

Name of the Element: Chhath Pooja

Community/ies: Hindu community

Region: Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand

Brief Description: Chhath Puja is a significant Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun God, Surya, and Chhathi Maiya. It is celebrated primarily in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and parts of Nepal, as well as by Indian communities in countries like Mauritius, Fiji, and Trinidad and Tobago. The festival is observed twice a year, during Chaitra (March-April) and Kartika (October-November). The Kartika celebration begins four days after Diwali and lasts for four days.

The rituals include Nahay Khay (holy bath and sattvik meal), Lohanda or Kharna (fasting and offering kheer and chapati), Sandhya Arghya (offering prasad like Thekua and fruits to the setting sun), and Usha Arghya (prayers to the rising sun). Devotees observe over 36 hours of fasting without water, maintain strict cleanliness, and offer prayers at rivers or other water bodies. The festival symbolizes purity, devotion, and gratitude, seeking blessings for health, prosperity, and well-being.