

# Animistic practices among tharus of Dang & Deokhuri

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Animism is the farmost belief which existed since primitive time and Nepalese society is binded by the animistic traditions, this paper deals with the animistic religious beliefs, rituals and practices that has helped to bring about unity and social harmony as well as helped to maintain social order, thus has affected the life of the Tharu community.

## Setting

The ethnographic study is of the Tharus who are dwellers of Dang & Deokhuri. This paper is based on the field survey of different villages of Dang such as Bargati, Digpor, Bhaisai, Puadi, Okra, Karjai and villages at Deokhuri such as Sisaniya, Arhanpur, Manpur, Pipri, Pipra, Parwa, Paharwa Pathargodawa, Majheriya, Bagrapur etc. in the year 1994, since most of the materials are first hand evidences therefore not many references have been given.

Among different ethnic races, Tharus to constitute a great bulk of Nepalese population more than app 458584 they are dwellers of Terai region of Jhapa in the East, Kanchanpur in the west and in regions of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari,

Saptari, Morang Banke, Bardhiya, Bhutwal, Nawalparasi and Chitwan. But the present study has been confined to the villages of Dang & Deokhuri.

The Tharus have app 65 different clans among with are Danwar, Lampooch, Kohila, Bhatyain, Patiabuna, Gadwalia, Rana, Mardana, Dangeria, Kathkania, Kathphoria, Deokhuria, Nawalpuria, Chitwaniya, they have been further subdivided into sub clans such as Satgaiya, Ratgaiya, Kusume, Siruwa, Purbiya etc.

Dang is situated in the west of Nepal, it rise up to the height above 6,000 ft. forming, Siwalik ranges, this region is of archeological importance numerous authentic findings & remains of implements proves it to be the home place of Primitive dwellers. Deokhuri lies along the Mahendra Rajmarga.

The study on the religious aspects brings to light that religion is one of the most important ideologies which fashions human societies and guides their social life patterns.

E.B. Tylor is of the view that animism is the belief in soul, spirit and ghosts & gods. He clarifies that the primitive men saw dreams where he conversed

with others while all the time he was assured by friends that he was a sleep after which there emerged a concept that there was a soul which left the body and when it returned an individual woke up, but there were times when the soul left for good never to return and then the individual never woke up and it was believed that his soul left for distant land from where there was no return. But primitive belief also persisted that at times some dissatisfied spirits returned and possessed individuals and to drive it away emerged shamanism.

The Tharu ethnic communities are followers of animistic beliefs as defined by Tylor they believe in life after death, about good & bad spirits, fetish, they are believers of spirits that dwell on stones, animals, trees, streams mountains as in vedic ages. The general belief that persists is that, if the spirits are displeased then the evils in form of natural calamities epidemics would befall them and mordes to please such deities they offer ritualistic sacrifices and the medium of transmission between the man & spirit is the Dhama known by the name of Gurba among Tharus.

These spirits play significant role in their lives in shaping their destinies infact the whole social structure and system of the communities has been guided by such beliefs & practices handed down from generation to generation so much so that each minute misfortune to large calamities, peace & prosperity all have been regarded as the will of the spirits. Such animistic beliefs & practices which usually is regarded by modern society as a hindrance for development, on the contrary to the Tharus these beliefs & practices have helped them to bring about social cohesion at the community levels as well as provided them with power & strength of force to survive against the harsh nature which is beyond their understanding. This has also helped them to safeguard their traditions & culture.

In order to simplify the paper presented only

relevant aspects associated with animism religious beliefs & practices have been included & different questions have been formulated.

- a. How have the different animistic ritualistic practice, beliefs, festivities connected with different social aspects help in bringing about prosperity and safety of the community?
- b. While dealing with the paper we get introduced to two most significant personalities who **have played an important role in guiding their lives.**

Like any other primitive communities of the world Tharus have been followers of animism which earliest was simple but in course of development process the rituals became complex. Their belief in the supernatural spirits is one of veneration; fear dependence and they worship the deities and offer ritualistic sacrifices in order to be protected & to obtain their blessings.

“They believe that the destinies & fortune of making are influenced by supernatural spirits”

(Caughley et al, 1971:15)

Tharus too believe that their destiny and their prosperity which is mainly based on agriculture is influenced by different spirits and in order to evoke then they perform different rituals & practices.

“Tharus are believers of ghosts spirits land mantras, infact for outsiders it is a land of witches, every villages have some eight to ten known as Dains and unshakable belief exist that if Dains get offended they not only kill but spread epidemics in the village and in order to scare away the Dains help is taken from exorcist (Gurba) and he is given paddy by villagers and he thus protect them from epidemics.”

Varya, 1971:404

But the reality that exists is that such beliefs and practices guides their social life as well as brings about harmony and social cohesion. To them each & every aspect of nature, mountains rivers stones are all fetish or dwelling places of spirits who are some how or the other related with their social life and their main emphases in performing rituals & practices by means of offering sacrifices in order to over disaster which may create havoc within the village and their sole object is to please these spirits who in return protect & bring peace and happiness & fortune to their community.

In this paper different animistic deities and spirits & fetish prevalent among the Thurs of Dang & Deokhuri have been discussed & the rituals beliefs & practices that are closely related with their life cycle

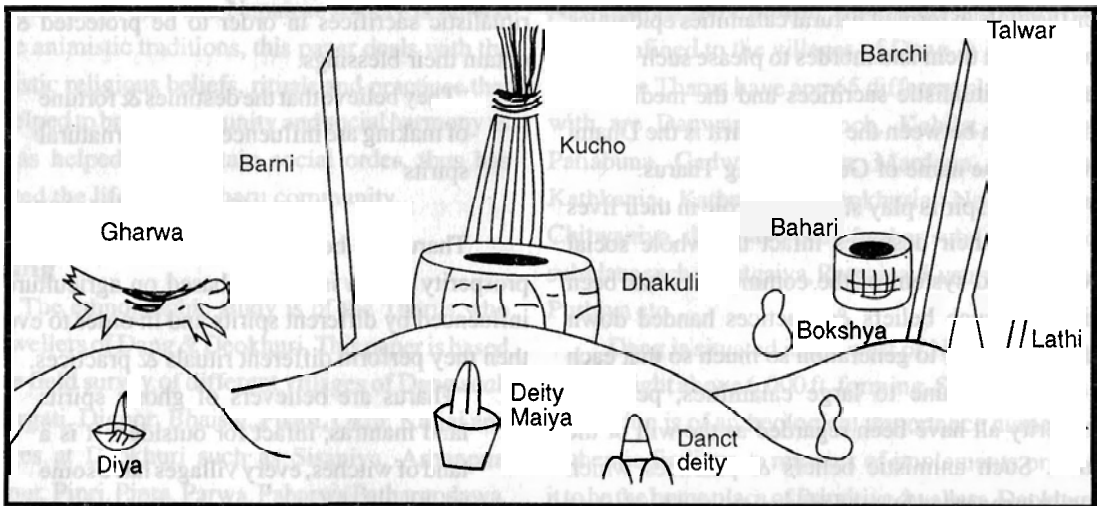
ceremonies & festivities associated with their social life are analyzed.

### The Devarar

Among the Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri there is a special room in every house like the Pooja Kotha known by the name of Devarara of the place where they house different fetish forms in which resides different spirits.

This Devearar exist either in the house of the eldest or the youngest son at Dang. However at Deokuri it exist in every house only the numbers of fetish<sup>1</sup> forms varied for e.g. in the house of the eldest son, all the fetish forms existed but among younger son the deearara comprised only of Diya & Kucho known as Barni.

### The deities within the Devarara



The above outlines sketch clearly denotes or shows fetish form where resides the deities, the names have been mentioned. These are of symbolic values.

### The deities and their importance

**The Gharwa-** was symbolized by a fetish inform of horse as shown in the figure and it was the

dwelling place of spirit Gharwa who was worshipped to overt or avoid illness that may lay footholds in their houses. In case of illness on the advice of Gurva sacrifices of pigs, fowl, chicken were offered to the deity to cure their illnesses.

**Diya-** symbolizes the deity of fire and it was burnt daily as homage to different spirit that protected them.

**Maiya-** was the deity symbolized by an iron form which was the fetish on which resided the spirit of Maiya deity who looked after them and protected them and they worshipped it by offering sacrifices of goat sheep pig Rakshi and Jad and in return they asked the spirit to preserve them from evils.

**Dancho-** was the deity who preserved them from thieves the interesting fact was that this deity was robbed and brought from another goan<sup>2</sup> and then placed it in their Devarara. This was the spirit who accepted sacrifices of animals.

**Dhakuli-** was used to keep Anna, it probably symbolized anna<sup>3</sup> Devata's spirit who if pleased provided them with ample crops & harvest.

**Bahari & Dahari-** also known as Dehari within which food grains were kept small representations of large Dehari<sup>4</sup> was kept within the Devarar. The belief exist that if it was worshipped its spirit would provide them good harvest & their Dhahari would always be full.

There was Kuthco<sup>5</sup> and Barni which was changed every year there was rised in the cleansing of Devaras, there was also Barchi, Talwar, Lathi used incase of auspicious ceremonies by Gurba and it acquired significant position within the Devarar.

In case of death in the family the whole Devarar has to be cleansed & purified because prior to death the sick person was placed near the Devarar, the belief persisted that when a person expires within the Devaras then his spirit straight away left for heavenly abode, beside it belief also existed that if the dead was displeased or had expired without his wish as being unfulfilled then his spirit returned to haunt them & locals were of view that an evil person who died through evil means by eating Poison or hanging themselves then even their spirit turned into *Bhutwa* or evil spirit who gave troubles to the villagers.

## Strict deity

There were also other deities or spirit who were considered to be very strict as they did not accept any blood sacrifices this spirit was placed outside the house and was regarded as the sister deity of Maiya and was known by the name of *Suchi*. The local belief persists that this deity was very strict, therefore many of the villagers did not keep Sushi deity because it did not accept any bloody sacrifices nor did it accept Rakshi and Jad, since the Tharus were Matwali Jata therefore many of them did not keep this deity. Local folklore foretells that one of the Tharu who had earlier housed sushi within the Devaras one day he accidentally on a festive occasion having drunk lot of Rakshi entered the Devarara & Sushi brought about illness to the whole family after lot of worship of offering milk & honey she was separately house outside their hut in the backyard. Since then the tradition to house it outside in the backyard and offering of only milk honey and fruits became a tradition.

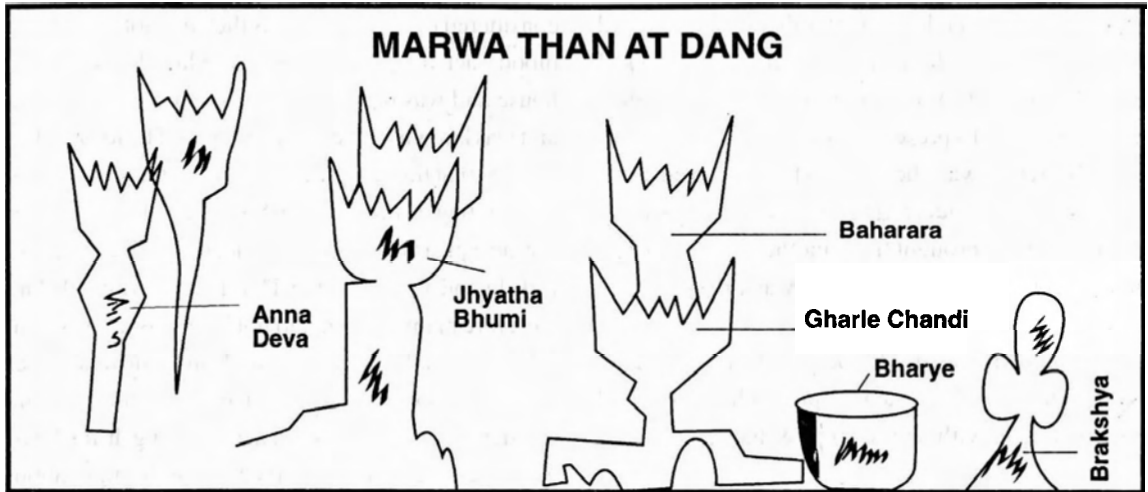
## Bhumiyar Than of Dang

In Dang incourse of spirit worship there was a Than<sup>6</sup> where resided the spirit known by the name of Bhumeyar, it was here that Bhuimeyar Pooja or community level worship was performed. This was done by groups of 50 to 70 household who contributed Jad Rakshi, fowl pig, food grains etc. and then the ritualistic Pooja was conducted by Matau (the head) twice a year after the ritualistic Pooja feasting occurs. This ritualistic Pooja at Bhuimeyar Than is performed for the preservation of the community from fire, flood, earthquake and epidemics.

## The Marwathan of Deokhuri

The Tharus of Deokhuri perform Marwapooja they install wooden fetish as shown in the figure below on which resided different spirits.

## Marwa Than at Dang



The wooden post were Marwa for Annadevata on which resided the spirit Annadeva who helped in growth of good food crops & if pleased provide ample harvest.

**Jhyta Bhumi-** is another Marwa who was the spirit of the earth, the local belief persisted that this deity had to be pleased regularly because it was the mother earth, who provided them good harvest if incase the Bhumi or the land of the tribe was unproductive it was because the spirits were angered and sacrifices had to be offered. In fact during the month of Ashad prior to sowing of rice they perform the worship known by the name of Ashade Pooja it was dedicated to Bhumi spirit, the locals prior to sowing kept boons saying if their harvest was ample then they would offer either cock fowl pig etc. likewise prior to harvesting & cultivation they conduct Pooja Aja and worship the land and then plough. All this brings to limelight how these locals and their deity activity is associated with the spirits who in their belief are a source of power and strength to survive against nature.

**Bharrora-** was the Marwa who was the spirit

of the cattle it preserved their livestock and if this spirit was pleased it increased their number but if displeased it destroyed them completely. Therefore the locals pleased it by offering sacrifices.

**Birakshya-** was the Marwa on which resided the spirit of the cattle the local belief persisted that if the cattle were lost & if this deity was worshipped the lost cattle would certainly return home if no harm had come to it. The Marwa Pooja of Deokhuri too was conducted at the community level, the Mahatau was called the Gurba who conducted the pooja, the members of 50 to 70 household contributed food-grains Rakshi, Jad, alcohol, cock, fowl, pig etc. & festival was also held. The main purpose was to preserve village from epidemics and other natural calamities. It is seen that all these spirits and their worship are concerned with their social aspects and lives of the people were guided by them.

This wooden post which meant nothing for us were of great symbolic & religious values which guided their entire life-patterns.

Beside it they worshipped other spirits by the name of Bhutwa both at Dang & Deokhuri the belief

persisted that this was an evil spirit who when displeased caused havoc in the villages therefore villages made regular offering, to pacify it so that in return for the offering the spirit would look after the village.

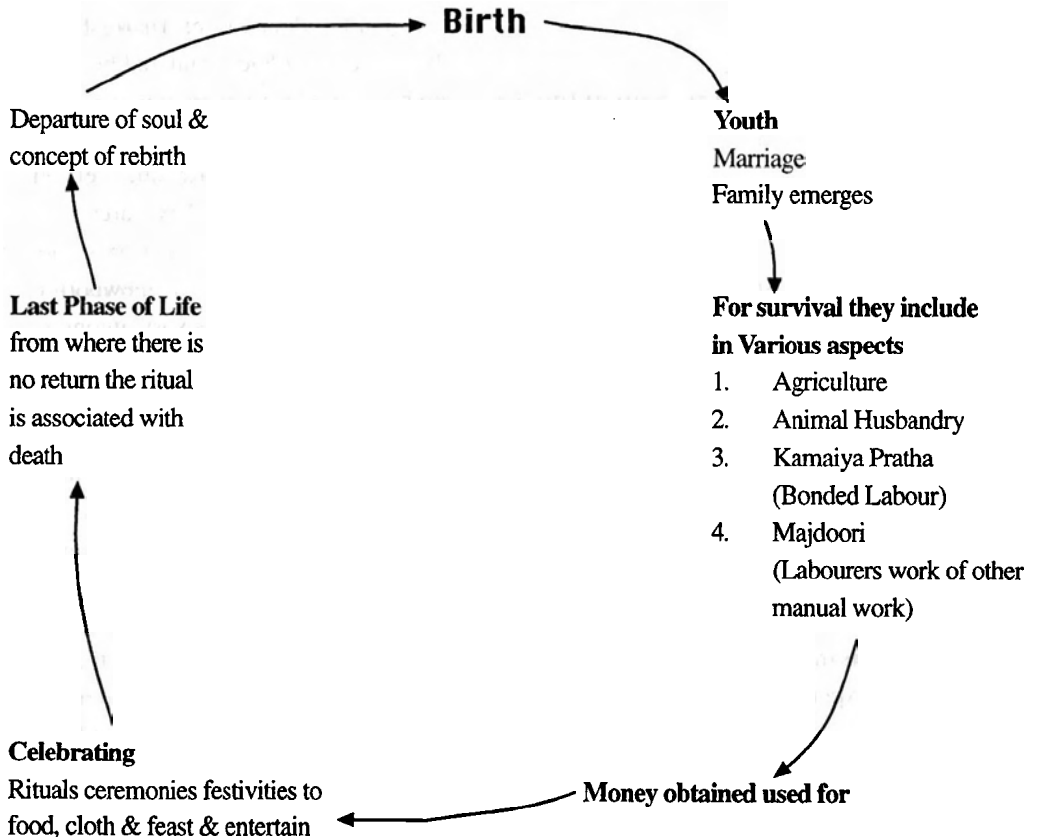
**Brahma-** was the spirit of fire and the local belief persist that if it was angry it burnt the whole village, this spirit was kept far away from the village and it was worshipped regularly and sacrifices were offered to please the deity so that it would safe-guard the village from fire.

At Deokhuri, village known by the name of Pipri the Marwa were termed by the name of 26 Narayan and community level worship & offering were made to them.

They also believed in evil spirit known as *Bokshi* just as Varya 1971 has mentioned that they were termed as Dians a living incognite infact at every village there were more than 10 to 12 witches or Dians & local beliefs persists that even to this day on a darkinght, when the whole village sleeps these witches burn their finger nails & fly together at the riverside to worship their evil gods and if at such instances a human eye happens to see the Dians, then he is killed by them. When displeased the Dians cause epidemics and the only person who can preserve them from the Bokshi or Dians is the Gurba who in return takes food grains for safeguarding them from such evil spirits.

**Life cycle associated with Deities**

Path of Survival Chart-I



The Hindu value system are full of rituals & ceremonies from the time a child is born into death an individual follows numerous ceremonies & rituals which can be termed as Samskar,

“Samskar meant religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body mind and intellect of an individual so that he becomes a full member of the community.”

(Dahal 1985:83)

Such Samskars vary from community to community the term such as Samskar does not exist among the Tharus however tribal and primitive their beliefs maybe, the belief persist that what has life has to persist and the Tharus to from birth to death follow numerous rituals.

### **The two most significant person in the life of Tharus**

— Sorini

— Gurwa

**Birth of a Child-** especially in case of the first male child is an special occasion both at Dang & Deokhuri, just as in any eastern societies they prefer a male child to girl child, in many cases the daughter-in-law usually gives birth at her husbands house among well to do Tharus, they prepare a special room for birth while among others they give birth at Kunti (which is a sleeping room). Sometimes it is the mother-in-law who plays the role of the most significant person in the lives of the Tharu the Sorini, and sometimes it is the local Sorini (or the midwife is called she is an expert at child delivery.)

**The navel cutting ceremony-** and rituals vary slightly in Dang & Deokhuri among the Tharus of

Dang the navel is cut with a clean sickle or Hasiya but recently blades are being used and then the Sorini gives the cut navel to the father of the child who buries it within the premises of Gahari (cowshed) which is within the house.

While among the Tharus of Deokhuri it is the Sorini herself cuts the navel and takes it outside the house and buries it deep just below the thatched roof.

In Dang incase of a first born male child he is garlanded and then as a fee to Sorini the family gives her gifts on the Supa (Nanglo) which is filled with Dhan (grains) and on it a burnt Diya is kept and money is also placed on it and is carried to the Sorenes house.

On the doorway of Tharus house fishing net shoes, leaves of Saer plant and branch of Seej plant are hung in order to avert evil eye. The local beliefs both at Dang & Deokhuri exist that if a Dian or Bokshi visits the house she gets entangled on fishingnet then is pierced by Barer plant and another belief persist that she cannot pass under the shoes. Thus the harms averted for newborn child and the mother, however beliefs vary among sub groups.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> day an important role is played by Sorini on this day she keeps the child on her lap and the new cloth is given to the child by his grand parents and it is the Sorini who keeps the child name, infact she is regarded as the second mother and is given great respect, she is given the important task of naming the child itself shows of her importance. But the recent trend has changed with the assimilations & acculturations of Hindu culture the Tharus to have under gone changes and now it is the parents & grandparents who keeps their child's name.

After the name keeping ceremony the gotiyar

(relative) are called & feast is held, again important position is given to the Soroni, after the feast lot of gifts, rice, Dhan, meat alcohol, money cloth are given to her. It is during this feast that the brides parents come and bring gifts of meat, alcohol, money & new cloth for the child & the mother and Sorini. This system varies among subjects even the feasting ceremony is done in accordance to their capabilities.

### **Rice feeding ceremony**

When the child is 5, 6 months old in case of the first son the solid food of rice is fed by the nearest gotiyar and gifts of meat milk new cloth money is also given both to the mother & child & feasting is held.

### **Hair cutting ceremony**

Similar to Chewar, among the Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri, hair is shaved but tuppi is kept in all these ceremonies the Sorini is given important position of respect.

### **The role of Gurwa**

Another person who exist in every walk of life in the Tharu society is Gurwa, he is their protector against evil he is their healer, the chanter of mantras the sole medium between man & spirit, he is the holyone similar to the witch doctors of Africa.

Among Tharus of Dang there is a special ritual associated with preservation of the child beside avoiding evil eye.

### **Ritual for child preservation**

This ritual is performed twice a year on Chaitra & Paush, the Gurwa comes on such occasion and five

places are plastered with red mud mixed with cowdung such places are said to be purified and sacred, furthermore eight other smaller place are plastered and on each plastered places leaf cups filled with grains are kept and on it burnt Diya are placed & copper coitus are placed on each of them and other materials required for the ritualistic purpose are Jaiphal & beetle nut and 2, 3 small chicks. The grand parents or the mother sits nearby with the child, the Gurba beats the drum and then continues with the chanting of the sacred mantra time and again he offers to spirits flower & vermilion & finally holds little chicks and them with the knife he cuts the feather of the leg & applies tikka to the little child. Then the feast is prepared & all gotiyars (relatives) are invited after the feast small portion of meat, grains, alcohol, money is carried by the person to gurwas house, in fact prior to inviting him on such occasion Rakshi, Jad grain is send as an invitation, just as the Sorini the Gurwa holds an important position for himself in the Tharu community. The spirits responsible for preservation of the child at Dang was known by the name Chaitra & Bhakura, & the Gurwa evoked it.

Another similar ceremony for child preservation is held on the month of Magh & Baishakh is it done or performed at the community level where 80 to 60 households contribute Jad Rakshi, grains, pig fowl and other required material such as Lauka, Ginger, Dhatura etc. again it is Gurba who chants mantra and cuts the chicks feather if there are 60 households then the feather of 60 chickens are offered to the deity in order to please it and then fast is held. Thus in this manner it is believed that the deity safeguards the children of the village.

Thought in Deokhuri we do not come across any of such rituals which are observed in order to



safeguard the children however there does exist certain spirits known by the name of Maiya Devee and the parents have to offer worship to her through the Gurwa who is the only medium of communication between man & spirit. If the child suffers from fever or vomits or is the victim of diarrhoeal diseases then the belief persists that the deity is angry and at once Gurwa is called & chanting of mantra is done & fowl, chicken, pig as required is offered to please the deity. However since this area of study lies near the developed region where people have already had knowledge of health post, therefore despite showing to the Gurwa if the child still suffered then he was taken to the health post this is however uncommon among Tharus of Dang who dwell far away from the modern world.

**Marriage-** is an important aspect of any community be it primitive or modern, likewise the Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri observe it in their own manner, They observe insert taboos and local belief persists that children born of those who do not observe such taboos are usually lame, therefore such marriages are forbidden.

### **The types of marriages that prevail among Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri are**

- Early marriage.
- Satta Patta marriage
- Arranged marriage
- Elopement
- Child marriages, widow marriages, remarriages marriage of unsuitable age etc.

The findings were that the child born out of the marriage contracted between people of same clan were called *Seethe* earlier they were tabooed by the Tharus but recently changes has emerged and such

marriages are being accepted. Beside it there were also *marriages of unsuitable ages* were 8 years old boy wedded girl of 14 years, infact such marriages exist to this day, incourse of field work the researcher came across a couple where a boy was 21 and a girl of 31 though of course while looking there was hardly any differences yet such marriages were held for the sake of conducting household & agricultural works.

**Early marriages-** Where the child of 4 wedded with a girl of same or little younger age this kind of marriages were common, but recently changes have taken place. In cases of early marriages the girl is brought to the grooms choose only after she reaches the age of puberty.

**Satta Patta marriage-** which exist no more was common among the Tharus of older generation Krsna who now is 75 was married at the age of 18 with Siva Hari Chaudhary the elder, after one year his younger brother Lal Hari Chaudhary wedded Sankara, after which Siva Hari Chaudhary handed his wife Krishna to Lal Hari and took Samkara as his wife she became wife of Lal Hari Chaudhary. But now such customs does not exist, but in her time it was quite common, there was nothing strange about it but recently this pratha is completely out of their system.

**Arrange marriages-** were common and exist up to this day however the recent trend is more towards elopement infact the father encourages daughter to runaway and later give small feast, this is being encouraged because of increasement in the dowry pratha which is beyond the capability of the modern families who mostly led life of Kamaiyas (bonded laborers). This exists both among the Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri. In case of arranged marriages, auspicious day is chosen specially Friday &

Wednesday in Dang and Monday in Deokhuri.

Asking of hand- It is the grooms father who send Aguwa to contract marriage while in Dang the grooms parents themselves go & take with them Rakshi, Jad, Rupee & if accepted, the marriage is considered fixed.

On the wedding day brides guardians go to the grooms house along with gotiyars (relatives) the Gurawa accompanies them and pooja Aja of the bride groom is done it is a ceremonial function of the brides parents are rich they even give Rs. 400 to 500 to the grooms or 4 to 5 rupees. In accordance to their capabilities, they also present him new cloth & the gotiyar also gives him gifts of other money or cloth.

Then begins the process feasting were scrumetious feast is prepared, then Jad, Rakshi, pig cock are prepared and then begins the ritualistic ceremonies in which the Gurwa play significant role.

- There is a ritual where the Gurwa places the grooms hand into brides hand
- Then uses Barchi which is placed in the Devaras, it is taken out by Gurwa and it is fixed on the around plastered with red mud & cowdung then the gotiyar joins head of groom & bride and Gurwa chants mantras & places Barchi on their head though the researcher lacks the symbolic meaning, yet this ceremony existed both among Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri.
- Another important ritual is the Parchedha according to which the Gurwa chants mantra and then sprinkled the water on the head of the groom & the bride.
- There was also ritual which took pace within the Devars the bride & the groom

were placed infront of the deity here they hold each others hand and the bride touches the grooms feet & all the while the Gurwa chants mantra and "Mulopani" (comprising of sugar & water is given to the groom & bride they drink from the same Batuko (wooden pot then he blesses them.)

The gurwa puts Dhaka of Rs. One on the grooms hand & amidst chanting he applies tikka on the head & then begins feasting & singing, dancing and drinking of Jad & Rakshi which is final phase of marriage.

Another ritual associated with marriage at Deokhuri was that the couple were taken to local Marwa than and had to circumblate it five times and Gurwa chants mantras in both cases gotiyar are invited & feast is held.

After few days bride is taken to her parents home by her nearest goiter & paur (Gift) of Dhikari (special prepared food out of flour of boil rice) meat, Rakshi, Jad and other alcoholic beverages are taken with them, then after few days her husbands brother comes to take her back and he is given feast and then she goes back with gifts of Tikuli, Dhikiri, vegetable, Jad, Rakshi, etc. after this ritual she is considered as having belonged to the house of other families etc.

Other marriages which are common are widow-marriage remarriage as well as Chariti Tirne where a man runs away or takes away another man's wife and then he pays for her this payment may vary from 1,000 to 4,000 after which she becomes his wife. In all these ritualistic process of marriages the Gurwa plays significant role.

The importance of Gurwa can be seen even in

the last journey to the land of eternity from where there is no return.

Death however crude is an accepted and an unavoidable fact of life and the Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri have accepted it as a part of life.

Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri prior to death brings the sick to the Devarar and the Gurwa chants mantra for peace & easy death, the gotiyars are called & body is carried out of the back door on Khatiya placed upside down, new cloth is wrapped and on the chest a burning diya is placed and the nearest gotiyar and sons carry the body and they either bury or burn the dead.

While burying the Gurwa chants mantra if it is a male he is laid facing front, if it is a female she is buried facing down, they bury his dresses, vegetables, grams etc. & amidst chanting they sprinkle Jau, corn, grain etc. & then bury it after which sons and gotiyar bathe and the procession returns at Dang they keep Baar Kada (Thorn) on the way so that the spirit of the dead may not return, but this was not done at Deokhuri, the Tharus of Dang observe 11 days rite in which he lives as a hermit and cooks himself while at Deokhuri it is observed for 10 days, during these days they do not touch anyone nor do they eat meat or alcoholic beverages & all ritualistic ceremonies are conducted by Gurwa.

Festivities followed by Tharus of Dang & Deokhuri are-

1 **Maghi-** is the most important festival observed in the month of Maghi for period of 5 days it is a period of festivity & joy pair is send the daughter & misrawa brought by them to their parents home it constitute of Tharus of both Dang & Deokhuri celebrate

it amidst joy & festivity in accordance to their capabilities.

2 **Dassian-** they also observe Dassian by worshipping goddess Durga and among some Tharus Tug of war is held & they held feast drink Jad, Rakshi, sing & dance for 10 days.

3 **Diwali-** where the brothers gather to be worshipped by their sisters & they give them gifts.

4 **Vasanta panchami & holy-** is also observed amidst feasts & festivity during Chaitra. Tharu women observe.

5 **Ghattu-** for 15 days, they make clay gods & worship it with flowers & sing & dance on the last day they drown the god amidst singing & dancing.

6 During the month of Shrawan & Bhadra they observe **Harede-** for the preservation of the whole community and the village again among all the festivities any ritualistic ceremonies are conducted by Gurwa who chants mantra and after pooja festivity is held.

7 On the month of Shrawan they observe ritual so that no disease may touch their body or for health & happening or the community.

8 Likewise **Dhuri** is performed on the month of Ashad for the purpose of good health sacrifices to the spirit is offered as advised by Gurwa and sacrifices vary from cock, hen, to pig, goat sheep etc.

- 9 They also perform **Ranje pooja**- this is conducted by Gurwa for the purpose of avoiding epidemics at community level.
- 10 During the month of Mangshir- they perform the ritual or festival of **Lwaghi** for the purpose of ample crop and good harvest ritualistic conditions is performed by the gurwa & sacrifices of fowl & pig is offered. Another important festivity, which brings about social cohesion among Tharus is the festivity of.
- 11 **Gadimai pooja**- which is performed after every five years, Tharus from all parts gather at the temple & pooja is done. Recently during this festivity 5,000 buffaloes, countless numbers of hen, cock, goat sheep were slaughtered in name of religion. This is performed for peace & prosperity of the community imagine what, wastage of wealth and bloodshed in the name of religion but then who can change it? It is tradition followed from generation to generation, which was probably simpler earlier with every little sacrifices but with modernization it has taken a complex form.
- 12 There is also another festivity known as **Sanu gadimai pooja**- which is performed annually, sacrifices are offered again for purpose of health wealth & happiness.
- 13 Other festivities are worship of **Musaniyamai Amodai**- for the purpose of health wealth and happiness and in all ritualistic condition the Gurwa plays significant role.

## Conclusion

These animistic beliefs and ritualistic practices and festivity are associated with their daily life, it provides these Tharus strength & power to survive against hardship of life and harsh nature in fact like in all ages these Tharus to have wished or hoped to benefit long life, good health, children, ample rain, good harvest, multiplication of cattle or for the admission of the soul to heavenly abode in conduction of these ritualistic beliefs and practices by worship of such deities or spirits who in return provide them & bless them with above mentioned aspects, the medium of communication between spirit & man is the Gurwa, all these beliefs, practices have helped in fulfilling their needs.

In fact their whole life structure is guided by these animistic religious beliefs & practices it has provided them with strength, power and helps in bringing about social unity and harmony and social order in the lives of these Tharus.

**NOTE-** Since most of the materials are first hand collection therefore very little reference are mentioned.

1. Fetish - dwelling place of spirits
2. Goan - the village
3. Anna - rice grain
4. Dehari - place to store rice, made of mud prevalent only among Tharu community
5. Kutcho - broom
6. Than - a religious place

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