

**International Conference – 2025: Developed India @ 2047****Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025****Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi****The Role of Tribal Festivals in Promoting Cultural Sustainable in Jharkhand****Deepika Birua**

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Jharkhand is a land of diverse culture known for its very rich heritage and diverse tradition. It is a land of numerous tribal communities. There are 32 individual tribes in this state, individual tribes has their own specific identity, rituals. In which most population is of Santhal, Oraon, Munda and Ho respectively. These 32 individual types of tribes which are categorised under two groups i.e. Austric and Dravid. Each tribe have their own specific identity, rituals, customs etc. The tribes of Jharkhand are originally classified on the basis of their cultural types. The culture of this state is unique blend of tribal and nontribal rituals and customs. The state of Jharkhand celebrates many tribal festivals. Some of the famous festivals are Karma, Sohari, Sarhul, Tusu parab etc. Each tribes have their own unique culture, tradition. Culture of Jharkhand's tribes shows some specific values, virtues and code of conducts. Cultural festival promotes cultural inter-relation between different cultures and strengthen community bonds. The tribal festivals play very important role in preserving nature. In a globalised world, sustaining cultural traditions is very essential. Nature and tribal people have a deep interrelationship since centuries. They worship natural things like rocks, water, mountains, forests, etc. Their festivals revolve all around the agricultural cycle. The traditions and trends of tribal people support towards a sustainable growth and a development where they preserve communal harmony with nature. The tribal festival plays a significant role in preserving indigenous art forms, dance, music etc. Tribal festivals have played a significant role in the preservation of cultural heritage. Festivals have become a key point for discussions about awareness of sustainability on a global scale. Tribal festivals are contributing for making the festival sector eco-friendly. In tribal culture, nature is given the highest place. Most deities of the tribes are connected to nature. They consider these natural forces as 'Singh bonga', meaning deities.

Sarhul: -Sarhul is the festival of flower. It is a nature festival celebrated by all tribes of Jharkhand in the spring season. It is celebrated when the branches and the green leaves of the tree starts coming out after the autumn season and the whole environment become fragrance with the flower of sakhua, mango, mahua etc. Sarhul festival begins every year on the Chaitra Shukla paksha according to the Hindu calendar and concludes on the day of Chaitra Purnima. In this festival the Sakhua or the Sal tree has a special significance. It is celebrated with great pomp in tribal dominated areas like Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand. Sarhul is the combination of word Sar + hul. Sar means Sarai Phool or the flower of Sal tree and Hul means revolution that is the revolution of flowers. Sarhul is the festival of flowers. The rituals of Sarhul festival are all performed by the Pahan (priest). It is considered that the



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worshipped method followed by the pahan is that three earthen pots are filled with fresh water. Pahan observes fast during the festival and the next day it is observed that the water in the vessel is full to the edge, then it is believed that there will be good rain this year. Farmers depend on nature and believe that if there is good rain, the yield will also be good but if the pot is not full, it seems that there will be drought. The process of worshipping is done at the Sarna. this festival is celebrated by the Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Kharia, Ho tribes etc. Sarhul festival is known by various names. Oraon tribes celebrate Sarhul by the name Khaddi, Santhal celebrate as Baha, Munda and Ho celebrate as Ba festival. Sarhul's simplicity and naturalness are in the harmony with nature. It is one of the famous festivals of the tribe of Jharkhand and has its own speciality. It is believed among the tribe that the new year begins only after the sarhul festival. The rituals of sarhul puja lasts for four days. On the very beginning of the festival, the consecrated water of the fish is sprinkled in the house. coming to the next day Pahan keeps fast during which the whole worship procedure is completed and Pahan keep Sal flower on the roof of every houses. On the third day, Sarhul flower is worshipped at the Sarna place and a rooster is sacrificed and by mixing rice and the meat of rooster khichdi is prepared, which is called Sudi in the tribal language and this Sudi is distributed as prasad. Fourth day is the last day of rituals, on this day the flowers are immersed in Giriwa. Sarhul festival is dedicated to mother earth because today we are seeing that our nature and our land are getting polluted and how we are destroying the very essence of our lives. This festival of Sarhul tells us one thing about preserving nature that we should save our nature's heritage. We will be able to survive only by saving nature because our tribe and society live in nature.

Karma: -Karma is celebrated with great respect and in traditional way by different tribes of Jharkhand. The festival is celebrated on Ekadashi of Shukla paksha of the Bado month, which is on September according to the English calendar. In this festival, the Karma tree is worshipped and pray for the prosperity and the good harvest. Apart from this, it is also a tradition that sisters fast for their brothers and pray for their wellbeing by considering Karma tree as a deity. The preparation of Karma puja begins at least a week in advance, the unmarried woman brings sand from the river in a basket and sows seeds of wheat, rice grams, urad etc. Under a week those seeds germinate into young seedlings which are called 'Jawa'. This Jawa has a great significance in the ritual of Karma puja. Jawa and the Karma branches are the main components of Karma festival. On the evening of Karma festival, the unmarried woman of the village goes to the jungle dancing and singing after cutting three branches of Karma tree, they bring it to the village it with great respect and honour and it is put on the Akhra. Then after Karma branches are worshipped in traditional manner, during the worship the pahan narrates the folktale related to karma puja. After the puja, all the village people dance around the karma tree and the dance and music continue throughout the night. On the last day the branches of the karma tree are immersed in the river or pond. There are various different traditional stories related to karma festival, whose variations are found according to different geographical region. This festival is associated with the worship of nature. In areas like Jharkhand, traditionally the entire life and economy of the people has been based on nature. Karma tree is the symbol of this



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nature and in a way of worshipping tree gives the message of environmental protection. The tribal festivals all are associated with nature worship, the ingredients used in performing worship all are natural things that do not affect the environment.

Sohrai: - Sohrai is celebrated on the honour of cattle. It is celebrated on the month of Kartik, next day after Diwali. Sohrai is the biggest festival of the Santhal tribe in Jharkhand. The word Sohrai means 'Sahrana' that is to be praised. On the day Sohrai, tribal worship animals. Animals that help in agriculture, the cattle are worshipped. In the tribal cattle are considered as Lakshmi. During Sohrai festival, Santhal tribes paints their wall of houses with Sohrai painting. No artificial products are used for painting, natural-coloured soils are used as colour for painting. This festival last for five days and the Gaushala, the area where cattle reside are decorated with Alpana. This Alpana is done by the rice powder. In all the festivals it does not affect the nature it is free from all pollution. The tribal festival motivates us for environment protection it also teaches us the values of nature.

Tusu Festival: - Tusu parab or festival is the harvest festival celebrated by the tribes of Jharkhand. This festival is a major festival of Jharkhand as well as West Bengal, and of Odisha and this festival is celebrated yearly after reaping of paddy when new paddy is brought home. Tusu festival comes along with the Makar Sankranti in the month of Pausha (dec-Jan). The festival glorifies goddesses Tusu who is believed to be a young cosmic girl. Tusu festival is also celebrated as a symbol of women's honour. This festival is celebrated on the last day of Pausha coinciding with Makar Sankranti. During this festival a wooden or bamboo frame is decorated with coloured paper by unmarried girl and then it is gifted to the nearby hills or rivers. There are various folktales associated with Tusu festival according to the variation of geographical region.

Different Philosophers have given their different point of view regarding nature, social life and ecology. Dr. Mahendra Bhanawat has written in the chaumas magazine of February 2002 that- 'All the rituals, ceremony, religious songs, rituals, worship are such that they are associated with environment science'. Dr. Vibha Agnihotri has presented the inter-relationship between natural environment and cultural environment in her work 'Experimental Physical Anthropology'. According to her the only cultural aspect of a social human being, with which he creates his own self and, in this creation, the natural environment has an important contribution. Dr. Ram Dayal Singh Munda has tried to highlight the environment an ecology in his book 'Aadi Dharam'. According to him nature is very important part of human life. Dr. D. Virottam in his book 'Jharkhand: History and culture' has described the geographical structure of Jharkhand's importance for the natural environment and ecology of Jharkhand.

Conclusion: Tribal festivals are very close to nature. This festival provides connection and sustainability to nature. Tribal festivals promote environmental conservation through practising using natural materials and reducing waste. It promotes greener celebration. Most of the tribal festivals are



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associated with the agriculture cycle that is from sowing to harvesting. These tribal festivals are very important in the preservation of cultural heritage. Festivals have become a key point of discussions about awareness of sustainability on a global scale. Tribal festivals are contributing for making the festival sector eco-friendly. Tribal maintains communal harmony with nature. These festivals promote the respect values for environment. The use natural ingredients for worshipping like trees, flowers, rice powdered etc for decoration also promotes the sustainability. It reduces the pollution; help conserving natural resources and promote to safeguard our ecosystem. The materials used during the tribal festivals are mainly bio-degradable which are very eco-friendly to nature. The cultural values and heritage must be safeguarded for current and future generation, because of its historical, cultural and scientific value. The vigorous developments in the field of digital technology have resulted in innovative changes. New digital technologies provide tools to protect heritage and share the cultural values. Digitalization provides several tools for preservation of traditional values.

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