



Research Article

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An Emic Perspective of Muka Dora Rituals

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Sethi, S. & Naik, P. (2026). An Emic Perspective of Muka Dora Rituals. *Indiana Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(2), 24-30.*“Ritual is not a mere reflection of social order, but a transformative experience that creates, modifies, and dissolves social structures” -Victor Turner***Abstract:** In India, tribal communities have a distinct identity due to their unique culture, traditions, and customs. Dance, song, and traditional arts are key elements of their culture. They embrace their culture in their daily life reflect on food, clothing, and rituals. They have distinct culture with social diversity. The Muka Dora tribal communities are mainly residing in the Koraput district of Odisha. Their cultural traditions are enriched with social and ethical values. The Muka Dora observes and celebrates different rituals that are an integral part of their traditional life. The primary aim of this study is to understand the rituals and practices associated with stages of life of the Muka Dora.**Keywords:** Identity, Cultural, Tradition, Ritual, & Muka Dora

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INTRODUCTION

In Odisha, 64 types of tribal groups are residing among them, 13 are specifically recognized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The marginalized populations of India, such as tribal groups are a very important and integral part, influencing the cultural and social life of India. The total number of tribes in India is 705 symbolizes a unique and diverse cultural unity (Census, 2011). The tribal population is approximately 100 million, which is about 8.6% of India's total population (Census, 2011). These communities have their own worldviews, languages, cultures, institutions, and traditions. Among the tribes of India, Gond, Bhil, Santal, Oraon, and Munda are most dominant and numerous. The customs and religious institutions of these tribal communities are the real protector of culture and traditions. Their fair, festivals, dances, songs, and religious traditions, lifestyle shows the collective unity to the mankind. Their culture strengthens the fundamental relationship between the individual and the natural environment. The state of Odisha is well known as a tribal-rich state, with a tribal population of 95,90,756, constituting approximately 22.84% of its total population (Census, 2011). Out of the 30 districts of Odisha, 14 districts have 50 percent of tribal communities out of its total population. The districts like Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Koraput, Rayagada, and Kandhamal have the highest tribal populations. Among 64 tribes; Kandha, Santal, Munda, and Saora are major groups of the Odisha. The life cycle rituals are the right way to illustrate the life of the tribal communities in an elaborate manner. It helps in developing a strong bond with their daily life, religious belief, relationship with nature, and social gatherings. In this study,

researchers have thrown light on tribal customs through different life stages rituals which has been explained in detail. To justify the objectives of the study, the researchers have cited anthropological literatures, which have given a compressive understanding to the subject of the study. The discussion and analysis on tribal rituals and culture are given below.

The rules of ritual are transmitted orally from generation to another ritual also being the members together and tied them into a single action and belief. Ritual is like a learning tool for adopting own culture through practice. Ritual is act as an active custodian of intangible culture. Ritual is not considered to exist as a natural phenomenon of human practice. Ritual is activities that are performed in culturally acceptable ways to create the feeling that these activities are different from other having significance in its implication. Ritual is considered as a way of acting namely ritualization of activity (Bell, 1992). Rites are practices that are ends in themselves, that are justified by their very performance, things that one does because they are “the one thing” the right thing to do” but also because one cannot do otherwise, without needing to know why or for whom one does them, or what they mean such as act of funeral peity (Bourdieu, 1995). Tribal ritual practices are mostly related to natural elements and nature; maintain traditional methods that show the deep connection between nature and humans (Bisht, 2018). Tribal practices help in maintain solidarity in social organization and the community. These ritual gatherings play a lead role in maintaining communal harmony within the society (Dumont, 1971). The experiences and establishment of practices in tribal societies are a very

important part that creates communal intimacy. It determines the communal value of the organization (Malinowski, 1932). Tribal rituals ensure their national unity. They demonstrate social unity and strength through various institutions (Firth, 1963). Rituals and social structures can be considered a social and cultural inherent relationship. This process empowers communal equality (Leach, 1968). Rituals play a vital role in preserving many tribal cultures and traditions. This transfers the institutional power of the community and preserves it for future generations (Basu, 2020). These rituals play a significant role in preserving the culture of tribal communities. It helps to maintain social harmony and keeps the cultural identity alive (Boas, 2021). Rituals and practices are an integral part of the daily lives of tribes. Through these rituals, they express their unity and religiosity. Rites the passage are found in every societies but its deliberation and depth is more visible among small scale and static societies where change is associated with biological rhythms and appearance rather than technological transformation. Turner studied the nature of transition in stable societies where he analysed that initiation rites like social maturity or cult membership is more appropriate in transition as they have well portrayed and sustained marginal or liminal phases (Turner, 1969). Ceremonies / rituals associated with an individual's life crises called as "rites de passage". These ceremonies come across three important phases such as separation, transition and incorporation. This threefold classification may not applicable to the same extent is case of every individual and every ceremonies. For example- rites of separation is most appropriate in case of death ceremony, rites of incorporation more applicable in marriage and lastly rites of transition most appropriate in initiation (Van Gennep, 1960).

Rites de Passage is found in every societies but its deliberation and depth is more visible among small scale and static societies where change is associated with biological rhythms and appearance rather than technological transformation. Turner studied the nature of transition in stable societies where he analysed that initiation rites like social maturity or cult membership is more appropriate in transition as they have well portrayed and sustained marginal or liminal phases (Turner, 2002). Life cycle rituals like naming, puberty, Marriage and death, move an individual from one stage to another that gives a cultural essence to biological development such as birth, maturation and death. Each of the rites of passage has some symbolic, social and cultural value specific to a particular community. If not only charges the position of an individual but also assigned with certain duty or honor (Marganet etel, 2003 & Hossain & Moinuddin, 2015). It has some cultural implication, based on principles, abide by customs and require certain performance. Rituals associated with birth the death starts before the birth continues even after the death of a person. Moving from one social position to another, charging from one status to another and lastly

fully accumulated into a new status are the three salient steps of every life cycle ritual. (Kumar, 2022). Life cycle rituals deals with the rituals concerned with different stages and its result. Cycle means it is not static, it results change and as changes occur it has some sort of role to play and accordingly status change (Hoogar *et al.*, 2017). Life Cycle rituals are referred as a testimonial of tribal identity and representing rich cultural heritage. This ritual plays a crucial role in the life of the tribals and its prevention ensuring continuity of their traditions and identity (Selvakumaran & Umaraj, 2025). Among Santal these rites and ceremonies are act as a medium between the community and spirit. It strengthens the community is bond and proclaim its value system (Troisi, 2002). Life of a person come across many stages and rituals, starts with birth and ends with death. In between this they have aside with certain rules and regulations specific to Kisan community of Sambalpur district (Majhi & Mohapatra, 2023). As pregnancy is initial stage in life cycle rituals, among Kandha of Kandhamal certain restriction imposed in expectant mother like she is not allowed to go alone in mid noon and evening as she is likely to be possessed by malevolent spirits and they will harm the pregnant woman. Kandha community observes pollution period for 21 days and the process ends with 'Big Vessel' function (Name giving Ceremony) (Swain, 1989). Among Kandha socio religious significance is attached with fertility rites and rites connected with child birth. These rites are always seeking the blessing of divine power. Good or bad results may likely to happen in pleasure and displeasure of these unseen powers (Acharya, 1986). The author explained death is the supreme and final crisis of life- is of greatest importance. He opined that death highlights a dual response among the survivors i.e. love and loathing, a deep going emotional ambivalence of fascination and fear which threatens both the psychological and social foundation of human existence. Mortuary rituals maintain the continuity of human life by preventing the survivors from yielding either to the impulse to flee panic stricken from the scene or to the contrary impulse to follow the deceased in to the grave" (Mallinowski, 1948).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The anthropological study helps in understanding the human diversity, culture, and social structures. Its purpose is not only to preserve tradition but also to explore the beauty lies within the culture of tribal society. Here, the researchers use key research questions to find out the results of the research objectives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To justify the purpose of the research, the researchers have used two research questions, namely: How do Muka Dora rituals preserve their traditional cultural identity? What are the life cycle rituals that help in maintaining solidarity within Muka Dora? The study objectives are based on the research questions. Here the researchers have used two objectives, namely: to analyze

each life cycle ritual observes within the Muka Dora society and to collect data on the importance of each ritual within the social and cultural boundary of the Muka Dora world in the modern era.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology is an essential part of every research process, which serves as the primary basis for ethnographic studies. Researchers work with the community to study their daily lives. The anthropological fieldwork involves gathering experiences, opinions, and life stories of the communities in a scientific manner. In this research, researchers have employed exploratory research design. The cluster sampling method was used to select the block. The study focused on a single homogeneous Muka Dora village, comprising 55 households with a total population of 226 (117 males and 109 females), situated in the Pottangi Block of Koraput District, Odisha. In this research, researchers employed anthropological methods such as, key informant, interview, participant observation, and focus group discussions (FGDs).

GEO-ETHNIC PROFILE OF MUKA DORA

The Muka Dora is a distinctive tribal community of Odisha, known for their unique traditions, life ways, and culture. They reside in the extensive Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. They are mostly inhabited in the Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri, and Nabarangpur districts of Southern Odisha. The Muka Dora community lives in a multi-ethnic villages with other scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and other backward classes such as with Kandha, Paroja, Gadaba, Parenga, Domb, Ghasi, Gauda, Kamara, Rana, Paika, Dhulia etc. They resides in both revenue villages and hamlets. In some village houses are constituted in both sides of the main lane and in other houses are sparsely distributed. Both pucca and kucha houses are common in the villages. There is a sacred place at the center of the village where social and religious activities are performed. Tradition and religious values play an important role in their social life. The Muka Dora worship nature and many benevolent spirits, god and goddesses. The religious specialists are called Disari, Guru, Beju, Gunia, and Gurumai. They sacrifice animals to please gods, goddesses, and spirits. The village deity, Nishani Munda, protects the Muka Dora people. Their main occupation is agriculture, but other means of earning, such as daily wage labor, animal husbandry, and MFP collection also done by them. In their daily lives, Muka Dora people consume both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. Their main food includes rice, millet, finger millet, fish, egg, and chicken, etc. They consume different types of alcoholic beverages such as Mahua liquor, Pendum, Handia, and Salap liquor. Due to the influence of modernity, they also consume Western food in their daily lives today. They have their

own socio-political system, which helps in resolving their disputes. Naika is the head of the village and control the socio-political system of the village. To assist Naika, Barika and Chalan are appointed. These are the members of the council, who are the protectors of culture and help pass on their traditional policies and rules to future generations.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study on ritual practices among Muka Dora community is a part of their traditional wisdom. The study is based on fieldwork covering the emic perspective of Muka Dora, based on their experience and practices related to life cycle rituals. These practices are passing on from generation to generation, and its essence remains alive even amidst numerous changes. In this study, researchers have done descriptive analysis to understand the rituals of the Muka Dora better, such as:

Pregnancy Ritual

When a woman becomes pregnant, the village *Disari* is consulted after three months of conception. After seeing the Panji, the *Disari* instructed them to arrange a puja for well being of both mother and child. On a suitable day *Disari* directs to collect necessary materials such as coconut, and various types of thorns, flowers, fruits, as well as water and soil from the confluence of river, white thread, soil, chicken, pigeon, duck, and pig. He performs a puja with all these materials at the confluence of rivers or the confluence points of a path. In that puja, "liquor" and "Pendum" are also used as offerings. This puja is performed and animals are sacrificed for the good health, intelligence, and safe delivery, and protect both mother and child from evil spirits. Then the expectant mother is given a mantrabound thread to tie on her left hand. The *Disari* instruct her to proceed towards home without looking back. This ritual is not only a religious activity; rather, it ensures the mental well-being and social security of pregnant woman. It fosters an emotion between pregnancy and Muka Dora culture. They believe that this worship can prevent misfortune for the mother and the child.

Restriction during pregnancy

There are certain taboos related to pregnancy such as she is not allowed to lift heavy objects, not allowed to do hard working not allowed to go to the graveyard, not allowed to go to the forest not allowed to sit in the boat for crossing the river, not allowed to eat ladies finger, black gram, *targai* tuber, and taro root, etc.

Birth Ritual

When a mother is in labor, the *Putrani* (midwife) is called on and she performs the delivery. After birth of the baby, the umbilical cord is tied with a white thread and cut with an arrow. This umbilical cord is then buried in a specific location normally in the backyard of the house. The arrow used to cut the umbilical cord is also buried with the umbilical cord. The pollution period observed in the family for three days

after birth or until the umbilicus falls off. On the day the umbilicus falls off, the *Putrani* and *Dishari* are called and the umbilicus is worshiped (Bamali Biru). In the puja, materials like pig, goat, hen, coconut, flowers, fruits, and wild tubers are used. Liquor and *pendam* are also offered at the same place where the umbilical cord is buried. In this puja, both the newborn and the mother participate. After this the mother-in-law or any close relative cook rice in a new earthen pot and offers it to the household deity. The delicious foods are offered to the guests and everyone enjoy dance and song. Generally, name giving ceremony is observed in three days but now some observe it on twelve days and even on twenty-one days. Later, invoking the name of the ancestors one by one (first from father side, if not succeed then mother side), rice ball fixed to silali stalk is given to the child expecting he/she will hold it; if the child holds it then it is assumed that that particular ancestor gets reborn and that name is given to the child. This custom reflects Muka Dora belief in the concept of rebirth. From that day onwards, the pollution period of the family ends, and the neighbors start visiting their house or exchanging food. According to the instructions of the *Disari*, a thread is tied to the child's waist to keep the child strong and healthy. Both paternal and maternal relatives are invited to attend the ceremony and bless the new born and mother. The ceremony comes to an end with lavish food and drink. After one month the mother is allowed to enter in the kitchen.

Head Shaving (*Kopudinchanamu*) Ritual

This is a traditional custom observed by Muka Dora community when the child turns three years old, on an auspicious as instructed by the *Disari*. The puja is takes place under the thatched of the house. First the floor is cleaned and cow dung paste is smeared then jhota is made using colored soil. In this ritual various materials are used like five types of flowers, coconut, milk, jaggery, puffed rice, and banana. Incense stick is burned and prayers are offered to the household deity. The main purpose of the head-shaving ceremony is to protect the child from all evil spirits. The cost of the head-shaving ceremony is usually borne by the child's maternal uncle. Besides this, head-shaving ceremony also has social and religious significance.

Bata Katinchanamu Ritual

This is a very important and traditional ritual, celebrated for the unmarried girl (aged eight to ten years). This ritual is performed in the months of Pousha and Magha (December-January). According to the instructions of the *Disari* (religious specialist) on an auspicious day this ritual is performed. Incense stick, lamp, flowers, fruits, coconut, saree etc are required for this purpose. Following tradition, an elderly married woman takes responsibility, she put vermilion and turmeric on her forehead and draped the girl with new saree. After that, the girl bows down to the village elders and relatives. At the end of the ritual, special food is arranged for them. *Handia* (*pendam*), liquor etc are also

prepared. This festival signifies the social unity of the village, the progress of tradition, and the glory of culture. Bata Katinchanamu is a family and community-centric ritual, which gives girls a new experience and helps them understand the basic and important lessons of life. It plays an important role in building the strong mental and self-esteem attitude of the girls.

Puberty (*Amalakudidi*) Ritual

In the Muka Dora community, if a girl attains her first puberty, the head of the family consult *Disari* and inform the neighbors, relatives and villagers. The girl kept one corner of the house where no male members can see her or vice-versa. For the girl a temporary shed is built up using four piece of wood/ bamboo and cotton saree. Three siali plates filled with paddy are placed around the girl, three arrows are laid on them, threads are wrapped around the arrows and at the centre the girl sits on a siali plate filled with paddy. A prepubescent girl grinds the millet and prepares tampa (a type of traditional cake) for the girl. First she takes pot, boil water, add millet powder, stir slowly with the help of a siali leaf stalk and make small ball out of it. The puberty ritual is performed in between three to nine days. On that day, as instructed by the *Disari*, the family arrange white rooster, spotted rooster, black rooster, coconut, banana, bottle gourd, fruits, five types of flowers, ground color powder, charcoal powder, finger millet, turmeric powder, vermilion liquor, and *handia*. In the early morning, some village women along with young girls go to the forest with rice, incense stick, lamp vermilion and turmeric powder. They select disinfected young jamba, mango, and sunari trees having no nest and no defecated leaves. They cut the trees facing east after performing puja. In addition to this, they collect *Bidam*, soil from three ghats (river bank) and water from three ghats (river). Then mango, sunari, jamba branches, and banana trees are tied together with a thread. An altar is made in front of the house, plastered with a mixture of termite nest soil, cow dung and water. These trees are planted near the altar. Then, the girl is brought and seated on the Ghorana placed near the altar, and *Disari* performs the Puja. At the end, the girl makes three circle around the altar. After this, the plants are taken to the river by the girls for immersion. All the women, girls along with the pubescent girl take bath in the river and return home. Then the girl is allowed to enter the inner room of the house. The invited relatives, friends, and guests enjoy feast. The ritual also strengthens social bonds and community spirit.

Marriage (*Peli*) Ritual

Marriage is an important social custom in the Muka Dora community. These are the different types of marriages prevalent among Muka Dora, (1) Arranged Marriage (*Adget Bote Peli*), (2) Love Marriage (*Etakatu Peli*) (3) Elopement Marriage (*Lageti Bote Peli*) (4) Widow re marriage (*Munda Peli*) (5) *Manganali Peli*, (6) *Mama Kuntur Peli*, (7) *Kunda Markam Peli*.

Arranged Marriage (Adget Bote Peli)

It is an age old and ideal marriage system in the Muka Dora community, where the roles of parents and family members are very important. It is an elaborate process through which the marriage of a girl and a boy is fixed based on the community norms. The initiation starts from the boy side, first the parents, *Raibaida* and relatives visit the girl's house. They bring liquor, *pendam*, rice cake and rice with them. Both the parties sit together, then the girl's parents ask the boy's family why they have come. In response one among the relatives says, "Is there a beautiful rose blooming in your house? Will you give it to us?" In this way, the proposal of the marriage is initiated. If the proposal is not accepted during the first visit then the groom party has to revisit again and again until the proposal is accepted by the bride family. This type of marriage is called as *Adget Bote*. After receiving the news of acceptance a suitable date is fixed by the *Disari*, on that day the groom family visit to the bride's house with *pendam*, salap liquor, and banana. The bride's family and the villagers sit together and decide the bride price (*Katnam*). The amount of money to be given as *Katnam* is decided there. The Bride price may range from few hundred to several thousand now a days. Later, the *Disari* fixes an auspicious day for organizing marriage. *Raibadia* visit the bride's house and deliver the news. A day before the appointed day, the groom's family members, relatives, friends and villagers visit the bride's house with the *Katnam* such as goat, liquor, *Handia*, chicken, rice, banana, and a special bamboo box meant for the bride's mother and maternal uncle. The bamboo box (*Perentpete*) is filled with uncooked rice, castor oil, three bottles of liquor, saree, mirror, kajol, vermilion, bangle, and cooked meat (which is tied in a Siali leaf).

This Bamboo box (*Perentpete*) is carried to the bride's village by an unmarried girl. After reaching the bride's village, the young men, women, and elders of the village welcome the groom's party. Upon reaching the bride's house, the boxes are placed in a plate with incense stick and lamp, the bride's maternal uncle opens it. The *Raibadia* counts each of those items and give it to them. After this, both the bride and groom parties enjoy the delicious food and drink together. At the time the procession is ready to go back with bride, the bride relatives intentionally hide her. The *Raibadia* approaches the bride's family to find out her promising to give them liquor and money as gift. On the wedding day, the bride goes to the groom's house. According to the instructions of the *Disari*, the wedding ceremony begins after the bride reach at the groom's house. A *Chhamundia* (a raised platform) is prepared in front of the groom's house. Mango, *Sunari* and *Jamba* trees are planted there, and turmeric is tied to them with white saree. On the way to the groom's village *Disari* perform a ritual. In this ritual chicken, coconut, fruits, salap liquor, *pendam*, *muruja* powder, and five types of flowers are used. After this, the bride and groom are taken to the *Chhamundia*. *Disari* made jhoti using five

types of powders (colored soil, rice flour, turmeric, vermilion, and charcoal powder). A Ghorana (Grinding Stone) and Sila (Pestle) are placed near the mango, sunari and jamba trees, groom's maternal aunt sits on the pestle, the bride sits on her lap and the grooms sits on bride's lap. The *Disari* starts ritual by sprinkling water on them. Flowers, jaggery, fruits, incense stick, liquor, and pots are used in the ritual. On the marriage day, in the early morning an unmarried girl is instructed to bring water in an earthen pot that water is poured on their bodies. Another ritual is performed in which the bride and groom search the areca nut placed inside the pot for three times. During the wedding, the *Disari* throws *Murat*, prepared by mixing black paddy, flax seeds, ash, roots, sesame seeds, etc. over the bride and groom. Prior to this the *Murat* is rubbed three times between the bride and groom's feet. A mud bed is prepared near the *Chhamundia* for bride and groom; they are instructed to smear the mud to each other. Then all other relatives present there play and dance, applying mud to each other. The bride and groom together go to the river and immerse the mango, and jamba trees planted in the *Chhamundia*. In the spring or river, the bride gives the groom toothpick three times and both brush their teeth. After bathing, both are dressed in new clothes. The maternal uncles of both the bride and groom carry them on their shoulders. After reaching home, the bride's father place the rice brought from the house on a bamboo mat and measures it with a *ada* three times. If the rice is not equal in each time then the marriage is said to be inauspicious. The groom's younger brother brings a rooster and kills it by touching the heads of both the bride and groom. After this, the bride brings water from the spring and cooks the rice and the meat. The bride offers this cooked rice to the household deity. After offering, both of them feed each other. The marriage ceremony is the most important rite de passage in the Muka Dora culture and beginning of a new chapter in life.

Love Marriage (Etakatu Peli)

This type of marriage is a symbol of love and affection. In this type of marriage, the boy and girl elope from their house after falling in love with each other. Either both the families succeed in finding them or after few days the boy and girl return back to the house. Family members of both are compelled to accept them. After receiving the news girl's family members visit the boy's house. Then on the proposed day boy's family visits the girl's house with goat, rice, salap liquor and money. After this, a grand feast is organized, in which families and villagers are invited. It prioritizes the rights of an individual and function of social organization from a different perspective.

Capture Marriage (Lageti Bote Peli)

If a boy secretly loves a girl, he will make a plan with his friends to kidnap the girl and take her to his house. His friends take the advantage of her loneliness like when she goes to the market, riverbank, collect firewood in the forest, alone in the house. At that time

they kidnap the girl and handed over to the boy. After receiving the news the girl's family members inquire about her well-being. Then, the groom's family informs the bride's family and announces the date of the meeting. On that day, according to the instructions of the *Disari*, the boy's side goes to the girl's house with food items, liquor, *Pendam*, Salap etc., which to be eaten and drunk with the villagers and family members of the girl.

Maganali Peli

This is another type of marriage where a man elopes the wife of a husband and takes her home is called *Maganali*. In some cases, both the woman and man are married. If a man's wife elopes with another man then the village elders, friends, and relatives all come together and seek justice and compensation according to the rules and norms of the community. The village head man and elders gather in the *Sadar Mandap* and solve dispute. Towards the end of the discussion, a bottle of liquor is brought to the meeting place. The first husband is offered to drink, then the second husband is given to drink from the same bottle. Hence forth it is considered that the first husband does not interfere in their life.

Widow re-marriage (Munda Peli)

Among Muka Dora if the elder brother dies, the younger brother can marry the sister-in-law. In this marriage, no bride price (*Katnam*) will be paid to the widow family. If the woman does not have a brother-in-law, then someone else can marry her. The interested individual has to give a certain amount of money, goat, rice, liquor, *pendam*, etc. to the in-laws of the widow. This type of marriage is a reflection of a social necessity. After the death of the elder brother, the protection of the sister-in-law and the continuity of the family are ensured by the younger brother. There is clear evidence that, this type of practice has become less prevalent now-a-days.

Mama Kuntur Peli

In this type of marriage, the boy is expected to choose maternal uncle's daughter as life partner.

Kunda Markam Peli

In this type of marriage, the brother and sister of a family marry to the sister and brother of another family. In this marriage no *katnam* (bride price) is required to be paid to each other.

Death Ritual

The Muka Dora community also has a strong belief in the concept of rebirth. When someone from this community dies, specific rituals are observed for the departed soul. After the death of an individual close relatives and friends are informed about the mishap. The funeral process starts after relatives reach at the deceased house. First of all, the two big toes of the deceased are tied with thread and laid on a bed. A lamp is lit near his head. The elder son brings water in an earthen pot from spring or nearby water source and heats it. After this, the body is brought outside and placed in front of the house,

and the family members and relatives pour the water over the deceased, chanting the names of their ancestors. Then, the women relatives smear turmeric paste all over the deceased body and bathe it with the water. After this, the body is taken inside the house and dressed in new clothes. The family members and relatives cover the deceased with new clothes and bow down. The family members and relatives give certain amount of money to the deceased as offering by uttering for "Trinath is donating (*Danam Dabu*) Rs. 100 to you, take it and go to the heaven, stay happily there with our ancestors, take rebirth and bless Trinath with a prosperous life. A bier is made using two pieces of bamboo and nine bamboo splits for carrying the dead body to the cremation ground over which a bamboo mat is placed. Broken earthen pot filled with cow dung cakes are set on, placed on a sling made out of bamboo splits and rope. This is known as *Dale Pidika Agi*. A bundle of thatched straw (*Manjur gadi*) is collected from the roof of the deceased, divided into two equal sizes and placed over the cow dung cakes in cross manner. An empty earthen pot and cotton towel is also taken to the cremation ground. Besides, in a bamboo basket (*Edur buti*), puffed rice, flowers and coins are poured. One relative holding fire sling go first then another relative follow him by throwing puffed rice and coins, then at last the dead body placed on bier carried by son and relatives and accompanied by all relatives and villagers irrespective of gender. The exist point (end of the village boundary) of the village is called *Bejar*, where the bier is placed on the ground, the positions are interchanged, the two at the front go back and those at the back come forward. The women folk are returned back from there. If husband dies, the women folk break wife's bangles at the *bejar* point. The daughter washes the feet of the deceased there for last time.

There are three kinds of *Danam* associated with the death ritual such as 1. *Gatu Danam* (ridge/boundary of agricultural field), 2. *Go Danam* (Cow), 3. *Gada Danam* (River). They have the perception that if cultivated field is situated on the way to cremation ground, money (Rs. 5 to 10) has to pay in order to enable the dead body to cross the field boundary. During his life span if he promises someone to donate cow, then before go to the cremation ground tethering rope will be given to that person and cow will be given later. If a river is on the way to cremation ground, then money (Rs. 5 to 10) also be offer there as *danam* to enable the dead body to cross the river.

Then all the male members proceed to the cremation ground. Some relatives visit prior to the deceased and arrange wood for pyre. On the cremation ground, the bier is again placed on the ground. Ornaments along with cotton dhotis are removed from the deceased body, except one. The mouth portion of the cotton dhoti is teared to make a whole. Then bier bearing the deceased is carried around the pyre three times. Then the body is taken from the bier and the bier is thrown away over the deceased. The deceased is placed on the

pyre. The elder son put a wood upon the dead body and others follow him. Then the son takes bath in the river or nearby water source and pours water in the earthen pot with turmeric and mango leaf. The son sprinkles water and one relative make a whole in the earthen pot using axe. Then the son takes three circle around the pyre and throws the pot. A family member and the elder son stand on two side of the pyre facing each other, holding straw make three circles in opposite direction. After completion the son stand on the head side of the deceased turn back and lighting the funeral pyre. The son left the place immediately. After the body turn to ashes others leave the cremation ground. With the money (*Danam*) all the male members gather in a place and decide the date of *Karmeli* (10th day ritual) in consultation with the head of the family. If he economically sound then the *Karmeli* is observed on the 10th day or if he denies to do it on a grand manner, then thousand rupees will be distributed among the relatives. The *Danam* money is kept in a cotton dhoti and placed in the tree which used in 3rd day ritual (*Kasa*). Then in the evening or next day morning some of the relatives go to the cremation ground and put rest wood on the pyre place and set fire (it is called as *Mading Ganralu*). The pollution period lasts for three days. On the 3rd day *Kasa* is organised. A mixture is prepared from Mango bark (*Mamadi Cheka*), black berry (*Narenti Cheka*), Turmeric (*Pasapu*), Castor oil (*aamde nune*) and water, then placed in a Siali leaf cup (*Dane*). with mango leaf or Jada leaf the entire house and street of village is sprinkled in order to purify it. *Kasa* involves a pain taking process ends with grand feast and drink.

CONCLUSION

The rituals of the Muka Dora community are deeply rooted in their cultural heritage, clearly reflecting their connection to tradition and spirituality. The continuous and evolving nature of these rituals is a testament to the community's ability to preserve cultural traditions while also adapting to changing times. This dynamic interplay of continuity and change demonstrates their resilience and ability to think critically about modern influences while maintaining their identity. These changes offer valuable insights into how tribal communities manage the pressures of globalization and modernization. This analysis not only helps in understanding cultural dynamics but also highlights the importance of preserving the identity and traditions of tribal communities. It provides a fresh perspective on anthropological studies, offering informative data on cultural continuity and the comparative social organization of change.

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