

Johar' greeting

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In news— The 15th President of India, Droupadi Murmu, assumed office recently with a 'Johar' greeting to the country.

What is 'Johar' greeting?

- **'Johar', which essentially means 'salutation and welcome'.**
- **It is used within the tribal communities of Jharkhand, and in parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha.**
- According to several tribal leaders from Jharkhand, the **word 'Johar' also means 'paying respect'.**
- **Tribal communities are nature worshippers and follow Sarna religion code,** although it is not an official religion.
- **There are 32 tribal communities in Jharkhand who speak different dialects. Almost all, including tribal Christians, use the word 'Johar' along with some other words for salutation.**
- **Johar, is predominantly used by Santhali, Munda and Ho communities** that share some similarities.
- **People belonging to the Oraon community use the word 'Jai Dharam',** apart from Johar, as a salutation.
- There are at least four types of 'Johar' salutation. **One of them is 'Doboh Johar',** which is used between people where one among them has a higher standing.
- In 'Doboh Johar' there is a ritual where the person with a tumbler full of water bows in front of the person of higher standing.
- The person who bows will touch the earth and in return the other person will wash his/her hand (using water in the tumbler) and let the water drop on the earth. The entire exercise means that the hospitality being shown has been accepted.

- Leaders from the tribal communities say that the greeting has been in use since 'time immemorial', adding that it is hard to pinpoint when it actually began.

What is Sarna religion?

- Sarna is an **indigenous faith and its followers are nature worshippers**.
- Jal, jungle, zameen (water, forest and land) are the main elements that they hold holy.
- The word **sarna literally means a patch of forest left untouched** for spirits to live in.
- There has been a demand for separate religious code for the Sarna tribals.
- At present, under the census, there are codes for only six religions: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism.
- While filling in these columns, a tribal resident has to identify himself or herself as one of these or as 'others', but cannot specify his / her religion as a different one.
- In census surveys during 1871-1951, there was a separate category for the tribal population. But later, this was dropped.