

Importance of Chhath Puja in the Culture and Economy of Bihar

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Abstract

Chhath Puja, the great festival of folk faith, is a major and traditional festival of Bihar, which is celebrated with devotion, reverence, and dedication. This puja is dedicated to Sun God and Chhathi Maiya. Business worth more than thousands of crores takes place during Chhath festival in the whole of Bihar. However, no special study has been done on this yet. Economist NK Choudhary says that this amount is quite large, because every small and big business from rural areas to cities is involved in it. Every family of Bihar contributes to Chhath in some form or the other. Chhath Mahaparva is directly related to the economy of Bihar. Soup and daura have special significance in Chhath Puja. In such a situation, it is manufactured on a large scale in different areas of Bihar. It is also manufactured in the areas of Madhubani, Bhagalpur and Seemanchal. It is also ordered from other states many times. Most of the fruits for Chhath are ordered from other states. Apples are ordered from Kashmir and Himachal, oranges from Nagpur, coconuts from Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, bananas from Karnataka and Chennai. Apart from this, sugarcane is brought from Uttar Pradesh. Soop-Daura is made on a large scale in Bihar. Chhath festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm. This festival lasts for four days i.e. 96 hours, and people from the eastern communities living in different states along with whole India, especially Bihar and Jharkhand, participate in this festival. About 15 crore people including women, men and children participate in Chhath Puja rituals. According to an estimate, the country's economy can benefit by Rs 12 thousand crore in these 96 hours. as a culture and faith of Bihar. How Chhath Puja is connected to the common people as a cultural heritage to the economy of Bihar has been studied in this research article.

Purpose: This paper examined how Chhath Puja is the cultural heritage of Bihar and this festival acts as a lifesaver for the rural economy of Bihar. How social harmony in this festival brings happiness in the family. And how this festival gives the message of preserving the natural economy. And today this festival is celebrated not only in Bihar.

Methodology: This paper determined the significant factors a part from various news sources about Chhath Puja, it has been included in the research article after doing an in-depth study on it. Along with this, the focus has been on the historical importance of Chhath Puja, people's participation and its impact on the economy of small businessmen and how this festival gives impetus to the economy of Bihar's rural areas after Diwali.

Findings: There is no such area of business and trade which is not included in Chhath Puja. The market becomes bustling during Chhath Puja. The demand for bamboo products, fruits, flowers, natural fruits etc. increases in this festival. Because it is offered as prasad in the soup and basket used in the puja. This festival also plays an important role in keeping the native culture alive and preserving it. Soup and daura have special importance in this. In such a situation, it is manufactured on a large scale in different areas

of Bihar. It is also manufactured in the areas of Madhubani, Bhagalpur and Seemanchal. It is also ordered from other states many times.

Apart from fruits, wheat, rice, flour, semolina, refined flour, sugar, dry mawa and other food items are also used on a large scale. Apart from this, milk and ghee are also sold on a large scale. From lathi to other worship materials are also sold on a large scale in Chhath Puja. From mango wood to earthen stoves, everything is sold. If we talk about textile businessmen, then sarees are also sold in large numbers. Chhath Mahaparva is such a festival in which hardly any area of business is left out.

Originality/Value: This paper examined factors associated with in Importance of Chhath Puja in the culture and economy of Bihar .More than a thousand crores of business in Bihar is done during Chhath festival. However, no special study has been done yet. According to the Economist NK Chaudhary that this amount is very large, because every small business from rural areas to cities is involved in it. Every family of Bihar gives their participation in Chhath in some form or the other. Chhath Mahaparva is directly related to Bihar's economy.

Keywords: Chhath Puja, great festival, economy of Bihar, big business, Every family, great enthusiasm, eastern communities

INTRODUCTION

Chhath Puja, a great festival of folk faith, is a major and traditional festival of Bihar, which is celebrated with devotion, reverence, and dedication. This puja is dedicated to Sun God and Chhathi Maiya. According to the report of Confederation of All India Traders, on the occasion of Chhath Puja, business worth about Rs 12,000 crore takes place across the country. From big businessmen to small businessmen play an important role in the four-day Chhath Mahaparva. Therefore, traders also wait for this festival. Businessmen doing wholesale to retail business make a year's profit from sales during Chhath Mahaparva. The capital Patna Market Committee is the largest fruit market in Bihar. Apples, oranges, bananas, coconuts, pears and pineapples and many other fruits are imported from other states and sent all over Bihar. Apart from fruits, wheat, rice, flour, semolina, refined flour, sugar, dry mawa and other food items are also used on a large scale. Apart from this, milk and ghee are also sold on a large scale. Lahthi and other worship materials are also sold on a large scale in Chhath Puja. Everything from mango wood to earthen stoves is sold. Talking about textile businessmen, sarees are also sold in large quantities. Chhath Mahaparva is such a festival in which hardly any area of business is left out. Chhath Puja is not just a religious festival, but an integral part of Indian culture, which reflects social unity and dedication. It also promotes trade and directly benefits local producers, which strengthens Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Vocal for Local' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India). Most of the products used during Chhath Puja are prepared by local artisans and craftsmen, creating new employment opportunities and supporting cottage industries. Chhath Puja, beyond its spiritual significance, has emerged as a major opportunity for business and employment, bringing new economic energy to Indian markets. This research article focuses on the economy of Chhath Puja



The contribution of Chhath Puja to the economy of Bihar is as follows:

1. During Chhath Puja, local producers are directly benefited.
2. During Chhath Puja, local artisans and craftsmen get employment.
3. During Chhath Puja, cottage industries are supported.
4. During Chhath Puja, local traders and small scale industries are benefited.
5. During Chhath Puja, traditional costumes are purchased in large quantities.

Cultural Impact.

While Chhath Puja remains a strict festivity mainly in Bihar, it has gained acceptance within other states like Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and further to the Indian diaspora. The festival further fosters community spirit when thousands gather at water bodies to pray and engage in various rituals. It is a time for communal bonding and cultural expression. Chhath Puja sums up the glory of Sun God and, above all, family unity, good health, and respect for nature. It is a reflection.



Chhath is the most difficult fast

Chhath festival is said to be the most difficult fast of Hindu religion. For Biharis, it is the only festival that is connected to their culture. Now Chhath festival has become popular all over the country. This festival of worship of Chhathi Maiya and Sun God is now celebrated all over the country. You must be interested to know how Chhath Puja started and what are its scientific reasons. According to mythology, after conquering Lanka, on the day of establishment of Ram Rajya, Lord Ram and Mother Sita fasted and worshiped Sun God on the sixth day of Kartik Shukla. After this, on the seventh day, they performed rituals at sunrise and took blessings from Sun God. This is the scientific importance of Chhath Puja. Pandit Kapil Maharaj said that Shashthi Tithi i.e. Chhath is a day of special astronomical change. At the time when the ultraviolet rays of the sun gather on the surface of the earth in more quantity than normal. This tradition of Chhath Puja has the ability to protect humans as much as possible from its possible ill effects. This festival has scientific importance through which it is possible to protect living beings from the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays. A person can get a lot of benefits from it. By coming under the effect of its light while offering arghya to the setting and rising sun, no skin disease occurs and a person remains healthy. After Diwali, the heat of the Sun God reaches the earth less. Therefore, with fasting, energy is stored through the heat of the sun, so that the body remains healthy in winter.

The story related to Lord Krishna and Draupadi

This belief of Chhath festival is related to Lord Shri Krishna and Draupadi. When Maharaja Dharmaraj lost all his kingdom in gambling, at that time Lord Shri Krishna asked Draupadi to observe Chhath fast.

Chhath is special for the wish of getting a son

The most special story about Chhath festival is that there used to be a king named Priyavrat who had no children. To get a son, he performed a yagya called Putra Kameshti Yagna. After performing this yagya, he got a child but it was a dead child. He was taking the child to bury him. At that very moment, Srishti Devi appeared before him and as soon as she touched the child, the child started laughing loudly. Since then, Chhath festival is being celebrated continuously. Mothers who wish to have a son can get the desired result by worshipping Sun God and Chhathi Mai with full rituals.

Cleanliness and discipline are of great importance.

Chhath Vrat is a great festival of faith and spirituality that brings social harmony and happiness in the family. In this festival, discipline and cleanliness are of great importance. This festival is celebrated by offering water to the rising and setting form of Lord Sun. Women mostly celebrate this festival in Bihar or wherever it is celebrated. The person who observes Chhath Vrat is called Vрати. In this festival, first of all, wake up in the morning and take a bath. On this day, cleanliness is taken great care of. After cleaning, a resolution is taken for fasting and worship. In the evening, the Vрати women themselves prepare kheer of rice and jaggery. It starts with Nahai-Khaai, on this day rice and gourd vegetable are cooked and eaten. The next day is Kharna, on the day kheer of jaggery and rice is prepared. After eating this kheer, a 36-hour fast begins. On the third day, arghya is offered to the setting sun in the evening. Chhath festival lasts for four full days and fasting is observed. Therefore, Chhath fast is considered one of the difficult fasts.

Festival of social harmony

There are no rituals in Chhath festival, so there is no priest in it. Just as mothers or women living with babies take full care of cleanliness to prevent any infection after birth and there is a ritual of Chhath. Similarly, in this festival, cleanliness is linked with purity and is followed. Many Muslim families in Bihar have also been celebrating Chhath. According to them, Chhath festival has been a festival of religious and social unity. Apart from the women who perform Chhath, people who make 'soup-daala', farmers who grow crops, shopkeepers who sell fruits and prasada, male members who clean the house, road and ghats, all have their own roles.

History of Chhath Puja

If we look at the history of Chhath Puja, it is believed that it started during the Mahabharata period when Kunti worshipped the Sun at the time of the birth of her son Karna. It is believed that Chhath Devi is the sister of Sun God and to please her, this worship is done on the banks of Mother Ganga-Yamuna or any holy river, considering the importance of Sun and water as important elements of life, considering them as witnesses and worshipping and thanking the Sun.



Puja is celebrated in the country and abroad

Chhath Puja is celebrated not only in Delhi but in the entire country wherever people from Purvanchal live. Along with this, wherever people from Bihar-UP, Jharkhand went to other countries including America, they took this Puja and the great festival of folk culture with them. A large number of people worship Chhathi Maiya on Chhath Puja. According to the estimate of Confederation of All India Traders (CAT), business worth about 12 thousand crore rupees takes place on Chhath Puja across the country. During this time, there is a big trade of clothes, fruits, flowers, vegetables, sarees and small products including earthen stoves. According to Confederation of All India Traders (CAT), more than 15 crore people participate in Chhath Puja across the country, which includes women, men, youth and children. People of these states celebrate Chhath on a large scale. Actually, Chhath Puja is considered to be the biggest festival of Indian folk culture, which is celebrated with great enthusiasm in Bihar, Jharkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Odisha, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha and Madhya Pradesh. people participate in Chhath Puja across the country, which includes women, men,

youth and children. People of these states celebrate Chhath on a large scale. In the year 2023, the business of Chhath Puja had reached about eight thousand crore rupees. This great festival of folk faith is celebrated after Diwali. Chhath Puja Sale: Following the Diwali festive week, the Chhath Puja festival has recorded trade worth more than Rs 8,000 crore for retailers, the traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said. Celebrated in Bihar, Jharkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and other states, the festival is among the biggest celebrations of Indian folk culture starting from Nahay-Khay and ending at Paran.



History and associated legends

In Champaran, Bihar and Madhesh Province, Nepal, it is a belief that after leaving Ayodhya, Sita stayed in Valmiki Ashram located on the edge of Narayani River in Chitwan district. During that time she celebrated Chhath Mahaparva in Nepal. Even today, people celebrate Chhath festival with great pomp at Luv-Kush Ghat on the banks of Gandaki river located in Indo-Nepal border. The Chhathi Maiya is worshipped on the Chhath festival, which is also mentioned in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana. It is said that the Chhath Puja was started in the holy city of Varanasi by Gahadavala dynasty. According to the Kashi Khanda, after Banaras the trend of Chhath Puja started increasing in the country.

Discussion:-

It is said that India is a country of festivals and celebrations. In that too, Chhath festival has its own special significance in Bihar and the neighbouring states. Chhath festival is a festival of enthusiasm and worship. It is a wonderful confluence of culture, art, song, music, joy and traditions. It is a living example of collectivism and sociality. Among all the festivals that are celebrated, Chhath has a different way of worship. It is a festival completely connected to nature.

This four-day worship begins the next week of Diwali. This festival begins when the first crop starts coming from the farmer's field. Farmers remain delighted. The sugarcane season begins and it is a symbol of the farmer's economic prosperity. The crop nurtured by their blood and sweat is used in worshipping the Sun, the form of energy. On one hand, it is a festival to thank the Sun for illuminating human life and awakening the hopes of farmers. If you pay attention to the material used in this festival, you will realize its importance and connection with nature. The festival is a symbol of the existence of human life. Standing on the bank of a river in its flowing water and offering prayers to the Sun while offering Arghya is a symbol of the existence of human life. The river is a symbol of the flow of life.

Human life also moves like the flow of a river, incorporating all the good and bad experiences and standing in the middle of this flow and waiting for the sunlight is a symbol of light after every darkness. The Sun is the truth. We also worship its setting form, which is unique. The setting Sun is humanity. No matter how bright a person is, how influential he is, his setting is the truth and remembering his cooperation and favors at the time of his setting is a reflection of gratitude. This is a festival of cleanliness, worship of purity. This is the time of change of seasons. Winter is about to come, so the society collectively cleans all the water sources like rivers, social places, roads, footpaths, ponds. This along with the sanctity of the festival makes the ways of living easy in the coming season. If we look at other festivals of Sanatan Dharma from a comparative point of view, then Chhath is a festival in which there is no separate special worship method. There is no idol, no priest is needed. It is a symbol of direct connection with God.

This is also like Vocal for Local. The prasad of this worship, Thekua, is made at everyone's place. This is a symbol of equality. Cow ghee, jaggery, flour, rice kheer are all the items used directly from the produce of the farmer and these help in increasing economic activities at the village level. You will find all those things in the Puja material which are produced locally and ensure everyone's participation in our social structure. It completely calls for collectivism at the level of sociality along with the economic activities of the village and the city. People working with bamboo are at the lowest rung of the society but they are the ones who make the soup for offering arghya and this festival brings joy and enthusiasm for them. If we look at it at the level of the family, then men, women, children all participate somewhere and this is a very big message to connect. It is also a symbol of self-reliance of the society. Along with the family, there is a resolution of self-reliance at every level. As a festival, it is a symbol of sociality as well as collective self-reliance and continuous development of the individual. Chhath is such a festival of worship of nature which, being based on the liveliness of the society, takes the individual towards collectivism.

Conclusion:

In a diverse country like India, Chhath Puja gives the message of worshipping nature. This festival also gives the message of happiness in the family, nature worship, cleanliness, harmony, unity, mutual brotherhood, discipline, along with economy. It is a festival in itself. Chhath Puja is not only a religious festival but also a symbol of social unity. This festival brings together all the people, irrespective of their caste, religion, or economic class. During Chhath Puja, people of the society gather and meet at the ghats and help each other. This festival promotes the spirit of unity and cooperation in the society. In Chhath Puja, many women and men together offer arghya in a group, which strengthens community feelings. Chhath Puja is a major and very sacred festival of Bihar, which is priceless from religious, cultural and social point of view. Even in 2024, preparations are on to celebrate this festival with utmost devotion and reverence. Chhath Puja gives us the message of respect for nature and positivity in life. Chhath Puja festival is celebrated with joy and devotion not only in Bihar but in the whole of North India, and it brings energy, power, and prosperity in our lives. The materials used in Chhath Puja festival include bamboo baskets, banana leaves, sugarcane, sweets, fruits and vegetables, especially coconut, apple, banana and green vegetables. All these things are sold in large quantities during Chhath Mahaparva. On the occasion of Chhath Puja, people make large purchases of traditional women's clothes like saree, lehenga-chunni, salwar kurta and kurta-pyjama, dhoti etc. for men. This gives a large scale business to the local traders. Along with this, industrial units related to MSMEs have got strengthened.

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