

Chudi Pooja



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- It is a festival observed by married women from the Goud Saraswath Brahmin (GSB), Saraswaths, Vysya and Daivajna communities during Shravan month (late July -late August) in Karnataka and some parts of Kerala .
- Tulsi Plant and Sun god are worshipped during Chudi Pooja.
- Chudi is derived from the Kannada word 'Soodi,' which means a tied bundle.
- The main ritual involves arrangements of wild flowers and herbs in a small bundle. Traditionally eleven specific flowers along with durva grass and some herbs tied into a small bouquet with banana fibre yarns constitute a chudi. The arrangement of flowers and herbs used to make the chudi resembles the ethnic 'Ikebana' (Japanese Flower arrangement) .



Chudis arranged on a plate



Significance

- There are many reasons why Chudi Pooja is observed.
1. Jalandhara's wife Vrinda was very beautiful and chaste. She was also an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. To save the world from the grip of the demons, Lord Vishnu was awaiting an opportunity to demolish the wicked Jalandhara that would be possible only if Vrinda loses her chastity.

When Jalandhara is away one day at the war front, Lord Vishnu is believed to appear before Vrinda in the form of her husband and has connection with her. Vrinda loses her chastity and as a result, Jalandhara loses his life in the battle field.

Later, Vrinda realises that it was not her husband Jalandhara but Lord Vishnu who had connection with her, thereby snatching away her chastity along with her husband's life. Being devotee of Lord Vishnu, she has faith that Vishnu's act was aimed at the welfare of the world.



Lord Vishnu suggests her to offer Chudi Pooja to the Tulsi plant during Shravan month, which ascertains chastity and fortune for women. She offers the pooja before noon and it is believed that this is how the custom of "Chudi pooja" originated.

2. Another reason why it is observed is, Sita had offered this pooja with wild grown plants/leaves and flowers during her vanvaas and hence the pooja came into existence.
3. It is also believed that, wild flowers and other plants which are not used for pooja had asked lord Vishnu that they too need a chance to be given to the lord and hence Chudi Pooja is celebrated.



How is it celebrated?

Married women perform this pooja on every Friday and Sunday of Shravan month.

Generally, all the Hindu houses in South India have a Tulsi plant grown in a raised platform in front of the house. In Tamil it is called Tulsi Maadam, in Kannada Tulsi Katte, in Telugu Tulsi Kota and Tulsi Thara in Malayalam.

An odd number of chudis are prepared for the pooja. The Hosthilu (door step) is decorated with chalk designs (Rangoli). The area where the tulsi plant is kept is cleaned and washed the previous day.

The *pooja* is performed after a head bath, before 12 Noon. A lamp is lit near the Tulsi plant.

Chudis , haldi, kumkum, sandalwood paste, aarti, oil lamp along with some sweets for Prasad are arranged on a plate and placed in front of the Tulsi plant.



Tulsi Kotte



Next a kalash is made ready by applying Chandan (Sandalwood paste)-Haldi (turmeric) –Kumkum on four spots of the Kalash. Then water is poured into it, few grains (akshath) and Kumkum are added to it and Sun God is worshipped. Next, water is poured to the Tulsi plant, little by little, five times and very little is also had by the person performing the pooja (Aachamana).

Chandan (Sandalwood paste)-Haldi (turmeric) –Kumkum are applied to the Tulsi plant, an *agarbatti* (incense stick) is lit, and the plant is decorated with a flower string (usually jasmine). Then Chudi is offered to Tulsi and Sun God and aarati (Flame) is shown to Tulsi.

After prathakshina or Parikrama (circumambulation) and namaskara (bowing) to Tulsi, women then offer pooja and chudi to the door step (Dwara Bagilu), jaladevata (water well) and coconut tree (Kalpavriksham). Then, one Chudi is offered to God in the prayer room and one choodi is worn in their hair.

Finally, Chudi is also offered to the husband and elders at home and women seek their blessings. 'Chudis' are then exchanged between women and are also sent through post to relatives residing in distant locations. Young girls are only given chudis & kumkum & no veedos (betel leaves).



- Some of the commonly used flowers and herbs in a standard Chudi are (there are many more other than these):

- ❖ Ratnagandhi
- ❖ Sanje Mallige
- ❖ Nandi Batlu
- ❖ Mitayi pushpa
- ❖ Gauri Pushpa
- ❖ Paarijat
- ❖ Karaveera
- ❖ Rathapushpa
- ❖ Sugandhi
- ❖ Shankupushpa
- ❖ Durve (leaf)
- ❖ Sita Chaavari
- ❖ Aarati (leaf)



Variations in Celebration

- In south Canara the pooja is performed every Friday and Sunday of Shravan month.
- In North Canara it is performed only on Sundays of Shravan month.
- Cochin GSB do chudi pooja in the name of Sirvan Aitharu . Sirvan Aitharu means Shravan month's Sunday (Shravan masacho aitharu) . They perform this only on Sundays .
- Newly married women perform her first Chudi Pooja in the presence of many elderly women, separately in her home and her parents' home.
- Second Friday of Shravan is Varalakshmi Vrat / Varamahalakshmi Vrat when some prefer to offer special prasad like sheera ,halwa etc..
- If Chudi pooja comes on a Ekadeshi - then only chudis & kumkum is given to all without veedos (betel leaves) .



Varamahalakshmi Vrat

- It is celebrated on the Second Friday or the Friday before the day of full moon (Poornima/Pournami) in the month of Shravana.
- This pooja is performed by women in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Even unmarried women can do Varamahalakshmi Puja along with their mother.
- Varamahalakshmi festival is performed to commemorate Goddess Mahalakshmi.
- It is believed that worshipping the Goddess Varalakshmi on this day is equivalent to worshipping Ashtalakshmi – the eight goddesses of Wealth, Earth, Wisdom, Love, Fame, Peace, Contentment, and Strength.
- Women fast on this day, offer fruits, flowers, sweets to the Goddess Lakshmi and pray for the well-being of everyone in the family.



Varalakshmi is one who grants boons ("Vara")



Benefits of Chudi Pooja

- The combination of various colors in the chudi is a visual delight.
- While collecting the flowers and herbs themselves, women spend time appreciating and admiring nature.
- Visiting elders and friends to exchange chudi strengthens the relationship.
- Certain plants which are collected have medicinal value and gives a cooling effect when worn in the hair.



Modern Chudi Pooja

Earlier, all the flowers were easily available. But now, flowers like Kedage, Rathapushpa are rare. So, we use other alternatives like roses of different colours, shoe flower etc..

Readymade 'chudis' are now available in the market as a result of busy lifestyle and lack of gardens.



Button roses



Rangoli



Shoe flower



Thank You!!

