

CULTURE OF ODISHA

World Chhenapoda Dibasa: Honouring Odisha's Iconic Sweet and Its Creator Sudarsan Sahu

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • April 12, 2025 • 3 min read

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Odisha, a land rich in cultural heritage and culinary traditions, celebrates *World Chhenapoda Dibasa* today, April 11, with enthusiasm and pride. This special day is dedicated to honouring Sudarsan Sahu of Nayagarh, the ingenious creator of *Chhenapoda*, one of Odisha's most beloved desserts. The occasion also serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and promoting regional culinary heritage.

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The Sweet Origin of Chhenapoda

Chhenapoda, literally translating to “baked cheese,” traces its roots back to the Nayagarh district. The story of its creation is as delightful as its taste. Legend has it that Sudarsan Sahu, experimenting in his kitchen, ended up baking sweetened chhena (cottage cheese) overnight—giving rise to what would become an iconic dish known for its caramelized outer layer and soft, spongy interior.

Since then, *Chhenapoda* has become a staple in Odia households and festive occasions, admired for its distinct flavour and simple, wholesome ingredients.

A Celebration of Culinary Pride

First commemorated in 2022 by the non-profit organisation *Helping Hand, World Chhenapoda Dibasa* is celebrated annually on April 11, the birth anniversary of Sudarsan Sahu. The initiative aims to bring well-deserved recognition to this traditional Odia sweet and ensure that its cultural legacy is preserved for future generations.

“We have been celebrating World Chhenapoda Dibasa since 2022. The special day is celebrated on the occasion of the birthday of its creator Sudarsan Sahu on April 11 every year. We celebrate the birthday in a grand way,” shared Bibhuti Bhusana Mohanty, a member of Helping Hand.

Rising Popularity Beyond Borders

The popularity of *Chhenapoda* is no longer confined to Odisha. With increasing demand across the country, especially in states with significant Odia diaspora, the Nayagarh district has seen a significant surge in production and distribution. Each day, thousands of units are sent out from local sweet shops and households to different corners of India.

Suman Sahu, the son of Sudarsan Sahu, expressed his vision for the sweet’s global reach: “*Chhenapoda is the pride of Odisha. People across the globe should know about this sweet Odia delicacy. Efforts should be made to provide a GI tag to Nayagarh Chhenapoda.*”

A Call for GI Tag Recognition

Indeed, many believe it is time for *Chhenapoda*—especially the Nayagarh variety—to receive a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, which would help protect its identity and promote its unique connection to the region. Such recognition would not only benefit local sweet makers but also cement Odisha's place on the map of India's culinary traditions.

Conclusion: Sweetness Rooted in Identity

As Odisha celebrates *World Chhenapoda Dibasa*, it is not just a tribute to a dessert but a celebration of cultural pride, creativity, and tradition. Sudarsan Sahu's creation has not only delighted generations of Odias but also become a symbol of the state's culinary identity. It's time the world gets a taste of *Chhenapoda*—Odisha's sweet masterpiece.

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