



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Teej Festival

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Why is in news? A nine-month monsoon festival celebrated by the Lambadas of Telangana

Teej festival is celebrated by **Banjara(also known as Lambadas) and Mathura communities** in the old Adilabad district of **Telangana**.

Amid displaced homes and constant moving, their life is an eternal search for small joys, which they find in festivities.

The Lambadas of Telangana **share roots, lifestyle and culture with the people of Rajasthan**.

One of their socio-cultural showcases is celebrating the nine-day monsoon festival, Teej.

Celebrated in the auspicious **month of Sravanam** of the Indian calendar, young girls and women of the community **pray for a bountiful harvest and prosperity in their lives**.

The Teej festival begins on the day of the full moon in the Sravan month on the day on which the festival of Rakhi or Raksha Bandhan is celebrated.

Religious rituals aside, the **Lambada tanda** (habitation) comes alive with many activities as part of the festival.

Song and dance are integral to the celebrations, and resplendent **Banjara attire** add to the festive atmosphere.

The habitations reverberate with traditional Banjara songs and dance throughout the nine days, with relatives arriving from far-off places for participation.

They **worship gods and goddesses** by carrying wheat seedlings in twig baskets and immersing them in the local streams as a finale to the festivities akin to the **Bathukamma**, honoured by the rest of the women of Telangana. Hence, this ritual is termed **Banjara's Bathukamma**.

The **"twig arrangement"** is taken up by unmarried girls on an elevated platform outside the residence of their Naik or community elder after seeking his permission.

They water the seedlings three times a day for nine days, drawing water from local streams or wells.

It is believed that the healthy growth of the seedlings brings good harvest and is considered auspicious.

The women pray to **Sevalal Maharaj, a saint** and **Mera Mayadi** (another name for Goddess Parvathi), seeking good alliances in marriage.

Before the immersion of Teej (baskets with wheat seedlings) on the ninth day, the women seek the blessings of community elders.

After offering meat and kheer to Goddess Parvathi, the baskets are immersed in rivers or streams. Another offering is prepared with rice and jaggery and distributed after prayers. A grand banquet is organised for the community to

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mark the end of the festivities.