

all-arounders

Ugadi fervour abroad



UGADI PACHCHADI

Savouring the Ugadi Pachchadi after the early morning puja is one of the most important rituals of Ugadi, the Telugu New year.

This chutney made from neem flowers, mango, jaggery, tamarind and other ingredients with different tastes, has a deep inner significance. The preparation comprises of six tastes (*shadruchi sammelan*) and each stands for a special facet of a person's life. The preparation has ingredients that impart all the tastes — sweet, bitter, sour, salty — indicating that life is a mixture of good and bad, joy and sorrow. Everything has to be taken in our stride and should be enjoyed equally.

The underlying message is that we must face whatever happens in the year calmly, accepting it with grace.

Here's a simple traditional recipe.

Ingredients

2 tsp neem flowers
4 tsp jaggery, grated
3 tsp tamarind (pulp)
Red chilli powder, a pinch
1 tsp raw mango, finely chopped
1¼ cup water
Salt to taste

Method

Soak tamarind in water for 30 minutes. Squeeze the pulp, extract the juice and strain it. Then keep it aside. To this tamarind water, add the chopped raw mango pieces. Add jaggery and stir till it melts. Keep aside.

Add neem flowers, chilli powder, salt and all the other ingredients. Mix well. Once done, add the mixture to the tamarind juice. The pachadi is now ready to serve.

Eat it on the morning of Ugadi to start your day auspiciously.

Recipe by Aishwarya Rao, System Analyst



"I WILL BE WORKING ON UGADI AS I DON'T HAVE A HOLIDAY"

Varun Kota celebrated Ugadi with his aunt's family in Chicago last year

IKYATHA YERASALA

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Brand new clothes, a visit to the temple, savouring the Ugadi pachchadi, reading the panchanga (religious almanac) with the entire family sitting in the puja room. This is something that most Telugu youngsters who live

abroad, away from their parents, will surely miss during Ugadi. While some follow the festive rituals, others try their best to celebrate with family and friends in their own 'modernised' way.

For 26-year-old Varun Kota, a Telugu who works as a financial analyst in Chicago, Ugadi is about visiting the temple and praying for a successful New Year. "I visit the

Lemont temple in Illinois during Ugadi to see the nice *alankaar* (decoration) and later relish the yummy *prasadam*," he says. Ugadi, which is celebrated by Telugus and Kannadigas as the 'New Year' involves wearing new clothes as well. While Varun does whatever he can to retain the festive spirit, he gets to witness the pujas, thanks to his aunt with

whom he lives. "My aunt's family reads out the panchanga in the evening. A lot of Indians gather at her place to listen to the reading. Many of them prepare *obattu* (a south Indian sweet) at home," he adds.

While some take part in the Ugadi pujas, others who live alone don't really have the time to follow the rituals. "I will be working on Ugadi as I don't have a holiday.

So all I can do is wear new clothes and wish my parents over the phone," says Shravan V., a Telugu who works in an MNC in San Diego, USA. So how does he feel about missing out on the pachchadi this year? "I'm surely going to miss my mom's pachchadi," he replies. He adds that there are some who keep the spirit of the festival alive. "My friend who works in New Jersey, buys jaggery and neem and distributes the *bevubella* mixture to people in his office," shares Shravan.

Pavan Dhananka, who works in Switzerland, celebrates Ugadi by visiting his wife's family. "The elders get the *vepa puvvu* from the UK or India, as neem trees don't grow in Switzerland. If that doesn't happen, then we celebrate Ugadi with just the *bellam!*", says Pavan. So, whichever part of the world you're in, make sure you offer prayers this New Year. Happy Ugadi!

SASWATI MUKHERJEE

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Post-Munnabhai, Mahatma Gandhi was back in the news when business tycoon Vijay Mallya bought his belongings from an auction at New York early this month.

Back in Hyderabad, D.V.K. Vasudevan is busy popularising Gandhian values, albeit differently. He has chosen musical strains christened Sabarmati Sangeet, after the Sabarmati Ashram.

"These are some of his favourite songs, which not many people are aware of," says Vasudevan, who identifies himself more with the name of 'Violinvasu'. A music instructor at the University of Hyderabad and cultural advisor at the International Institute of Information Technology, Vasu thought of putting all the songs together to popularise them.

Designed with the aim of spreading Gandhian thoughts through music, the songs propagate popular Gandhian values such as truth, non-violence, service to others, sacrifice and friendship.

Currently being popularised

Humming Bapu's geet



Children learn Sabarmati sangeet in the city.

among youngsters through college and school workshops, Sabarmati Sangeet is aimed at children and elders alike. "While children are expected to learn human values through the songs, elders are expected to change their way of looking at things and opt for a better existence by incorporating Gandhian values in their everyday

life," adds Vasu.

Talking about his inspiration, he says, "It all began when I visited Bapughat three years ago. That's when I started teaching Mahatma Gandhi's songs to those who would gath-

er there every evening. When I found that it had a positive impact, I collected more songs from people who had spent time listening to Gandhi's bhajans."

Before teaching the Mahatma's songs, members of the Gandhi family were not only consulted, Vasu also sought permission from them.

For now, 12 songs have been popularised as Sabarmati Sangeet. Depending on the response from youngsters, Vasu says that they may organise a peace concert soon.

Till that happens, Sabarmati Sangeet will continue to find its way through sporadic workshops across the city.

