



Karam Festival

Why in News?

Jharkhand Chief Minister took part in the **Karam festival celebrations** held in **Ranchi**.

About Karam (Karma) Festival

- **Geographic and Community Reach:** The [harvest festival](#) is celebrated by **tribal populations** in the states of **Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, and Odisha**.
 - It is especially popular among the **Munda, Ho, Oraon, Baiga, Kharia, and Santhal** tribes.
- **Timing and Date:** The festival is traditionally celebrated on the **Ekadashi tithi (eleventh day)** of the lunar fortnight in the month of **Bhado/Bhadra** (corresponding to **August-September**).
- **Central Symbol and Deity:** The festival is named after and centers on the **Karam tree**. The tree is traditionally seen as a symbol of **Karam Devta or Karamsani**, the **god of strength, youth, and vitality**.
- **Rituals and Ceremonial Practices:**
 - **Preparation:** About a week before the festival, **young women** bring **clear sand from the river**, in which they sow **seven types of grains**.
 - **Main Ceremony:** On the day of the festival, a **branch of the Karam tree** is planted in the **courtyard or 'akhra'**.
 - **Worship:** Devotees bring **jawa (hibiscus) flowers**, and the **pahan (priest)** worships the **Karm Raja or Karam Devta**.
 - **Celebration:** The worship is followed by **dancing** and the **singing of traditional Karam songs**.
 - **Conclusion:** The festival concludes with the **immersion of the Karam branch** in a **river or pond**, and the **jawa** is distributed among the devotees.
- **Agricultural Linkages and Practices:** The origin of the festival is traced to the **beginning of agriculture** by **tribal communities**.
 - As the **Oraon/ Kurukh community** aligned cultural practices with **seasonal agricultural cycles**, they celebrated Karam as the **festival of dhaan/ anaaj (grains)** during the **autumn rains**.
 - **Branches from sal or bhelua trees** are often planted in the fields after the festival, hoping **Karam Raja/ Devta** will **protect their crops**.
 - The **stems of Chirchitti (chaff flower) and Sindwar (chaste tree)** are planted in **paddy fields**, acting as **natural insecticides**.
 - The **pahan (priest)** prays for a **good harvest** during the ceremonies.