



*“Aa ka Ma Boi, Pana Gua Thoi  
Pana Gua Tora, Masaka Dharama Mora”*

The Full Moon Day or 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the *Shukla Paksha* (waxing moon) of the *Kartika* month is considered as *Kartika Purnima*. During this month all the pious Hindus refrain themselves from eating fish, meat and egg. All of them take pre-dawn bath and visit temples as a matter of routine habit. The last five days are considered more sacred, in which there is wide participation of devotees. Taken together the days are called '*Panchuka*' (a period consisting of five days) and the last day being the "*Kartika Purnima*". Every day they take food only once in the afternoon which is known as '*Habisha*'.



### **Panchuka Brata (The five days Celebration)**



For all the five days the women after their purification bath in the early morning draw beautiful flower-designs around the '*Chaura*' (a small temple like structure with a '*Tulsi*' plant overhead) with colour powder. Fasting for the day is commonly observed. Most of the *Shiva* temples get crowded with devotees offering prayer to Lord *Shiva* who is said to have killed the demon '*Tripurasura*' on this day. Group singing of '*kirtans*' and loud beating of '*Mrudanga*' and cymbals continue for the whole day.

## Boita Bandana – As an Ancient Festival

Another festival that takes place in the “*Kartika Purnima*” morning is significant to the ancient history of Orissa. This reminds the maritime glory of the State. In olden days the ‘*Sadhabas*’ (Sea Traders) used to sail off to distant Islands like Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Ceylon etc. for trade by huge



boats (*Boita*). The women of the community were giving them a hearty see off by saying ‘*Aa ka Ma Boi*’ which symbolizes three Oriya months i.e. *Aswina, Kartika and Margashira*. The days are now gone, but the memory is still alive. Now, people float tiny boats made out of cork and coloured paper or bark of the banyan tree remembering the past glory. This is called “*Boita Bandana*”. The “*Kartik Brata*” is concluded on “*Kartik Purnima*” day. It is commonly observed that devotees take holy bath in Puri Sea Beach and worship Lord *Jagannath* on this holy day. This festival is celebrated with lot of respect by each and every individual of Orissa.

Aa Ka Ma Boi