wrapped with thread. The bride is bathed with water filled in kalashkarna (earthen vessel on which the oil lamp is lighted from the very first day of tel). Suvasin covers the face of the bride with cloth and makes seven rounds of the maerojan, after which the madawa is touched by the bride. Kankan (seven iron hooks attached to a thread) sent by the bridegroom's party is tied on her left wrist while the Kankan sent to the bridegroom is tied on his right wrist.

Paniagrahan:

Then the bridegroom is called. He comes sitting in a palanquin, in case of Kamaujia, Menev, Darhoal, Athboriya, Bandaiya, Bhorathiya and Thethhwar Rauts. Women make arti and mark teeka of curd and rice on the forehead of the bridegroom. He is then taken to the courtyard where the madawa is fixed for the wedding ceremony. Among the Jheria, Kosariya, Kawarai and Magadha Rauts, this ritual is performed by derha and derhin. Among rest of the sections, this ritual is done by the priest. He reads the sacred texts and the bride and the bridegroom worship Gauri-Ganapat (Parvati- and Shiva) made of cow dung. The bride wears a yellow sari and maux (crown) is tied on her forehead, while the bridegroom wears the maux on his head. They are seated on a new cloth, and then the ends of their cloth are tied into a knot, which is known as 'gathhjorav'. An areca-nut is tied into that knot.

The right hand of the bridegroom is kept below the left hand of the bride and upon that the hands of her parents are kept. A small roll of flour is placed on that and wrapped with cloth. Thereafter, the brother of the bride pours 'roohan pani' (turmeric water) on the flour which is collected in a pot. There is kept a sil (stone slab) on which seven closed singholis (small wooden vessels) are put and a
muhoozhari (open singhohi) is also kept filled with vermilion. These are brought from the bridegroom's house. When they make seven circumambulations of the sacred fire, the bride pushes down the singhohis in each round, one at a time, by her left leg. The bridegroom follows the bride and keeps his hand on her head. Then, they sit down. The bridegroom fills the marr (hair-parting) of the bride seven times with vermilion from nose to marr. He unveils the 'ghunghat' (veil) of the bride six times a little and on the seventh time fully. Mamasasur (husband's mother's brother) or Kurasasur (husband's elder brother) throws a sari on the bride from a little distance, because he comes in the relation of avoidance. Derhin replaces the marr by a new cloth which is called 'sudharauni or pochhouni'.

Thereafter presentations are made to the couple. Parents of the bride give pachabar, i.e. five utensils, five turmeric, five areca nuts and five cloths. Other things which are given may be mirror, comb, powder, oil, soap, blouse, petti-coat, sari, cow, plank, quilt, mattress, etc. Sweetmeats are also given. These are special preparations of papachi, laddoo, etc. After that, all the relatives and other persons drop the roohan-pani on the feet of the bride and the bridegroom, mark a teeka of rice coloured with turmeric and give the presents.

Then the 'hom' ceremony is done. Curd is thrown on fire to normalise the heat. This is called 'havan'. The priest narrates the story of seven girls and takes vows from the bride and the bridegroom of devotion, fidelity and service to each other.

Ceremonial gift-giving is done to the priest. He distributes rice to the standing persons which they offer to Gauri-Ganapati and bless the bride and the bridegroom. They
are carried inside the house by the derhin and showed the picture of Maay (mother) sketched on the wall. The cover of Maay is opened by the bridegroom and a series of jokes are exchanged. Mur is put off and the Jhanga-ranga (ceremonial dress worn by the bridegroom) is kept on the parda and he is given to eat the 'basf' (rice left over-night in water).

All the 'baratis' are feasted. Baratis of other castes are given provisions and they cook their dinner separately. After that, the wedding party is bade farewell. Again, the 'parohhan' is repeated. Firstly, it was done in the bridegroom's house at the time of departure of the wedding party. Women of the bride's family make palm-prints of the water of the kalah on their maurs and make arti of them. At this time, the whole atmosphere becomes sad. The parents of the bride begin to sob and are joined by the bride, who too feel very sad, due to her impending departure from her family of orientation. They are seen off up to the outskirt of the village by the bride's party.

When they reach the bridegroom's village, they visit the place of village deities to gain blessings and offer rice to them. Coconut is also broken on the pedestal of some of the deities. Then they reach the bridegroom's house. They are stopped on the door. Women keeping salt in their sali (one side of the sari used as a bag by tying both the corners with the waist making a hollow passage) and holding a khilai or mathani (churner) covered with leaves and Kalaash make seven rounds of the palanquin. They put a handful of salt after every round on the scoon (bamboo-winnower) kept over the palanquin. They offer coconut, burn incense and then take down the bride and the bridegroom. The derhin holds the hand of the bride and they are taken inside the house.
The bride makes seven palm-prints on the cloth spread at the door and makes 'taqqa' of bandan on them. The bridegroom tramples down the seven small flour pots placed on that cloth. They reach the place of the home-deity. The bride keeps muhooghari singholi and vermilion in her 'cali'. Then, the rice-exchange takes place. The bride gives the full singholi of rice to the bridegroom and takes it in return. This is repeated for seven times. Mauur-pasa is put off. That rice becomes the property of the suvasin. Here, the bride and the bridegroom eat taamai (milk and rice) in the pot given by the bride's parents.

The priest is called and the ritual of kankan-untying takes place. At first, it is opened by the bride. The bride opens the kankan of the bridegroom and the bridegroom opens the kankan of the bride. Among the Kawarai and Kosariya Raut the kankan happens to be of mango leaves, while in rest of the sections, it is found to be of iron-hooks. Then the gambling starts. A coin, cowrie and a necklace are sunk into a pot filled with rochan-pani. Both of them try to get the coin and whosoever, gets it, wins the game. It is done for seven times. The winner is applauded by the sitting people. Then they play with cowries.

A ceremonial bath takes place. The bride pours water on him the bridegroom and makes seven palm-prints on his back. This is also done by the bridegroom.

If the spouses are grown-up, 'gauna' (second marriage) takes place with the marriage and in case of immaturity, it is given a due gap of time. After four days, the relatives come to take the bride back which is known as 'chauthiya'. The persons who come for 'chauthiya' are warmly welcomed and feasted.
In pathkouni or gauna the bridegroom's party is invited. They go to the bride's village. The wife of the barber goes to invite the relatives and other friendly households of the village. A design of flour is structured. Again the gift-giving takes place. The bride wears a new sari and meets her relatives. The 'baratis' are feasted and seen off.

The Kansujia Rauts have the same system of rites as the upper caste Hindus perform in the marriage. They call the Brahman priest to perform the marriage and send a lokarhin (a woman sent with the bride to help and to guide her) with the bride. She lives with her for 3-4 days and returns back when the relatives of the bride come for chaupati.

Among the Deshaha Rauts, the whole village (all caste members except the untouchables) are invited to cut madawa. They bring the wood on a cart. Those persons who attend the ceremony of cutting madawa and belong to other castes, are provided with ration (rice, pulse, salt, etc.) and the persons from the caste are feasted at home.

Among the Deshaha Rauts, the priest initiates the tel-haldi with sacred incantations on the first day of marriage, which is later on continued by the suwasins. On the second day, mai-mauni and phara-panthas are prepared. Mai-mauni mauni means the preparation of eatable things done on the area fenced by cloths. This preparation is tied with the madawa erected over the courtyard. It is taken off after marriage by the derha when the madawa is broken. This preparation is eaten by them later.

Deotalla (worship of the village deities) also takes place on this day. They go to the shrine of Thakur Deo and offer him tel-haldi. On the 3rd day, hardiyahi takes place, which is celebrated first by females and later on by males.
On the same day, the wedding party starts for the bride's village. On the fourth day, they are welcomed by the bride's party which is called 'pargahan'. The bride-groom is brought to the bride's home. He is worshipped by women at the door and is made to touch the parta ties on the door by his dagger.

The Deshaha Rauts do not use palanquin in marriage. Only this is the difference between Deshaha and Menav marriages. At the same time, they perform 'binouki'. In 'binouki' the bride and the bridegroom are brought to the place of the deity by suwasins and derha lifting them on their shoulders, respectively. A fencing of cloth is made there, which is circumambulated by the bride and the bridegroom seven times throwing rice on it. 'Lalbhaji eating' also takes place in which the younger sister of the bride tries to feed vegetables to the bridegroom. The bridegroom is provided a special lodging in the proximity of the bride's home. Other baratis return to their janavasa and are invited for the feast. The fathers-in-law daub gulal on each other, but, in joke, they apply lamp-black, kerwachhi (cooking vessels šāhōt), etc. Marriage songs are recited at this time. This feast is called 'doorbhatta'. After doorbhatta, 'sohag-deway' takes place. The bride is taken to the washerman's house. Derha of bridegroom goes there with all commodities required, along with vermillion. He gives a new sari to the washer-woman to wear. She fills her own mash with vermillion and rubs the mash of the bride with her mash leaving the mark of vermillion. At afternoon, the information of wedding is given to the relatives and friends. The last ceremony of marriage is conducted by the priest with sacred text reading.

They return to the bridegroom's house and a goat of khaira or white colour is sacrificed to the family deity. Some people offer coconut and some cut lemon fruit, too.
Among the Deshaha Rauts, marriage between sister's son and his own daughter is not permissible. Marriage between the mother's brother's children and his own children is also not permitted. The caste meeting held at Kera-Jheria (Champa) in 1959 made the rule that Brahman should be employed to officiate in the marriage and it should be completed within three days.

In Thethwar's marriage, on the first day 'madava', second day 'desotalls', third day 'cheekat', fourth day 'hardiyahi' and on the fifth day 'barat' takes place. On the day of tel, they prepare meethha-roti (sweet-roti). Milk, jaggery-water and phara-pakuwa (wat) are also prepared. Bara-bhat is feasted. At the day of 'nayan', they offer food to gods and tie it with yellow rice in the madava. Seven persons are feasted, five 'kauras' of meals covering their heads with a cloth. On the 3rd day, females celebrate hardiyahi and on the 4th day, it is celebrated by the males. There is no celebration of 'schag-daway' or 'sindoor poohhouni' among the Thethhwar Rauts. In this section of the Rauts, the head of the bridegroom is shaved leaving a sacred tuft of hair (shoti) before marriage.

Among the Kawareli Rauts, on the first day of marriage a community-feast is given. The bride and the bridegroom are bathed and dressed with new clothes. They are besmeared with tel-haldi on the first day of marriage. On the second day, the village-folk are invited to cut 'madava', and on the third day, 'hardiyahi' is held. On this day, seven unmarried boys stand underneath the 'madava' round the 'magrohan'. The bridegroom wounds the thread seven times around them and tie mango leaves at seven places. In this way, they prepare the 'Kankan'. Four are tied at the bridegroom's house, and three are sent to the bride's home. On the fourth day, the 'barat' goes to the bride's village. They are given a feast and on the fifth day, 'pargahani' and wedding takes place.
They return to the bridegroom's village, where the 'bhawan' is held. The bride and the bridegroom touch the 'kankan' of each other and 'derha-derhin' take out the kankan. Then they are bathed. Both the bride and the bridegroom exchange the 'chinnundari' (ring of copper, made by the blacksmith, for the little finger).

On the same day, the bride's party come for 'chaushiya' and they take the bride back to their village on the next day. After one or two months, 'pathhouni' is performed, if the bride is grown-up.

Among the Bandaiya Rauts, the priest officiates in the marriage and a palanquin is used. When the 'baratis' return from the bride's village, they sacrifice a goat or a pig beneath the palanquin. In case of pig, the head is buried and the carcass is taken by Dewar caste people who are pig-herders and eat pig-meat. They can also offer coconut in spite of sacrificing a goat.

Choori:

It is the most common form of marriage. It is done with the consent of the caste panchayat. Two saris and ornaments are given to the bride by the groom. In this form of marriage priestly rituals are not observed, and simply the bride is accepted by the groom as his wife by giving her bangles to wear. In case of a virgin, the 'tel' ceremony is held. A widow has not to observe the ceremonial performances if she is remarried. When a married woman deserts her husband, she gets married by 'choori' custom.

Among the Menav Rauts, the man who marries pays Rs. 50/- to the caste members and gives a sari, ornaments and bangles.
to the woman whom he takes as his wife. The Darhoal Rauts worship Gauri-Ganapati before marriage. The Kawarai Rauts give one khandi of paddy to the bride's parents and two saris - one for the bride and another for her mother. A feast is given to the caste members. The custom of choori is almost the same among all sections of the Rauts.

**Marriage by exchange:**

This is locally known as 'gurawat'. In this form of marriage, brides are exchanged with the families where suitable bridegrooms are found. Then the regular marriage is performed with the ceremonial rites.

**Junior levirate:**

Junior levirate is prevalent among the Rauts except the Kanaujia Rauts. If, the husband of a young woman is dead, the younger brother of the deceased accepts her as his wife and have normal sexual relations, along with taking responsibility of her upkeep. In this way, the woman gets security and the family property remains undivided. When it does not seem suitable for the widow, she gets married outside the family with another man of the caste by 'choori'.

**Secondary marriage:**

In some cases, secondary marriages are also practised. If the wife is dead prematurely after begetting children, the man marries another woman for taking care of his children and of the house. In case of sterility of the wife, secondary marriage is made and both the wives can live together.

**Baramdi marriage:**

In this form of marriage, if a girl married very young,
becomes a widow, she is married to another man. She is regarded as good as a virgin. The marriage is solemnised in a very simple manner at the bride’s house. ‘Tel-haldi’ does not take place, because it has been done earlier, and as it is the sacred custom that a girl can be married with full ceremonies only once in her life.

**Dera vivah**

This form of marriage is generally in vogue among the Jheria, Kawaci and Kosariya Rauts of Chhattisgarh. In this marriage the priest does not officiate. The derhas stand before and behind the bride and bridegroom and perform all the rituals of the marriage. The work of derha is done by the mother’s brother or the husband of the bridegroom’s father’s sister or the bridegroom’s sister’s husband, who takes a leading part in the celebration. They are also known as ‘suwasa’. Similarly, there are the women on the girl’s side, usually father’s sister or the daughters of the same family, who are known as ‘suwasin’ or ‘derhin’, who celebrate the marriage. In this way, this marriage is performed by derha-derhin.

**Paithoo marriage**

Paithoo marriage or marriage by intrusion is also seen in some parts of rural Chhattisgarh. In this marriage, if a woman from the lower castes voluntarily goes to the house of a man of Raut caste and does not come out. She is accepted by the man as his wife to avoid scandal. It may also happen that being in love with a man for some time, the woman simply walks into his house and declares him to be her husband. It is usually resorted to when an unmarried woman or a widow has an illicit connection and becomes pregnant. This causes sometimes a feud and involvement of both groups. Paithoo
marriage, though not prestigious, is sanctioned among the Rauts, if, the woman belongs to the same group.

**Some other observances:**

It is also found that if a girl is of the boy's choice and both fall in love and do not see any chance of their union being approved by the society, they simply run away and get married by 'choori'. In this case, they sacrifice a goat and give a feast to their relatives. In this feast, bara-roti is also prepared. The man who deviates from the caste norm is again taken back into the caste, if he gives a community feast and pays the imposed fine.

Ratan-kanyakas (precious or pious girls) are also married in the caste. If a man has daughters from his first wife and after her death, he marries a woman from other caste, his children from the first wife get married within the caste. These girls are known as 'Ratan-kanyakas'. The wife of Jagat Ram Kanaujia of Bhaesgar eloped with a Mussalman and after two months came back. She was outcasted. But her daughter was married in the caste.

**Cross-cousin marriage** is prevalent in this caste. The degrees of relationship avoided in such marriage are the close relatives of mother's and father's side upto three generations.

**Bunda or Bihouti:**

Among the Deshaha Rauts it is found that if a man elopes with a married woman, he has to pay Rs. 1000/- to her previous husband as compensation for loss of his wife. If the woman deserts her second and goes to another man, the second husband is to be paid Rs. 500/- by the third one. If the parents of the woman co-operate in this affair, they are fined Rs. 500/- by the caste panchayat. This money is
spent on community feast. In case of not paying the amount of 'bunda' (fine) the man is outcasted. The amount of 'bunda' is given to the deserted man in the caste meeting. Out of the total amount, Rs. 100/- is deposited in the caste-treasury, Rs. 100/- for other expenditures, Rs. 25/- or Rs. 50/- for religious purposes and the rest is paid to the man for the loss of his wife.

Among the Menav Rauts, the amount of 'bunda' is Rs. 900/- which was previously Rs. 500/-. The deserted man is given Rs. 700/- as compensation. A little amount is spent for Gautiya and Panch and the rest of the amount is deposited into the caste-treasury, which is given as loan to needy persons of the community and a nominal interest is taken from them. They take a receipt from the deserted person and given him the amount of 'bunda'. As for example, Ganesh Ram, S/o. Kalas Ram from Tingipur was given Rs. 340/- on 1st February, 1967 which is written in the caste register, recorded by the Gautiya of Puresha.

Among the Kawarai Rauts, the amount of 'bunda' is Rs. 350/-, while among the Athhorriya Rauts it is Rs. 700/-. Among the Bandaiya Rauts the 'Bunda' is Rs. 500/-. The amount of 'bunda' is also Rs. 500/- among the Ththethhwaras. Among these sections, i.e. Menav, Kawarai, Athhorriya, Bandaiya and Ththethwar, the amount of 'bunda' is only given to the man of the first marriage, while among the Deshaha Rauts, the second husband is also entitled to get the amount of 'bunda'.

Other important observances:

The use of the wood of 'doomar' (magrohan) is a symbol of perpetuity (Doomar tree represents perpetual life, because it is always laden with fruits. New fruits come in the tree
before the fruits of the previous season have fallen away),
of life and for fertility, like the fertile tree of Doonmar
always laden with fruits.

It is also likely that the use of 'ficus' wood may be
have something to do with the fertility cult. Hutton (1931)
mentions that, "It is probably on account of its milk-like
sap that the ficus is associated with fertility cults in
Africa, Italy and New Guinea as well as in Assam and Southern
India.....".

The leaves of jamun and mango are used to make a shade
over the courtyard and doorway of the house because they are
evergreen and do not dry up quickly. The symbol appears to be
perpetuation, continuity and stability of union.

Adoption is also prevalent among the Raut caste. If
children are not born in a family, they adopt the son of their
brother, maternal uncle or sister. If he is not capable of
bringing up the child, he returns him after some time to its
parents. If the parents are dead, the child is brought up
by its near relatives.

Marriage brings an important change in the life of a
Raut. He is then laden with all types of social responsibili-
ties. Both of the spouses discuss all the problems of life
and try to solve them by mutual co-operation. When a child
is born, their attention is devoted to bring it up carefully.
In this way, their thinking begins to be focussed in their
own procreated family.

Among most of the sections of the Rauts, the scope of
maintaining a joint family is very little, because of their
small land-holding and bad economic condition. Soon after
the marriage, the couple separate and concentrate their
economic activities for themselves. But among the Kanaujia, Thethhwar and Deshaha Rauts where the land-holding is more and considered as important factor, partition takes place only in extreme controversial circumstances. The newly wedded couple earn their livelihood separately, which causes break-up of the joint family.

Old age:

Old people have got an important place in the Raut caste community. Till now they are the leaders of the caste community. They get love and respect from all ages. Children and youth gain blessings from them on auspicious occasions and take suggestions in social and caste activities. They remain at home or go to the jungle to graze cattle. They never sit idle and remain engaged in some work, such as, milking the cow, selling milk, grazing, rope-making, etc. Among the Kanaujia Rauts, the old man of the family who generally happens to be wiser and experienced than others, represents the family; and in the same way, the oldest and wisest men of the village lead the society. They conduct and participate in the caste-meetings, and their presence in religious social activities is essential.

Some decades ago, this caste was fully engaged in their caste occupations of cattle-herding and grazing, but, now-a-days, they also participate in the village activities. Old persons are yet sticking to their traditional customs and old norms. They are sending their children to schools to be educated and the guidance of society and leadership are gradually coming in the hands of the new educated people. The position of old people however is still intact in Raut Caste.
Death Rites:

Death is the natural termination of life. One who begets life has to die. Rauts think that people come on this earth for a certain period fixed by the God. They perform their social and religious duties and are called back by Him. At the time of death, if there is any sign of unnatural death, they call the Guniya or Ojha and resort to 'jhar-phunk'. If the man dies an unnatural death, he does not go to heaven, but haunts upon the earth as a malevolent spirit. Rauts have faith in heaven and hell. It is their belief that a good man goes to heaven and a bad man to hell. It is a rite of separation.

Sets of rituals performed immediately before death:

When a person is on his death-bed, the whole family is beset with agony. At that time, he is given 'Gangajal' (Ganjee water), sanctified by 'basil' leaves, Mahaprasad, etc. A recital of Gita, Mahabharat, Ramayan and other religious scriptures is made. He makes gifts of money, land, foodgrains, etc, to the Brahman or other distressed people. The gift of a cow is very significant, and it is believed that the dying man who does so, will be able to cross the Baitarani river (fictitious), holding its tail, and reach the heaven. Otherwise, he would face insurmountable troubles in crossing this river of blood.

Sets of rituals performed just after death:

The dead-body is bathed and anointed with tel-haldi. Application of tel-haldi has manifold significance. The Rauts think that the body is purified and conditioned for easy-burning. Some persons think that at first, tel-haldi is applied at the time of marriage, and for the second time after death, so that, the man may enter into a new life.
He is wrapped with a shroud and covered with a cloth of his length, which is known as 'kafan'. If, the dead is a female, all the ornaments are taken off.

Now the relatives of the dead person arrange to carry the corpse to the grave-yard. A bier is made of wood-sticks or bamboo. The dead-body is laid on the bier. They offer flowers, sandal-paste, basil leaves and 'gulal' on the dead body, and then it is carried by four persons to the grave-yard. If there are four sons of the dead, they generally carry the bier. Otherwise, it is carried by his near relatives. In order that the dead person may not get any trouble, they throw small coins on the way to the grave-yard and utter loudly 'Ram Nam Satya Hai' (The name of Ram is true), which is followed by 'Satya Hai Bhai Satya Hai' (Brother, it is true, really true). When they reach the grave-yard, they sprinkle water at any clean spot and put down the bier there.

The Rautas follow two systems - cremation and burial. The local term for cremation is 'Kathhi' and for burial is 'Mati'. The funeral rites are also as rigidly followed as other rites of birth and marriage.

The dead body is burnt by some sections of the Rauts, such as, Kanaujia, Deshaha, Thethhwar, etc., while it is buried by the Jheria, Kawrai and Koseriya Rauts. In the former sections, only the married persons are cremated, while the children are buried.

Kathhi:

In this system of death-rite, 'pinda-dan' is observed. It is conducted by the priest. When the dead body is taken out from the house, the first 'pinda-dan' is done on the door, second on the way, and the third on the pyre.
When they carry the dead body to the grave-yard, they take some sheaves of paddy-straw and an earthen pitcher containing fire. A wooden peg is inserted into the earth on the spot of cremation, and thereafter, logs of wood are arranged to make a pyre. They put a coin beneath the pyre. Then they make a round of the pyre and lay the corpse on it with the back upwards, along the north-south direction. The head is put in the north and the face is then turned to the east. Above that cowdung cakes and woods are placed to cover the dead body. The priest performs the 'pinda-dan' and the son of the dead or his sister's son sets fire to the pyre by sheaves of straw through the head-side. Other persons help in keeping the pyre burning till the full disposal of the body. After lighting the pyre, they go back and sit at a little distance from it.

They keep a long stick to touch the head of the dead person. When the head breaks, the sister's son touches the head with the long stick dipped in ghee. The mourners throw five sticks each at the dead body dipped in ghee and then start to take bath in a tank. They do not look back and stop on the bank of the tank. They leave an earthen pitcher on the cremation ground, filled with water, in which they had carried fire.

They bring two 'urai-roots' from the grave-yard and fix these up into the bed of the tank, just beside the 'ghat' (bathing steps). One is given to the women, which they fix beside their ghat. One tooth-stick (brush) of 'chitchita' is also put there. One man is then sent to inform the women of the mourning family about their reaching the ghat. They come in a line to the tank, each taking some 'til' (sesame). They are led by the eldest female member of the family, who is also higher in kinship relation. This funeral procession is known as 'nahavan'. The woman take bath, offer 'tilanjali' (one
offering of the 'til' is followed by five offerings of water with folded hands) to the urai-root, and then they return back in a line. In the same way, the men also take bath, offer 'tialnjali' and return back to home. This ritual is repeated for ten days. It is believed that this offering goes to the dead person.

When the men reach their houses, they are given a lota of water to wash their legs. The persons from other castes attending the funeral give rice, pulse, etc. to the deadman's family, which are collected in a basket for feeding the family members. The daughters and womenfolk of the house cook the food. The wife of the barber supplies 'patari' (leaf plates) and khonia (used in place of mug, made of a single leaf). A khonia-ful of meal mixed with curd is kept at the door on a clean and besmeared spot. Relatives and family members are invited for the feast. This food is taken only once in the day, with curd. At first, the men, and then the women take the food. The chief mourner who lights up the pyre does not take rice for nine nights.

On the third day, they bring the bones from the cremation ground. Some ashes are consigned into the tank, and the rest kept in a pitcher or in a sunny bag. Bones are put in a parat (a flat brass utensil). They bring cowdung water and besmeared the place of the pyre. The peg which had been fixed there is then pulled out, and an earthen lamp is lighted there, and uradi, salt, cotton and cotton seeds are thrown around the lamp. They sprinkle milk on that spot and come to the tank with the bones for immersion.

The ash is sent for consignment into the river or a tank. For this purpose two persons are engaged. They do not, at any time, put the ashes on the ground, on the way.
persons who can go to Prayag to consign the bones in the Ganges start on this day, and those who are unable to do so, take the bones to a tank to immerse. They fill it in an earthen pitcher, cover it with a lid, and keep it in a pit covered with earth, beneath a peepal tree. Two more earthen pitchers are brought from the potter's house. They are hung over the buried ashes by a thread. One pitcher is kept just over the bones, hung up from a tree. A hole is pierced into it and a cotton wick is placed through it, so that the water inside may fall down in drops. The other pitcher contains many slits and an earthen lamp is lighted inside it every day, up to the completion of the death rituals. The chief mourner offers 365 lotas of water at the root of a peepal tree on the 3rd day of the death. It is their belief that God Vasudeva lives in the peepal tree, for which this specific genus is known as 'Ghantaha peepal'.

On this day, purificatory rites are observed. The washer-woman collects the cloths from the houses of those persons who have attended the funeral rites. In return of her services, she is given a sari and some money and foodgrains. On the first day of the death, the relatives of the mourning family change their earthen cooking vessels and do not use the food cooked before it. They bring water from the tank or well and prepare meals to feed their family members. They wash their cloths and get purified. This ritual is also strictly observed in every family of the kins.

On the 3rd day, at the bank of the tank, the barber trims and shaves the hair, beard and moustache of the mourners. They are given oil to anoint and biri-shongi to smoke. The wife of the barber touches the nails of the women with mahani (nail-cutter), and then they are ritually purified. The women also anoint their body with oil and take bath. On this day,
the women of the deceased house carry some pulses and after washing, prepare 'bara'. It is known as 'dokhaha bara'. In the ritual feast, they are given a bara to eat.

Relatives from other villages are informed and invited. Upto the third day, the ritual of 'solhatti' (food cooked by donated grains) is observed, and after that varieties of food are prepared. The chief mourner does not ask for food for the second time, and eats only what he has been served for the first time. Hearths are not lighted at night in the mourner's family and they are invited by their relatives for meals.

On the tenth day, they offer pindas. Five utensils (huala, doowa, batuwa, thali and maliya), cloth, rice, pulse, rice of karhani (a kind of paddy), flour, milk, money, til, java and plank or cot, etc. are given to the priest. All these are brought at the place of pinda-dan, i.e. on the bank of the tank. Then fire is lighted with cowdung. Til, java and honey are mixed with the rice and cooked on that fire. When it has boiled well, pindas are made from it. Thereafter, a small trench of 6 inches depth is made there. An earthen lamp is kept there, which is called 'patalidiya'. It is then covered with earth in a way that it may not be extinguished. The barber brings ten pataries (each patar is made of three leaves), which are kept facing the earth on the place made clean. Ten pindas are kept on the pataries. Thereafter, ten smaller pindas are placed on them. A khonia is also kept there. The chief mourner squats upon one leg and offers water on the pindas by the khonia. According to the number of the pindas, the number of khonias are also increased. On each of these pindas, fire-offerings are made. In this process, they turn the hand from one pinda to the other. Rest of the water is offered to Vasudeva. Then the women are informed.
The women of the family come to bathe and purificatory rites are started. The barber shaves the hair of the chief mourner and the beard of other persons attending the funeral rite. If the husband of a woman is dead, her bangles are broken by the wife of the barber and the vermilion dot is wiped off. She wears the dress of the widow from this day, which is generally a white sari having no border. She applies black earth on her body and then takes bath. At that time, a white sari is given to her by her parents' family. Then a ritual presentation of cloths, ornaments and other commodities is made to the mourners, which are returned back to their givers, which is known as 'Ransari'.

Then the Ekadasi pinda is offered. All the remains of the ten pindas are cleared and the spot is besmeared with cowdung. The chief mourner bathes and changes his cloth. A banana leaf is put there, on which the Ekadasi pinda is offered. The priest utters the incantations and the cremator offers water from eleven khonias. After that the priest takes the leaf with the pinda and touches every part of the body of the cremator with it, and then puts it on a parat. It is consigned in waist-deep water of the tank, and after bath, the mourner changes his cloth. All the persons then take bath. After that ritual worship, they make 'dan-dakshina' (charity) and promise to give something more, such as, rice, pulse, etc. or supply a 'hau'la' of water daily, which is known as 'barkhasan'.

If the bones are not consigned into the Ganges on the third day, then they carry these in a pitcher, or wrapped with leaves to their house. This is put either on a wooden seat in the courtyard over a cleansed and besmeared spot, or under the earth near the basis platform. An earthen lamp is lighted there. The women sprinkle milk on that and make aarti. It is sometimes hung up by a rope in the cattle-shed.
Pagbandhi is done in the same night. In the next morning, they take bath and present a cot to the priest. The priest is given a dhoti, a shirt, a cap, an umbrella and a cow or a calf. During the ritual at Murpar village the priest daubs sandal-paste on every member of the family and a turban is offered to the woman's father's relative (if a woman is dead), and next to Guru, in case of males, money is offered to the 'paga' (turban). The priest gives rice to the prayer and takes vows, which are followed by dakshina. All these things are sent to his house. A feast is given then. All the members of the family and relatives are feasted, but the persons who participate in this rite from other castes are provided with 'bagari' (rice, pulse, salt, etc.). All the relatives give 'sahadani'. After paga, a new cloth is thrown over the roof for appeasement of the dead.

**Note:**

In this system of death rite, a trench of 3'-4' depth and equal to the length of the dead person is dug out. They keep a coin into it, and then the corpse is laid on it. Then some salt is thrown over the body, and they offer five handfuls of earth on the corpse sitting at the head-side, which is kept in north-south direction. This is done first by the family members, and later by others. An earthen lamp is lighted there for ten days. A lota of water is also kept there. There is only the difference that pinda-dan is not performed in this system.

Among the Raut caste, those who are not married are buried. Persons who die of small-pox are buried. The pregnant woman is buried, not cremated. If a child is dead, the death rites end within 3, 5 or 7 days. The reason behind the burial of the children is that that they are not incorporated
into the world before their marriage and therefore, they are buried, not cremated, in order to return them to their place of origin. (The earth is the home of children before they are born— not symbolically as a mother, but physically, as it is the home of the dead.)
Chaparasi (Bailiff) of Theththwvar Raut

Caste meeting of the Theththwvar Raut