



KUMAR UTSAV

Orissa has a good deal of well-known tradition of *Oshas*, *Bratas* and *Melas*. The ceremony and sanctity of these traditional religious festivities are unparalleled. Out of various religious festivals, *Kumar Purnima* is one of the most popular and important festival of Orissa. On the full moon day after *Dussehra*, *Kumar Purnima* is celebrated by all the unmarried girls & newly married brides in the state. It is believed that girls worship Lord *Kartikeya* to get grooms as handsome as Lord *Kartikeya*.

Like Raja Festival it is a festival of girls mainly. The unmarried girls and newly married brides take part in this festival in great deal. The central theme of this festival is – praying to moon god to be blessed by good and ideal husbands. The girls wear new clothes, take bath before sunrise and pray God for smooth marital life. They also fast on this day. In the evening when the moon rises girls pray moon by offering *prasad*. The girls in groups sing special songs programmed for this particular occasion. The atmosphere of Orissa becomes so addicted with cultural programmes that any outsider will be delighted to be at Orissa during this festival.

Time for the Festivity:

Kumar Purnima is the full-moon day in the month of *Aswina Purnima* (September-October). This autumn festival is one of the most popular and important festival of Orissa. '*Kumar*' or '*Kartikeya*', the handsome Son of *Shiva* was born on this day. As young girls always wish for handsome husbands, they propitiate *Kumar*, the most handsome among Gods.



Rituals:

In the early morning the girls after their bath, wear new garments and make food-offerings to the Sun. They observe fasting for the day. In the evening when the moon rises they again make food offerings of a special variety and take it after the rituals are over. It is a festival of rejoicing for the girls. All of them sing and dance. The songs are of special meant for the occasion (*Kuaanra Punei Jahna Go Phula Baula Beni.....*). They also play a kind of game known as '*Puchi*' and also involve themselves in other varieties of country-games.

*“Kuaanra Punei Jahna Go Phula Baula Beni,
Kuanri Jhianka Apurva Ananda
Puchi Khelibaku Mana Go Phula Baula beni...”*
