



# Kristu Jayanti College

**AUTONOMOUS**

**Bengaluru**

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## DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

# SCROLLS

**VOL. 4 ISSUE. 1**

*Celebrating Culture,  
Proud and Loud.*









## CULTURAL FESTIVALS

The world while not Festivals can simply become a jungle wherever we have a tendency to lead a run of the mill life. Festivals in Republic of India are abundantly larger than nearly any occasion. We have a tendency to think about them as the most effective part of the year and await them thirstily. Individuals of all ages and economic conditions notice their ways to relish with their families and worship the gods and goddesses. Festivals are the oldest rituals and traditions our countrymen follow to pay tribute to the almighty gods and goddesses. In fact, these celebrations are nothing but the symbols of peace and happiness. India could be a numerous country with multiple religions and cultures conglomerated during a single kind. This is often why our Festivals draw a novel image for the remainder of the globe to follow as an excellent example of harmony. In India, we've got 3 differing types of Festivals. The national Festivals are those days once one outstanding thing happened that modified the course of history for our country. As an example, twenty sixth January is widely known as Republic Day. October second is Gandhi Jayanti, the birthday of nationalist leader, the father of our nation. These Festivals are known as gazette holidays declared years back. These days, each public and personal workplace celebrates and declares holidays for the workers. Independence Day is widely known on August 15, 1947. On in this day, we received independence from the colonial rule of country Empire. We have a tendency to celebrate and pay tribute to the revolutionaries who led their life to make us free from the shackles of British tyranny. Republic Day is widely known in New Delhi, our capital.

Our defence forces join hands to perform tricks and showcase their power to the general public. These Festivals are celebrated across the country. The most outstanding spiritual Festivals that celebrate are Dussehra, Diwali, Eid-Ul-Fitr, Christmas, Guru Nanak Jayanti, Holi, etc. Dussehra and Diwali are thought of to be the prime spiritual Festivals of Republic of India. The states celebrating these Festivals get embellished like a new bride. New vibrant dresses and attractive things to eat are unit the prime attractions for teenagers. During this time, individuals of all ages and economic stature unite at one place to worship the gods and goddesses. Every Indian festival incorporates a story behind it. These stories carry a message for all the common men. Most of the Festivals convey the message of peace and also the success of excellent over evil. Each family prepares delectable preparations and invitations guests, relatives and different relations. Families reunite, individuals relish for many days and so go back to with their monotonous lives. They once more await another year thirstily for the spiritual Festivals to arrive with the want to check their darling ones once more. Seasonal Festivals usually specialize in cultivation or different seasonal phenomena. As an example, Onam in Kerala, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Bihu in Assam, etc are the seasonal examples. Republic of India is Associate in Nursing agricultural country and these Festivals have huge importance in our history. These Festivals usually depict the appearance of recent harvests. The farmers worship the Gods and Goddesses of agriculture and harvest, desire smart yield for consecutive year.

The superb reality is that despite the cultural variations, the seasonal Festivals associated with harvests are celebrated at constant time of the year. These Festivals create India one entity. It's the wonder of varied unity that no different country will show. The Festivals are the social glues that keep completely different communities along despite the social variations and create India stronger. This is often the inheritance of our country that we've been carrying from one generation to the other for ages.

- CHANJANA  
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## How Kerala's Celebratory Culture Converges in the Boat Races of Alappuzha with Reference to Nehru Trophy Boat Race

The Nehru Trophy Boat Race is a boat race event or Vallam Kali as it is called in Malayalam, which is held every year in Alappuzha, Kerala, India. The event's main attraction is the snake boat race or the Chundan Vallam race. It takes place in Punnamada Lake, also known as Vembanad Lake, the longest lake in India. It is an event with many fans and admirers, not just in Kerala or India but in and around the world. One of the many attractions of foreigners to visit India and Kerala, the God's own country, as well! It is nothing less than a great festival. The event is conducted around the time of the Onam festival in Kerala, on the second Saturday of August every year. The date of the event is fixed on this particular day and is not changed unless there are unprecedented circumstances.

Nehru Trophy Boat Race cannot be talked about fairly enough without a mention of Alappuzha District where it occurs. Lord Curzon, who was the viceroy of India at the start of the twentieth century, is the one who addressed Alappuzha as the Venice of the East. Henceforth, it has been known as the Venetian Capital of Kerala. It is an important tourist destination in India. Its boat races, backwater holidays, beaches, seafood and coir industry, have been the reason for it being one of the tourists' most loved places to visit. The first-ever Nehru Trophy was conducted in 1952. It was organised as an event for the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to witness when he visited Alappuzha in 1952. He enjoyed it very well. And when Nehru returned to Delhi, he sent a beautiful rolling trophy for the event. And on the trophy was written 'To the winners of the boat race which is a unique feature of community life in Travancore.' The trophy was a replica of a snake boat placed on a wooden abacus. A snake boat or a Chundan Vallam is about one hundred and thirty-eight feet long and can accommodate more than 100 oarsmen. It is called a snake boat because it resembles the shape of a hooded snake. The Nehru Trophy Boat Race was initially called the Prime Minister's Trophy Boat Race and was conducted again in 1954 under the initiative of the then Kollam collector. Later, after Jawaharlal Nehru's death, as a tribute to him, the event's name was changed to Nehru Trophy Boat Race. In 2019, the event became part of the Champions Boat League, and Star Sports took its broadcasting rights. The event first got cancelled in 2020 since its inception due to the pandemic and later in 2021 for the same reason. The dedicated preparation and practice of the oarsmen will start at least one month prior to the race. The track for the race covers a distance of about 1400 meters. There would be four tracks, each ten-metre wide.

When the race begins, the rowers start to chant the boat song or the Vanchipattu. That is one of the most beautiful sights for the viewers. The competition is conducted in different rounds. The winning teams of each round advance to the next rounds, and finally, four teams reach the final round. These four teams then compete for one last time to claim the Nehru Trophy. Along with the snake boats or the Chundan Vallams, different varieties of other boats also compete against each other, like the Churalan boats, Odi Vallams, et cetera. But the snake boats are considered the king among all boats, and hence the most important event of the day is the snake boat race or the Chundan Vallam race. Over the years from its inception, Nehru Trophy Boat Race has always amazed its viewers. Year by year, its fanbase is increasing. Even though the event has not occurred in the last two years due to the pandemic, its fanbase has only grown stronger. It has been decided that the Nehru Trophy Boat Race will be conducted in Ras al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates on the 27th of March this year. It will be held at Al Marjan Island. The organisers for the event in the UAE said that "The move is to build on the beautiful relationship between the UAE and Kerala." It is also decided that the event will be resumed this year in Alappuzha too, after a two-year pause. But instead of having it on the second Saturday of August, like every other time, it will be conducted on the 1st of November. It is with great expectations that people around the globe are looking forward to it. It is the resumption of a festival that people have longed for very profoundly during its absence!

- GERALD JACOB S  
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## Story of a dying God : Jagannath the rebirth

How often do we hear of a festival, celebrating the death and then the rebirth of God?

One such is the festival of Nabakalebara. It is a celebration of the ancient ritual of Nabakalebara associated with most of the Jagannath Temples . Navakalevara meaning "New Body or re-embodiment" is a composite of two words 'Nava' meaning "New" and 'Kalevara' meaning "Body ". A festival where the death and rebirth of Jagannath is celebrated, Jagannath meaning "lord of the world" also called Kaliya for its black colour, with great affection. The unique feature of the temple is that Krishna is worshipped not with a spouse, but with his siblings, his elder brother Balabhadra and his younger sister Subhadra. The images are malformed, with no hands or feet, and disproportionately large heads. They are not made of metal or stone, but of wood and cloth and resin, and therefore must be replaced from time to time, leading to rituals in which the enshrined deities fall sick, die and are reborn. Nabakalebara, or the ceremony of the deity's rebirth, which takes place every 10-19 years. It is a ritual that takes place when the extra month (adhik maas) align the Hindu lunar calendar to the solar cycle. Every year, in the month of Ashadha, when the summer is at its height, the deity and his siblings step out to bathe in public, unable to bear the heat inside the temple. This happens on Snana Purnima. When you bathe with 108 pots of water under the blazing sun, you fall ill. And so every year, for the two weeks that follows, Krishna and his siblings take ill and are kept in a recovery chamber called anasar ghar.



When they recover, appetite returns and they wish to eat the food cooked by their aunt Gundicha, whose house is a little away from his temple. So Krishna steps on his grand chariot and makes his way there. This is the start of the famous nine-day "Jagannath Rath Yatra" during which the old image would "die", and a new image would be "born". Jagannath's rebirth takes place with the use of special neem trees called Darubrahama which are collected, these are trees which contain no nest and have an ant hill and a snake near by, which contain the symbol of Vishnu, these trees are cut and transported. They are carved in specific ritualistic guidelines and the special priest wear blindfolds before transferring something mysterious called the Brahma padartha to the old image of Jagannath. After the ritual Jagannath's old image is buried in a special burial ground near the temple. The new wooden idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are welcomed to the temple in celebration. The origins of the ceremony, dates back to, the fifth century where the temple was invaded by the IndoGreek king Raktabahu, during which time the priests hid the image of the deity in a cave far away. In the 16th century, Kalapahad, a Muslim convert, not only raided the temple but also burned the images of the deities. It is attacks such as these that may have inspired the rebirth ritual, whereby the immortal deity can be killed but always comes back with a smile, defying death. We see how something divine or godly is made so relatable to one's life, who could imagine that even the infinite divine power called God could fall sick and face the truth of life called death just like another finite being.

- KUMARI KRISHNA  
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## My ancestors

Ethnicity of my culture is highly  
Celebrated, from the laddu to the kurta,  
From pashmina shawls to Thanjavur silks  
From Agra to Hampi  
From religion to religion.  
For my roots have been held strong  
Deep and rooted.  
But yet there were times  
When blood shed for, the  
Love to freedom;  
When the life laid down, for the  
Joy of future.  
I listen to the whispers of our ancestors  
Telling the tales of their victories and defeats  
From Mauryan empire to the British rule;  
From the Kalinga to the Jallianwala Bagh  
From slavery to freedom As the list goes on....  
We, Indians never let to slip  
The celebration of our festivals of  
Life, joy, love,  
Peace, victory,  
As an Indian, I am proud;  
Of our up and downs,  
Fall and rise.  
All through the way,  
I believe how incredible it is;  
That the blood flowing through my vein are of  
My ancestors.

- BLESSY BABU  
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## HAMPI FESTIVAL

““The city is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world” - Abdul Razzaq  
 “Many rivulets and streams flowing through channels of cut stone, polished and even. The whole city was full of gardens, and because of them”- Nicolo Conti “Large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight”; it is full of charm and wonder with its innumerable lakes and waterways and fruit gardens. It is "the best-provided city in the world" and “everything abounds.” “The chambers of the palace were a mass of ivory, with roses and lotuses carved in ivory at the top--"it is so rich and beautiful that you would hardly find anywhere,another such.”

Domingo Paez

### The Glory of Hampi

The Cultural ethos of south india,deemed as the richest city of india; hampi was the capital of the great vijayanagara empire which reigned during the 14th to 16th century bc held a prominent role in the cultural as well as the architectural pinnacle for several years. The austere and grandiose of this ancient city is remarkable,from the enchanting virupaksha temple to the trade centers of achyutaraya to the monumental narasimha to the magnificent stone chariot, a city thats a sight to behold.the largest open air museum unesco has recognised as one of the biggest heritage sites in the world.



### Historic Significance of The Festival

The ruins of Hampi, a UNESCO world heritage site in central Karnataka, come alive with the strains of music and sounds of dance when the State Government holds the Hampi Utsav to recreate the grandeur of the erstwhile Vijayanagara Empire. It is believed that the Utsav is celebrated from the time of the Vijayanagara Empire and hence might be one of the oldest celebrations/festivals in India. Today, the Hampi Utsav also called as Vijaya Utsav celebrated over 2 or 3 days captures the pomp, splendor and glory of the Vijayanagara empire. The backdrop of the Utsava is Hampi and her ruins.

**The Renowned Festival of Hampi** : Hampi Utsav, also known as the Vijaya Utsav, Festival of Hampi has been celebrated from the times of the Vijayanagar reign. This event has been reiterated as the “Nada Utsava “ by the Government of Karnataka. Hampi being a World Heritage Site is an international tourist spot. This festival is attributed to the mega cultural extravaganza.Renowned artistes all over India come forward in bringing the grandiose days of the Vijayanagara Period to the present day. The rich culture of Kannadigas in the fields of dance, music and art thus showcased complemented the beautifully carved ruins of Hampi.Bright colored handicrafts, leather puppets done by the traditional craftsmen of the past are reproduced with the same skill by their present generation. Musical instruments such as pipes and drums traditionally played vibrate the air with past grandeur. The Government of Karnataka promotes this festival every year to attract people all over the world to this magnificent land.Decorated elephants, horses and men dressed in the military fashion of the Golden Era, are posted underneath the red, yellow, blue and white cloth “Gopuras” are posted along the lanes of Hampi. The 2 kilometer path near the Virupaksha temple which was known as the Raja Marga has been decorated as the Vijayanagar theme. Traders offered tokens of “gold coins” and “diamonds” recreating the once world famous open trade in diamonds, gems and gold of the Golden Era. Classical dance exponents and classical vocalists are set to entertain the guests with their brilliant performances in five avenues.

**Major Events held in the Utsav** Hampi Utsav brings together thousands of finest performers in art, music and dance to offer a cultural extravaganza to lakhs of visitors. While exact event schedule and performances could vary each year, below are what you can expect during Hampi Utsav ❖ **Competitions:** As part of Hampi Utsav, several competitions such as Photography competition, Rangoli and Mehendi competition, water adventure sports are held. ❖ **Cultural Shows:** Puppet shows, Music performances, Dance shows, Drama, street performances and more ❖ **Fireworks:** Spectacular firework complements the celebrations at Hampi Utsav ❖ **Exhibitions:** Stone sculptures, paintings, books and other exhibitions ❖ **Helicopter Rides:** Visitors to Hampi Utsav 2020 could enjoy helicopter rides over the world heritage site of Hampi ❖ **Celebrity visits:** Some of the prominent celebrities from movie industry visit and performs at Hampi utsav.

**Chronological Order of Events** Hampi has a set of annual festivals. Some are religious festivals associated with the temples. The others are cultural festivals. Many of them usually attract huge crowds. Generally the dates not fixed. Every year the exact dates and schedules of the programs are made public. The most popular are listed.

❖ **Hampi Festival (November):** This is the largest festival at Hampi. Generally they are scheduled for 3 days during the first week of November. The celebrations are typically packed with shows of music, dance puppet shows, fireworks and a pomp procession as the grand finale showcasing the cultural richness of the place. Late items like rock climbing, water sports and rural sports also have been included in the schedule. The programs are state sponsored and the admission is free. The celebrations attract too much crowd for this otherwise low profile town to handle. So if you are planning to visit Hampi during these 3 days be prepared to face the associated troubles (overbooked lodges, overcrowded sightseeing, packed buses & trains etc). Also note that in local language the Hampi Festival is referred as Vijaya Utsav or Hampi Utsav.

❖ **Phalapuja Festival (December):** This again is held at the Virupaksha temple to mark the ceremonial betrothal of the divine couple.

❖ **Diwali (October):** Though not specific to Hampi, Diwali is celebrated in Hampi in a grand way (usually in October). Noisy nights with firecrackers are the hallmark. Hampi Bazaar area is the epicenter of the celebrations. Visit Virupaksha temple to witness some special ceremonial functions during the evening. That includes a local procession where the temple elephant too participates.

❖ **Purandaradasa Aradhana (January/February):** This is principally a classical musical festival. The festival is held every year to commemorate the birthday of the ancient poet Purandaradasa who lived in Hampi. The 2-3 days long program is scheduled during the months of January or February. Though not as grandeur as The Hampi Festival, Purandaradasa Aradhana is a feast to the classical music enthusiasts. The venue is typically centered on the Purandaradasa Mantapa located near the Vittala Temple. Sometimes programs are conducted at other places too. Musicians of national and international repute participate. ❖ **Virupaksha Car Festival (March/April):** Held during the months of March or April (based on the local calendar), this is the largest religious festival in Hampi. The highlight is the procession along the main chariot street in Hampi. The image of the god & goddess is kept on the temple car (the giant wooden chariot) which is the center of the procession. The festival marks the annual ritual marriage of the god & goddess.

❖ **Sivaratri (February/March):** This is a special festival earmarked for all Siva Temples in general. This nightlong religious offering is held at Virupaksha TEMPLE.

❖ **“Jumbo Savari”**, similar to the Dasara elephant march is held at Hospet town. The Howdah in Panchaloha (made of 5 metals), from the Vijayanagar Empire is being used.

❖ **Light and sound show:** Special lighting of monuments across the 15 km of Hampi ruins on the banks of Tungabhadra is another attraction guaranteed to make the visitor mesmerize and put on the spell of the ancient days.

❖ For those who are fond of traditional shopping there cannot be a better place than Hampi to shop. Color, gaiety and excitement follow the long and spectacular processions which wind their way to the sounds of pipes and trumpets reliving the Golden past. this year’s hampi utsava was held in 13th january to 16th january 2022 with pomp and pageantry

-M CHETAN KRISHNA

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## Dance ‘metaphysics of culture’: A brief about Indian classical dance Bharathanatyam

*“ To understand the culture study the dance. To understand the dance study people”.*

*-Charles Davis*

Dance has always played an important role in the social fabric of all human cultures. Dance is most frequently characterised as a form of movement that allows people to express themselves. Dance, on the other hand, cannot be reduced to movement alone. While movement is an important aspect of dance, it is also much more because dance can be defined as a special art movement based on the expressive movements of the human body. Polhemus says that societies create dances and that dance is actually a ‘metaphysics of culture’, because a culture of specific society is embodied in the forms of material and physical culture, and the latter is also stylized and schematized in the form of dance. There is a lot of dancing going on all over the world. People dance for a variety of reasons, including amusement, pleasure, leisure, money, their jobs, self-expression, tradition, and ritual.

India is known for its rich and diverse culture, which can be seen in the performing arts, handicrafts, paintings, sculptures, and architecture. Different groups' ideologies, languages, and customs resulted in the emergence of a range of performance art forms. Dance has played an important role in Indian society since ancient times. Legend has it that the first dance drama was performed at Indra's court for the Gods and Demons. Bharata planned and produced the dance theatre based on Indra's victory over the demons, in which his hundred sons acted as performers. Bharata felt the need for women to perform the feminine characters while they rehearsed. Then he went up to Brahma, the creator. When Brahma heard this, he produced the Apsaras (celestial nymphs), who not only took part in the play but also joined Indra's court. The Natya Shastra, often known as the Fifth Veda, is the foundation for all traditional dance styles. . Though the exact period of creation of this literature is unknown, it is claimed that Sage Bharata codified and documented the Natya Shastra on Lord Brahma's order. The majority of India's classical dance genres, which are rigidly based on the Natya Shastra, developed in temple complexes.

The Sadir Attam of Tamil Nadu, now known as Bharatanatyam, is one such example.

The Natya Shastra mentions the notions of Tandava and Lasya, which are the foundations of Bharatanatyam. These concepts are said to have originated from Lord Shiva's dance. Legend has it that Lord Shiva was presented with a play based on Samudramantha (Churning of the Ocean) staged by Sage Bharata on Mount Kailasa. When Lord Shiva saw the performance, he was so enthralled that he decided to do the Tandava. Shiva performed the Tandava at the auspicious period of Pradosham, and the 108 Karanas (poses) that are depicted on the walls of Tamil Nadu's major temples arose from it. Shiva realised that the Tandava was incomplete without the softer expressions when he did it (Lasya). He subsequently taught Lasya to Parvati, his bride, who thereafter performed for Lord Shiva. Sage Bharata then documented these events, which became the Natya Shatra's foundation. Bharatanatyam is a pre-eminent Indian classical dance form that is regarded as the mother of many other Indian classical dance forms. It is arguably India's oldest classical dance heritage. It began in the Hindu temples of Tamil Nadu and finally flourished in South India as a solo dance performed only by women. The footwork is the most basic unit of Nritta in Bharatanatyam. The footwork is in sync with the music's talams. Slow, medium, and fast talams are the three types of talams available. Bharatanatyam, unlike other Indian classical dance styles, is recognised for its strict stances, repetitive movement, and strenuous footwork. Music and Instruments form a part of the expression through song and music. Bharatanatyam is performed to the beats and rhythm of Carnatic Music. A performance begins with the vocalist singing the song followed by the instrumentalists rendering the notes. The costume and jewellery used by an Indian classical dancer vary according to the state where it is performed. Though the basic outfit design remains the same, an artist has the ability to add things and props to the character they are portraying.

Bharatanatyam, like other Indian dance styles, has changed over time in order to survive in this fast-changing environment. Today, it is not limited to Carnatic music, but also includes songs from other civilizations, demonstrating the mixing of cultures. Bharatanatyam, which began as a solo dance form, is today performed in groups on a variety of subjects relating to society, science, and culture. Regardless of these alterations, the essence of this dance form stays the same.

**-SHANTHA KUMARI K G  
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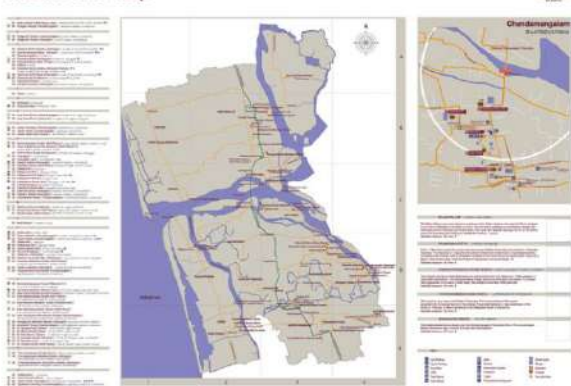


## **REINSTATING THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A REGION: THE MUZIRIS HERITAGE PROJECT**

A legendary port, the heart of the ancient Spice Route, vanished off the map before the start of the early medieval age. Historians and archaeologists hunted far and wide in search of it but to no avail. Then one day, in 2007, the search ended when Pattanam, a small town in Kerala, revealed to mankind remnants of a legacy – the legacy of the lost port, MUZIRIS. Muziris was once a doorway to India for varied cultures and races, including the Buddhists, Arabs, Chinese, Jews, Romans, Portuguese, Dutch and even the British. Muziris has stood witness to civilizations being born, wars being waged and history being rewritten.

The cultural plurality found in central Kerala can be attributed to Muziris, left behind by its ancestors from around the world – to the waves of Azhikode where Christianity is said to have first entered India, to the Cheraman mosque which is said to have given out the first Muslim call for prayers in India, to the original culture of the Jewish synagogue, to the village where handlooms spin heritage, to the Palium palace and to the old waterways that led one to Muziris. The Muziris Heritage Project aims to connect all these and utilizes at a global level the possibilities of a region, which lost its glory centuries ago. Initiated by the Government of Kerala, this project will reinstate the historical and cultural significance of a whole region near Muziris. The region is dotted with numerous monuments of a bygone era that conjure up a vast and vivid past.

Muziris Site Map



Major objectives of the project include – promotion of awareness and understanding of the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Muziris, conservation of cultural assets and safeguarding them for the present and future generations, practicing and promoting sustainable development, promotion of participative approach towards conservation and restoration, ensuring accessibility for all, including the heritage of Muziris in regional educational programmes and integration of heritage management for mutual synergy. This project is the largest heritage conservation project in India! It is also the first green project of the Government of Kerala. The project has seen the involvement of multiple Government departments.

More than 25 museums are set up to appreciate Muziris's heritage. Also, a research and academic institution to support the project and major improvements in infrastructure has been started. Another great achievement is the integration of this project with local communities through native resource persons for data collection, survey, etc.

• Figure 1: Kerala Jews History Museum



• Figure 2: Islamic History Museum

The museums established under the project include – Kerala Jews History Museum, Kerala Jews Lifestyle Museum, Paliam Palace Museum, Paliam Nalukettu Museum, Sahodaran Ayyappan Museum, Abdul Rahman Sahib Museum, Kesari Balakrishna Museum and the Islamic History Museum. The project has gained international fame and recognition! Hence, the next time you visit the area, make sure to take time and enjoy this wonderful blending of archaeology, culture and heritage.



Figure 3: Paliam Palace Museum

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## **Brahmanda Nayaka Brahmotsavam.**

The greatness of culture can be found in its festivals.-Siddhartha katragadda Tirupati is renowned for its many temples, the most famous of which being the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, which makes Tirupati one of the most visited pilgrimage places in the world. The city is continually pulsing with the torrent of adherents alighted here from every corner of the planet. Tirupati is known for its global culture, which is seen in the kaleidoscopic populace that lives in peace and harmony. Tirupati, a city where two ancient languages, Tamil and Telugu, coexist, is a fascinating site to visit, demonstrating the country's linguistic concord. Dravidian architecture is used to construct the temples. People choose to wear Dhoti and Saree as traditional costume because Hinduism is the predominant religion. The Tirumala temple is the oldest, and its deity is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Its origin is shrouded in legend and myth.

There are several legends connected with the building of the temple, but the first historical mention of the Tirumala temple is in the Tamil literature of the early centuries of the Christian era. Though the exact date of the existing structure of the Tirumala temple is difficult to determine, some historians put the oldest part at eighth century A.D. at the latest. The Tirupati Tirumala Brahmotsavam is Andhra Pradesh's most important festival. The Tirumala Venkateswara Temple celebrates this nine-day festival with a magnificent fanfare. In the months of September and October, Tirupati Brahmotsavam is held. This Hindu festival becomes a magnet for pilgrims and tourists from all over the world. Lord Brahma is said to have initially performed Lord Balaji's celebration at Tirupati, according to legend. The event was held as a thank-you offering to the Lord. This ancient festival gave rise to the phrase 'Brahmotsavam,' which means "Brahma's Utsavam" (Lord Brahma's Festival). In Andhra Pradesh, Brahmotsavam is also known as the "Tirupati festival." Various ceremonies are held at the temple over the nine-day period, both in the morning and evening. Because one festival announces another, each celebration during the festival is significant.

Brahmotsavam is a magnificent gala event for pilgrims and devotees who come to see the festival's processions and celebrations. The celebration is well-known for its inexhaustible allure, with worshippers experiencing the 'Vaikuntha Anubhava' (heavenly pleasure and feeling). Lord Venkateswara leads a two-hour parade through the four streets of the main temple, counting down to midnight. Though every day is a joyous day in Tirupati, the nine days of 'Brahmotsavam' provide the people with an extra special treat.

### **BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - FIRST DAY**

The Garudadhwaaja (flag with the insignia of a black garuda) is hoisted near the Srivari Alaya Dhvajasthambham on the first day of Dhvajarohana. From 22:00 hrs to midnight, a beautiful procession of Lord Venkateswara on the Pedda Seshavahana is brought around the four avenues of the main temple. The word Sessa means "to serve." Lord Sri Maha Vishnu sits in his abode, Vaikuntam, on Adi Sessa, a thousandheaded serpent. Lord Sri Venkateswara's residence, Tirumala Hills, is thought to be Adishesha's manifestation. The Lord is taken in procession around the streets of Tirumala on the Seshavahana (vehicle shaped like Adishesha) during the first two days of Brahmotsavam to commemorate this event (Pedda Seshavahana and Chinna Seshavahana).

### **BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - SECOND DAY**

The Lord is brought around the temple streets on the Chinna Seshavahana in the morning on the second day. The deities are transported to the Uyala Mandapam for the Unjal Seva late at night. They are then escorted on the Hamsavahana through Tirumala's streets. 'Pure' is the meaning of the Hamsa or swan. Hamsa is thought to have a high level of intelligence and the ability to discriminate between good and evil. In addition, Hamsa appears visually. Lord Brahma utilises Hamsa not just as a vehicle but also to chant the Vedas for these reasons (the Vedas are believed to have emanated from the soul of Vishnu).

**BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - THIRD DAY:**

The deities are carried on the Simhavahana on the third day's morning. Simha (lion) is a royal and powerful symbol. The Lord is the Simha among animals, according to the Bhagvad Gita (mrganamcha mrigandroham). Hari (which means Simha) is another name for the Lord, and Hari sits on Simha. To put it another way, we have the phenomena of God sitting on himself. The Lord is also said to have taken the shape of Narasimha (half man, half lion) in order to defeat the demon Hiranyakasipu. As a result, on the third day of Brahmotsavam, Lord Venkateswara rides the Simha. Unjal Seva is performed at night. In the night, Unjal Seva is conducted. The deities then ride in the Mutayalapandiri Vahana, which is decorated with a pearl canopy. Mutyam (pearl) is a symbol of purity and royalty.

**BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - FOURTH DAY:**

The deities are brought in a Kalpavriksha Vahana in the morning on the fourth day. Kalpavriksham is a tree that is said to bestow blessings and grant wishes to believers. The Lord offers boons and fulfils the requests of his worshippers, as symbolised by the chariot shaped like the Kalpavriksham. The deities are brought in a Sarvabhoopala Vahana at night following the Unjal Seva. Sarvabhoopala is a Sanskrit word that means "all the kings of Mother Earth." According to Hindu belief, kings, such as Lord Vishnu, must always safeguard his subjects (na vishnuhu prithivi pathihi). On the fourth day of Brahmotsavam, the monarchs take the shape of the Sarvabhoopala Vahana to thank Lord Vishnu for his ideals and to pray to him.

**BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - FIFTH DAY :**

On the fifth day, Mohini Avatarotsavam is celebrated to commemorate the Lord's incarnation as Mohini, in the morning. According to legend, the Devas and the Demons performed Ksheerasagaramadhanam that resulted in amrit (nectar which when consumed grants immortality) and other sacred qualities. The Devas and the Demons fought for possession of the Amrit. Lord Vishnu then assumed the form of Mohini (a beautiful woman) and procured the Amrit for the Devas. The Lord is dressed like Mohini, and He is taken in a procession in a Pallaki (palanquin).

Lord Krishna is also taken in the same procession. This is to celebrate the assistance rendered by Lord Vishnu to the Devas during Ksheerasagaramadhanam. After the Unjal Seva in the night, the Lord and his consorts are seated on Garuda Vahana. Lord is decorated with Mahaakanti, Sahasranaramala that day. According to the ancient Hindu texts, Garuda, the king of birds, is a replica of the Vedas (vedatma vihamgeswara), while Lord Vishnu is the God of the Vedas. Therefore, the Lord sees Himself in Garuda. In the Vaishnava Puranas, Garuda is also called periyatiruvadi, meaning the first devotee. Therefore, Lord Venkateswara selected Garuda as his vehicle for the most important day of the Brahmotsavam. Garuda Vahana is the greatest of all the Vahanas. A large number of pilgrims visit the temple on this day.

**BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS -SIXTH**

**DAY:** On the morning of the sixth day, the deities are carried on a beautifully-decorated Hanumad Vahana. Hanuman was one of the greatest devotees of Sri Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Hanuman served the Lord so faithfully, that even the Lord could not thank Hanuman enough. Devotees believe that they are indeed blessed if they catch a glimpse of the Lord on Hanumad Vahanam. Unjal Seva is not performed on the sixth day. Instead, Vasantotsavam (spring festival) is celebrated. In the night, the Lord is mounted on the Gaja Vahana. Gajam (elephant) is also called the samajam (born from Samaveda). It symbolises wealth (gajamtam aishwaryam). It also symbolises the Airavatam – the vehicle of Devendra, the head of the heavens in Hindu mythology. It also can be attributed to the elephant in Gajendramoksham (story from the Mahabharatam), which is saved from a crocodile by Lord Vishnu. To thank Lord Vishnu for his ideals and pray to him, the kings take the form of the Sarvabhoopala Vahana on the fourth day of Brahmotsavam. Therefore, the Lord is taken in a procession seated on a Gaja Vahana during Brahmotsavam.



### **BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - SEVENTH DAY**

On the morning of the seventh day, the Lord rides on Suryaprabha Vahana (Sun chariot). Surya (the Sun), the son of Aditi, is another form of Lord Vishnu (Surya Narayana). Hindu mythology supports the heliocentric theory, and believes that Lord Vishnu is the centre of the universe (dhyassada savitrumandala madhyavarthi). To symbolise this, Lord Venkateswara uses the Suryaprabha (light of the Sun) Vahana. After the Unjal Seva in the night, the Lord is taken in the Chandraprabha Vahana (moon-shaped vehicle) around the brightly-lit streets of Tirumala. Chandra means the Moon, which is considered cool and pleasant. According to Hindu mythology, Chandra is the commander of the mind (chandrama manaso jataha). He is also the king of aushadha (medicine). It is believed that riding in the Chandraprabha Vahana is a soothing experience for the Lord. The Lord's contentment will bring peace to devotees' minds and result in a good crop.

### **BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - EIGHTH DAY**

On the penultimate day, Rathotsavam is celebrated, in which the Lord is seated in a ratham (chariot) and taken in a procession in the morning. It is believed that those who witness Rathotsavam will not be reborn (rathostham kesavam dristva punarjanma na vidyate). The idols of Daruka (the charioteer of Lord Sri Krishna) and the four horses (Saibyam, Sugreevam, Meghapushpam and Valahakam) are placed before the decorated idols of the Lord and his consorts. This symbolises that the lord's charioteer is driving the chariot. In the night, the Lord is mounted on the Gaja Vahana. Gajam (elephant) is also called the samajam (born from Samaveda). It symbolises wealth (gajamtam aishwaryam). It also symbolises the Airavatam – the vehicle of Devendra, the head of the heavens in Hindu mythology. It also can be attributed to the elephant in Gajendramoksham (story from the Mahabharatam), which is saved from a crocodile by Lord Vishnu. The chariot is pulled along by devotees, who chant Govinda!, Govinda! This is the only opportunity that devotees get to be of service to the Lord during Brahmotsavam. After the Unjal Seva in the night, the deities are taken in the Aswa (horse) Vahana.

Horses formed one of the four wings (ratha, gaja, turanga and pada) of the military forces in ancient times. Aswam, a symbol of energy, means 'one who runs fast'. Lord Venkateswara travels on a horse when he goes for paruveta. According to Hindu mythology, the horse was born along with Sri Mahalakshmi, Airavatham and Amritam during Sheerasagaramadhanam.

### **BRAHMOTSAVAM CELEBRATIONS - NINTH (LAST) DAY**

On the last day, Pallaki Seva and Chakrasnana Mahotsavam in the morning and Dhvajavarohanam are performed in the evening. The processional images are anointed with oil, turmeric powder and other auspicious ingredients and Abhishekam is performed. Sudarsan Chakram is given a bath in the Swami Pushkarini. The Garuda flag is then lowered. Every day in tirumala is celebrated like a festival. Some of the other things which also shows the culture are Woodcarvings, Whitewood Toys, Kalamkari, Works on Paper Pulp, Traditional Tanjore Style Gold Leaf Paintings, Devotional Music, Hindu Religious Books & Periodicals, SAPTHAGIRI Magazine, Photos, Idols, Statues of the Deity, Brass Lamps, Souvenirs, Terracotta Products like Pots, Lamps, Face Masks, Toys, Silver Jewelry, Bangles, Bracelets, Anklets, Vermillion in Garish Boxes, Rangoli Stickers, Mud Piggy Banks, etc. are the special items that one can buy as a remembrance of their trip to Tirupati. The delicious cuisine of this pilgrim hamlet include Tirupati Laddu, Sweet Rice, Halwa, Semia Payasam, Kaja, Shreemal, Andhra Meals loaded with variety of spicy Sambhars, Rasams, Vegetables and Chutneys, Idly, Dosa, Uttapam and Pesarattu that one should not miss tasting. The Prasad – the holy food offered to the Lord is distributed for free at the temple. People relish the flavor of devotion at the temple without fail. This is not a place for non vegetarians and you cannot even think about drinking alcohol in the holy abode of the mighty God. Decorating yourself with flowers is forbidden here as all the flowers are meant for the Lord.

Moreover, the devotees don't cover their heads inside the temple with any type of caps or helmets. Besides Brahmotsavam, townsfolk also celebrate other Vaishnavite festivals like Janmasthmi, Ram Navmi, Vaikunta Ekadasi, Rathasapthami, Gangamma Jathra.

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## Karnataka: One State Many Worlds

Karnataka is one among the southern states in India which cradled many empires and embraced different traditions and cultures. Kavirajamarga of Amoghavarsha states that Karnataka extended from Cauvery in the south to Godavari in the north. As for the origin of the term Karnataka terms like Karnada, Kammittunadu, Karunadu etc are found in many classical works and interpreted by the historians. Important dynasties like Kadambas, Gangas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagara, Mysore Wodeyars etc. have shaped the history of Karnataka in particular and India in general. Karnataka is truly one state with many worlds. There are many places in Karnataka that make their way to the heritage of India according to UNESCO. Following are the most unique and indigenous festivals celebrated in Karnataka: Mysore Dasara: Dasara or Navaratri is a widely celebrated 10-day long festival in India but the Mysore Dasara celebrations definitely step it up a notch. In 15th century, the kings of Vijayanagara empire started the practice of celebrating their military might on Mahanavami with a lot of show and pomp. This tradition has continued till this day and has become the state festival of Karnataka.

The Mysore palace is lit up so bright and there is a carnival like atmosphere across the city. The highlight is the Mahanavami [the ninth day of the festival] when a massive procession with elephants and dancers are out on the streets of the city. There is also an exhibition organized by the state with joy rides, handicraft stalls etc.

**Hampi Festival:** Hampi festival which is also called as the Vijay Utsav is a famous festival to celebrate the birthday of the ancient poet Purandaradasa who lived in Hampi and is normally celebrated in the month of October and November. In this festival, the Kannadigas show their talent in dance, art and music along with other activities like fireworks and puppets. There is a concert of folk songs called 'Jana pada kala vahini' which is a very big attraction. There is an elephant march across the ruins of Hampi which is almost 15 kms known as Jumbo savari.

**Pattadakal dance festival:** The Pattadakal dance festival is organized every year on a very large scale by the government of Karnataka in the month of January to honor and celebrate all of its famous temples. Pattadakal was the second capital of the Chalukya dynasties. The largest of all the temples are the virupaksha and mallikarjuna. This festival sees many different and beautiful dancers from not only Karnataka but the whole country. Another major attraction of this festival is the craft mela that is organized here like nowhere else.

**Mahamastakabhisheka:** This is a very important Jain festival that is held every once in 12 years in the town of Shravanabelagola in Karnataka. The festival sees the anointing of Bahubali. As the festival begins, the holy water is sprinkled on people, Later the statue is anointed with milk, sugarcane juice, saffron and sandalwood paste, turmeric and vermilion. Devotees and Jain nuns climb up the vindhaygiri hills to reach the statue.

**Kambala festival:** Kambala festival is a traditional buffalo race organized annually in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka by the farming communities. It is held between November and March. A pair of buffaloes is tied to a plough and is made to run through a field of slush, anchored by a farmer. The origin of this festival can be traced back over 1000 years when the festival was celebrated to appease gods for a godly good harvest.

**Sri Vithappa fair:** Held in the town of Vithappa, the fair is a yearly tradition for over 200 years now. It is a 3-day long celebration in honor of God Vithappa wherein a grand procession with a palanquin carrying the god's idol and drummers is carried out. The people from nearby towns also join the fair and an animal is sacrificed before the idol.

**Tula Sankramana:** The Tula Sankramana is the first day of the Kodava community's Tolyar month. River Cauvery holds a special significance and is revered by the Kannada people. It is believed that Goddess Cauvery rises from the water on this day to bless her devotees. Thousands of people throng near the Talacauvery river to witness the water level rise.

**Vara Mahalakshmi vratha:** Mahalakshmi is considered to be the goddess of wealth, auspiciousness and prosperity. So, this fast is observed on a Friday that falls before the full moon day of the Shraavana month. The goddess is invoked by decorating the kalasha with flowers, clothes, jewelry, money, sweets and savories etc. The importance of this festival is narrated in the Skanda purana and has evidence in one of the Maratha kingdoms.

**Bengaluru Karaga:** The 9-day Karaga, was started and sustained by a Tamil speaking community of gardeners called Thigalars. The Karaga festival is held at the Dharmaraya swamy temple, a priest dressed in female attire leads a spectacular procession which is followed by swordplay by bare-chested Thigalars. On the head, he carries a flower decked pyramid. A unique feature of the Karaga is the unbroken tradition of visiting the tomb of an 18th century Muslim saint every year. Each festival celebrated here in Karnataka depicts that the people are deeply steeped in traditional values and also shows the diverse and broad approach of Kannadigas towards other cultures and traditions that make the people from other communities feel at home.

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## CULTURAL FESTIVALS OF INDIA

A celebratory event associated with culture and traditions of a particular people or place is described as cultural festivals. The spirit of India is expressed every year in its festivals, dance, music, architecture, food and custom differing from place to place within the country.

Various types of cultural festivals are celebrated in India such as national, seasonal, religious etc. each having its own significance, lessons and teachings.

Cultural festivals of India are a way of celebrating India's vast diversity:

- International kite or Basant kite festival is celebrated in Jaipur, Punjab and Ahmdabad with conducting various competitions. The kite flying presents a lively spirit of the festival. Kite flying is also a practice of Makar Sankranti and Pongal.
- The highly anticipated festival of farmers is Baisakhi, a harvest season for Rabi crops and a commemoration of the sikh new year.
- The Rann utsav observed in the cold desert of Rann of Kutch lasting 100 days from November to February.

### Fairs of India

- An occasion organized for the purpose of buying and selling goods. In short a mixture of commerce, trade, festivals, religious, fests and holidays.
- Kumbh mela: Inscribed in UNESCO's representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity, lasting for nearly 50 days, it is a Hindu festival celebrated 4 times over a course of 12 years. It has the world's largest gathering. Devotees gather at pilgrim places- Haridwar, Ujjain and Prayag along the banks of holy rivers.
- Pushkar fair is a camel fair, shows the charming liveliness of Rajasthan. It is observed during the Karthik Poornima.

### Religious Festivals

- Diwali- Celebrated in the month of Karthik. On this day houses are decorated, people dress up in colourful attires, sweets and gifts are exchanged.

- Durga Pooja- is the 5th day of Navarathri till December. Devotees pay trivude to Goddess Durga, highlighting the power of women and victory of good over evil.

- Ganesh Chaturthi- Celebrated as the homecoming of Lord Ganesh. It is a 10 day festival after which the statue of Ganesh is immersed in water along with chanting of prayers.

- Raksha Bhandan- Celebrates the delightful and unique love and bond between siblings. It is observed on the poornima of shravana month.

- Guru Purab- Marks the birth of Guru Nanak. On this day langars are organized, Prasads are distributed and Nagar Kirtans are carried out.

- Holi- The festival of colors in India. It is celebrated in the month of Balgum.

- Dussehra- Believed to be the day Lord Rama defeated demigod Ravana. Statues of Ravana and his brothers are burnt on that day.

- Christmas- celebrated on the 25th of December to mark the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time for devotees to visit their parish, exchange gifts and decorate their homes.

- Eid – is celebrated by devotees with absolute zeal, ending the month with strict fasting and getting Siddhi.

Cultural festivals and celebrations are a glorious way of expressing our traditions. Our culture indicates the way perform and function. It shapes the way we view ourselves under the society. It is a label we use to recognize and categorize people. They boost our economy and bring about social benefits to communities. It is used to pass the baton of knowledge and traditions to the future generations.

- LUCKY ST  
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## The Vivid Colours of Tribal Culture

India is a dynamic mix of arts and crafts, where classical melodies blend effortlessly with a hypnotic mosaic of gorgeous paintings, ancient weaves and other handicrafts, divine dance forms, interesting festivals, and brilliant sculptures. This land glistens with vibrancy and vivacity, with ethnic flavours that grow at every turn in each of its states and union territories.

Because of India's long history, the love tale between her and her culture is timeless. Our country's indigenous population is just another colourful feather in our country's highly colourful cultural hat. India's tribal culture, traditions, and practises pervade practically every facet of Indian culture and civilization. Indian tribal culture has seen a significant blending of cultures within its own people, from the Aryan, Dravidian to the Indo-Tibetan languages. Each tribe has its own different character that distinguishes it from the others.

Despite the push towards modernization in the twenty-first century, the tribal communities of Chhattisgarh have managed to keep their unique identity and continue with their age-old practises among the vast number of tribes that exist across the country. The state is proud of its multi-millennia-old tribal tradition, as well as the music, culture, and craft of the tribal communities, all of which can still be found throughout the state. Chhattisgarh's tribes are predominantly a primitive race that adheres to all traditional rituals and its typical age-old ritual. The Gonds are Chhattisgarh's oldest and most prominent tribe.

### A Closer Look – The Gonds

The term Gond derives its etymological origin from the Telegu word "Kond," which means "hill." This tribe is believed to descended from the Dravidians. The Gonds are thought to have established in Gondwana between the 9th and 13th century AD, according to scholars. The eastern half of Maharashtra's Vidarbha area, parts of Madhya Pradesh directly north of it, and parts of western Chhattisgarh can be regarded the core region of Gondwana. From the 14th century onwards, Muslim sources describe the establishment of Gond governments in the region, bringing Gond history into sharp perspective. Gond dynasties ruled in four kingdoms in central India during the 16th and mid-18th centuries, when they were at the height of their strength (Garha-Mandla, Deogarh, Chanda, and Kherla).

The Koitures, also known as Gonds, are inextricably linked to nature. Their pantheon encompasses all parts of the natural world. Their music, folk dances, myths and legends, folk tales, customs and rituals all reflect and are intertwined with their deep relationship with nature. Hereditary bards and professional storytellers known as Pardhans keep Gond myths and stories alive. Because all Gond traditions are oral, several different versions of the same stories are told. The social rules of Gond culture, however, are anchored in mythology and the acts of Gond heroes. The Gondi language, more than anything else, gives the many tribal groupings who make up the Gonds a sense of cultural consistency. Despite this, many Gonds are bi- or trilingual, speaking Hindi, Marathi, or Telegu in addition to their native dialect. Some Gond communities have completely abandoned Gondi in favour of the local language or dialect.

In Gond society, music, singing, and dancing have a major part. Gonds are avid dancers, and song and dance are used to commemorate all joyous occasions. Dances honour dramatized retellings of events from Gond mythology in some cases, such as with the Dandari dancers. The Gonds' classically trained musician caste is the Dhulia. The Gonds' mythology, myths, and history are passed down through the generations by Pardhan bards. The vast epic that commemorates the origins and accomplishments of the cultural hero Pahandi Kapar Lingal is possibly the most renowned among the Gond mythology.

The Gond tribe observes a number of festivals, such as Dussera, Pola, and Nagpanchami. Some people believe that Hinduism and Gond culture share similar traditions, however there are considerable variations if you observe closely.

The Gonds have a long history of tribal arts and crafts such as pottery, basket-making, body tattooing, and floor painting. The Gond tribe has painted and sculpted art on the walls of caves stretching back over 1400 years, many of which are from the Mesolithic Period. The Gonds believed that looking at beautiful images brought them good fortune. Thus, traditionally, people painted designs, tattoos, and symbols on the floors and walls of their houses. Their artworks also serve as a means of preserving and transmitting historical information and beliefs.

A number of artists are currently raising interest in these traditions through their paintings depicting the Gond way of life. These painters are mostly Gond Pardhans, which is one of the Gond community's branches.

Jangarh Singh Shyam was the first Gond Pardhan painter, and Jangarh Kalam is the name given to the current Gond painting type. This is an effort to reconstruct the Gond cultural legacy via the artist's eye, as it depicts various facets of Gond culture, including deities, dancing forms, relationships with nature, myths, legends, and lore.

### Cultural Roots

Since the ancient history, the diverse art and cultural forms created by India's remote tribal people have continued to demonstrate their creative glory. Overall, the tribes of India capture the true and colourful characteristics of India that the rest of the world is familiar with. Since some tribal languages turned into official languages as a result of the tribes, we can safely assume that the civilizations that are called "developed" have their roots in Indian tribal cultures.

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## The Life Of Ravana

Around 7000 years ago, a fiercely fought battle between the good and bad, A dharma Yudham(war) between Demon king Ravana and the prince of Ayodhya, Rama.

**About Ravana**

Ravana was born to the great sage Vishrava who was the son of Prajapati Pulastya and his Kaikesi, it's a known fact that Ravana had ten heads, and people often say that this gave him the special gift of knowledge. It is assumed that having 10 heads meant he was a very knowledgeable man and by that logic, a great king who had great knowledge about administration. In fact, there are seven books in Ayurveda whose authorship still stands in his name, thereby establishing him as a great physician.

Ravana is the 10-headed king of the demons(rakshasas). His abduction of Sita and eventual defeat by her husband Rama are the central incident of the popular epic the Ramayana ("Rama's Journey").

**Ever wondered why Ravana had 10 heads?**

Some versions of Ramayan say that ravana did not in fact have ten heads, but it appeared so because his mother gave him necklace of nice pearls that caused an optical illusion for any observer. In another version, its said that to please Shiva, Ravana hacked his own head into pieces, but his devotion made each piece spawn into another head.

He got the name Ravana later, from Shiva. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Ravana wanted Shiva to relocate from Kailash to lanka, and to make this possible, he tried to lift the mountain. But Shiva, being who he is, put down his foot onto the mountain, thus crushing ravana's finger with his one toe. Ravana let out a huge roar of pain, but at the same time, he was so enamoured by Shiva's power, he performed the Shiva Tandav Stotram.

It believed that Ravanan plucked out nerves from his own hand to provide accompanying music. Shiva, thus got impressed and Named him Ravanan(the one who roars loud).

**Ravana was an extraordinary veena player**

In many depictions of Ravana, he can be carrying a veena. It is believed that he had a keen interest in music and was a highly accomplished veena player.

Ravana ruled in the kingdom of Lanka, from which he had expelled his brother Kubera. Ravana although took Lanka from Kubera forcibly but was a very able administrator and it is said that even the poorest of people in his land had gold utensils and were not poverty stricken.

Ravana was very powerful and skilful warrior. Lord Rama could not kill Ravana easily, It was only on the tenth day of the battle that he could kill Ravana. Ravana is said to be a great politician and had immense knowledge of political science, so much so that Lord Rama asked Lakshman to go and learn politics and duties of a king from Ravana when he was on his deathbed.

Many believe that it started when Ravana abducted Sita, However, the Sri Lankans believe that it all started with Lakshmana cutting off Surpanakha's nose after she proposed Lord Rama. For them, what Ravana did was anything that a big brother would have done to avenge the injury caused to his younger sister.

Ravana is unfortunately remembered only for his misdemeanours!

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# Culture and Festivals

## INTRODUCTION:

Every country in the world has its own festivals and their own ways of celebrating it. People around the world love sharing a goodtime through the festivals and celebrations. As we all know that festivals are a great way to experience culture. There are hundreds of festivals across the world. However, India is one of the largest countries to celebrate numerous festivals.

India is a very cultural and diverse country so are the festivals.

They are divided into three general categories of national, religious and seasonal.

## TYPES OF INDIAN FESTIVALS:

As we can divide the festivals of India into national, religious and seasonal and they are all different from each other. National festivals are celebrated in honor of reputable people and events. The religious ones follow legends of faith and their beliefs. The seasonal ones are celebrated with each season that we experience that varies from region to region.

## NATIONAL FESTIVALS

The National festivals are Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti and many more. These festivals are celebrated all over India. Every citizen of India celebrates them irrespective of religion, caste, creed and sex. Everyone citizen celebrates them with great patriotism. On these festivals are gazette holidays throughout the country and are enjoyed with great enthusiasm.

The capital of India, New Delhi is a seat of national festivals. We can witness the grand parade on the Republic Day.

The flag hoisting takes place in New Delhi, which is broadcasted on national television for the whole of India to see.

## RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

The religious festivals are one of the of the most famous festivals not only in India but throughout the world. Some of the most important festivals are: Diwali, Eid-ul-Fitr, Christmas, Guru Nanak Jayanti, Holi. Diwali and Holi are festivals mostly celebrated by the Hindu religion. These festivals are full of colors and lights.

Next is the Eid-UI-Fitr is an Islamic festival which is celebrated at the end of Ramadan. It is about delicious dishes and family gatherings on this occasion.

Christmas is celebrated as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it is all about Christmas tree and Santa Claus.

Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrates the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev

## SEASONAL FESTIVALS

Finally, particular regions of India celebrate seasonal festivals. For instance, Bihu is a festival celebrated in Assam. Likewise, in Tamil Nadu we celebrate Pongal. In addition, there is Basant Panchami which people celebrate throughout North India and West Bengal.

## IMPORTANCE OF FESTIVALS

We see that festivals are very important. They make us to forget our cultural and religious differences. They unite people and we all come together for a sole purpose of celebrating and happiness. Other than that festivals also helps very citizen of india to embrace our culture and religion. They are very important in breaking the monotony of life.



Moreover, people look forward to festivals all-round the year. Festivals spark joy and give people a reason to look forward to. In addition, people also repair their homes and paint them to look brand new because it beautifies the locality.

India has 28 states and 8 union territories with different culture and it is the second most populated country in the world. According to 2011 census, 79.8% of the population of India practice Hinduism. Islam 14.2% Christianity 2.3% Sikhism 2.7% Buddhism 0.7% Jainism 0.4% are other major religions followed by the people of India

### LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The Rigveda Sanskrit is one of the oldest literature of Indo-Aryan languages. The discovery of Sanskrit by early European explorers of India led to the development of comparative philology.

Tamil is one of India's major classical language, from Dravidian languages. The earliest inscriptions of Tamil have been found on pottery dating back to 500 BC. Tamil literature has existed for over two thousand years and the earliest epigraphic records found date from around the 3rd century BCE.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude I would say that there are different aspects of the Indian culture. Each aspect is practiced by people not everyone believes in the different aspects.

As we can see it is a very traditional culture, everyone has their own opinion towards it, positive or negative. Therefore the Indian culture is very unique culture. Although the youth do not believe in traditional aspects, the culture will vary with time and will not be traditional anymore because of the modern world. But the culture of India will never be neglected.

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### **Viduraswatha in the Independence Movement**

Every atom the spans between the Indira Col to the north and the Cape Comorin to the south has a tale encrypted within, waiting for history lovers to be awed. Right from the landmass drifting away from the Pangea, surging of Empires to the Colonizers exhausting her temper, this nation could unveil riveting historical moments buried by time. The construction of the modern nation we live in is accredited to the freedom movement spanning from 1857 to the 1947. Every Indian has her nationalism instilled by the independence movement.

The glory of our national advent is too vast. Hence, a few little uprisings in the early 1900s could go unremembered. The very same reason the Vidhurswatha massacre is quite unfamiliar to many.

Vidhurswatha is a humble village nestled in, Chikkaballapur Karnataka, bordering Andhra Pradesh. The name is derived from Aswatha(a sacred fig tree).

As legend has it the tree has been planted by Vidura, a courtier of Dhritrashtra, the antagonist in Mahabharata. Vidura is an Avatar of Yamadharma Raja, but unable to bear the guilt of blood shed of Kurukshetra war he turns to Lord Krishna for salvation. Lord Krishna upon listening to Vidura's agony, advises him to go on a pilgrimage.

After the pilgrimage Vidura plants a fig sapling. He was later blessed by Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma and hence the place is called Vidhurswatha.

Until today, holy stone figures of serpents are placed under the sacred fig tree.

In April, 1938, the Indian national congress had conducted a flag hoisting event in a Mysore congress session, only to be detained in vain. This led to a series of flag hoisting events throughout the state of Mysore. However due to police clamp downs they had decided to pause the movement from the 22nd to 24th of April, and hoist the flag on the 25th when the police have lowered their guards.

On the 25th of April, at 10:30 am several villagers around Vidhurswatha had gathered at the village ground. The plan was that if the police force had baton charged the gathering they would cross the river and flee into Nizam's state of Hyderabad.

The police force refused to acknowledge the massacre, leading to widespread protest in the state of Mysore. Hence Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Kripalani visited the village to gather accounts of the incident. This incident led to the Mirza-Patel act, which removed all restrictions on flag hoisting. Now there remains a newly constructed memorial. Although Vidhurswatha has played a major role in the independence movement, it has been silenced.

- RYAN MARCUS  
21HSPS20

## ICONS OF INDIAN CULTURE: THROUGH WOMENS EYE

India is a land of diversified culture, traditions and languages. Today, most of the culture in India is carried and passed on from generation to generation, with women playing the significant role in its perseverance. In the deep patriarchal society of our country, where men go to work, the women stay at home and look after the household, it is them who have the most knowledge of all the scriptures, rituals and traditions at home. They help in the upbringing and perseverance of those traditions, in their children, who pass it to their children.

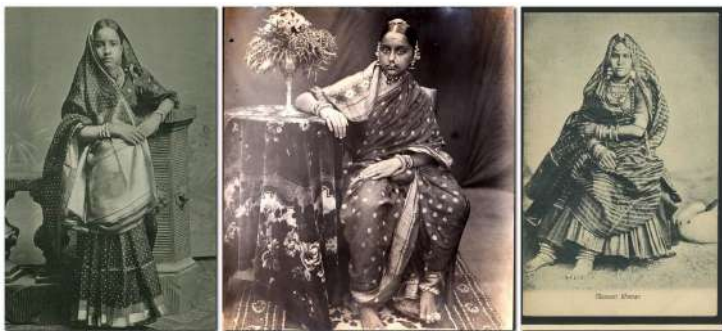
Herein, I have tried to mention few icons of Indian culture, representing women clothing and ornament, that from historic times has remained the symbol of an Indian women, from various parts of our country.

### 1) SAREE

Saree has been the traditional attire of women in India, since ages, from all parts of the country. Although worn in all different forms in India, saree has been a cultural icon of Indian women. They are worn along the length and breadth of India.



A) Women in traditional saree



B) Different forms of saree worn

### 2) BINDI

A bindi is a usually round decorative ornament, that is put on the forehead, in between the eyebrows. It comes in different shape, size and colours and are worn by most women daily, or on special occasions.



A) a rural woman wearing a bind



B) Women adorned with bindi's on her wedding day.

### 3) MAANG TIKA/ NETHI CHUTTI/ NETRI CHUTTI

They are basically ornaments worn along the parting of the hair on the forehead. Although variation is seen in various cultures and tradition on how its worn. Women wear it on their wedding or special occasions.



A) A bride wearing a maang-tika on her wedding.

#### 4) PHERAN

A Pheran is basically a robe that is worn by women in Kashmir. It helps in providing comfort and protection in the cold of the winter. They have been worn since historical times. Traditionally made from wool or tweed for winters. It has been stitched with cotton as well for the winters.



A) a traditional Kashmiri woman wearing Pheran

#### 5) GHAGRA CHOLI

Ghagra choli, (also known as lehenga choli and locally as chaniya choli), is a type of ethnic clothing for women from Indian Subcontinent, notably in the Indian states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Sindh. In Punjab, the lehenga is traditionally worn with a kurti. It is a combination of the gagra or lehenga (long skirt) and the choli (blouse), however in contemporary and modern usage lehenga choli is the more popular and widely accepted term by fashion designers.



A) girls wearing ghagra choli and dancing

**6) MUSHAIK**

Arunachal Pradesh is another state of the North eastern region of India that is known for its striking hued, tribal motif embedded traditional dress. The females wear full sleeves weaved coat like jacket over a sleeveless chemise. The chemise is kept in place with a belt tied over it and is worn with a slip or waist cloth called the Mushaik

**7) DAVANI**

A langa voni (also pavadai daavani or langa davani) is a traditional dress worn mainly in South India by young girls between puberty and marriage.

It is also known as the two-piece sari or half sari. Young girls between puberty and marriage wear this dress. Girls younger than this may wear it on special occasions.

It comprises a langa or paavadai, a skirt which is tied around the waist using string, and a voni, oni, or davani, which is a cloth usually 2 to 2.5 metres (6 ft 7 in to 8 ft 2 in) in length.

The voni is draped diagonally over a choli (a tight fitting blouse, the same as that worn with a sari). Usually, the garment is woven with cotton or silk. A variant of this is the gagra choli of North India (the difference between the two being the direction of draping the voni or dupatta). The modern day "lengha-style sari", worn by Indians across the subcontinent mainly for special occasions, is inspired by the langa voni.



A) Small girls wearing Davani dress.

**8) MEKHELA CHADOR**

Worn by women from Assam. Ornamental designs on the mekhelachadors are traditionally woven, never printed. Sometimes a woven pattern called the paari, is stitched along the sides of a chador, or along the bottom of a mekhela

The patterns include motifs of animals, birds, human forms, flowers etc. These indigenous patterns are woven by tribal and nontribal Weavers. The motifs are known as phul. The bright-hued diamond motifs representing fine workmanship is a typical and traditional feature of the textiles of Assam



A) A young girl wearing the traditional dress.

While I have tried to incorporate as much as I can, such is the number of attires and ornaments that are worn by the women of this beautiful country, that a simple article won't be enough. Women are the symbol of perseverance and life, and as such they instil life in the dresses they wear.

Indian attire and clothing is renowned in the world and is famous all over.

**SUCH IS THE BEAUTY.**

- RAHUL RAJ  
BA HEP IV  
20HU2A1022

## CELEBRATING CULTURE AND FESTIVITIES

Culture is a way of life. Each country on the planet has its celebration and festivity.

Individuals from one side of the planet to the other love combining and sharing happy times through festivals and celebrations. Festivals are an incredible method for encountering neighborhood culture. At some point, they considerably offer a brief look into the past. Festivals are awesome celebrations of different things. They happen at standard stretches and aid in breaking the tedium of life.

Moreover, they give you the opportunity to commend the little and large things throughout everyday life. Festivals are the transporters of harmony and bliss in the networks. All countries of the world have specific strict and social festivals. Nonetheless, India is perhaps the biggest country to praise various festivals. As India is an exceptionally social and different nation, the festivals are as well. The partition into three general classes of public, strict, and occasional. Different cultures all around the world are praising occasions at various seasons.

These reaches are from little family events respecting such things as birth, marriage, and passing to weeklong celebrations affecting thousands of individuals. Then again, other celebrations have been created and adjusted to change while retaining impact from the social orders in which they are celebrating. Festivals of many kinds, meet explicit social necessities and obligations, as well as give diversion. These seasons of festivity offer a feeling of having a place for strict, social, or geological gatherings

Various nations have different celebrations to celebrate. Some are social, some strict, a few public, chronicled, and some more. What's more, there are various ways of commending them by there beginning a few festivals even conveyed way from other culture to celebrate. A celebration is the festival of a horticultural or a strict traditional occasion. While certain festivals have lost their unique purposes, I differ that they are simply for diversion; all things considered, there is huge work to restore the practice of our precursors. The beginnings of festivals are connected with agriculture and religions. In the collect season, following an extended time of difficult work, compensated by plentiful food, individuals could, at last, have a good time with music and ceremonial services.

Thus, custom and strict festivals were made to give amusement and gathering attachment. Different festivals began to show up forever ago, each having its own social and strict significance

The Industrialization Revolution has made agriculture less significant, brought about a decrease in social mindfulness. Halloween was initially a reap celebration of the Gaelic, in any case, as of late it has turned into an amusement occasion, with individuals wearing the outfits and savoring the evening

Notwithstanding, there is an ascent of traditional mindfulness all over the plane. Various endeavors to imply the significance of social personality have been made around the world, like showing history examples to the kids, or conserving and interpreting old texts into present-day dialects, we can talk about Diwali which is the festival of lights and there is an interesting historical stories behind it.

Numerous youngsters are developing interest in their practice, with the festival of old festivals like The Olympics Games is obvious proof. Celebrations are vital. They cause us to fail to remember our social and strict contrasts. They join individuals and they meet up for the sole motivation behind festival and satisfaction. Other than that, celebrations likewise assist us with embracing our way of life and religion. They are exceptionally useful in breaking the dreariness of life.

In addition, individuals anticipate celebrations by and large around the year. Celebrations flash satisfaction and give individuals something to anticipate. Moreover, individuals additionally fix their homes and paint them that resemble spic and span. It improves the vibe of the territory. To put it plainly, celebrations fill our lives with shadings and excitement.

They bring us closer consistently and dispose of any sensations of shared scorn. Further, they reinforce the obligations of the local area and eliminate the malignance from individuals' souls. Consequently, celebrations are very significant and should be commended with energy.

**- NOOR US SABAH  
BA HTJ 4TH SEM**

## **CULTURAL FESTIVALS OF INDIA**

Festivals are the oldest rituals and traditions our countrymen follow to pay tribute to the almighty gods and goddesses.

Festivals in India are much larger than almost any occasion. We consider them the best part of the year and wait for them eagerly, People of all ages and economic conditions find their ways to enjoy with their families and worship the gods and goddesses.

Some of the festivals are-

### **1. ONAM, KERALA**

Onam is celebrated in the beginning of the month of Chingam, the first month of the Malayalam Calendar.

There are actually four days of Onam. The most important day of Onam is the second day.

Festivities actually commence around 10 days before this day (on Atham), with the preparation of floral arrangements on the ground in front of homes.

One of the major attractions during the Onam festival is the Puli Kali event, which is an unusual but colourful form of folk art, dance, music, and drama.

Other events that attract travellers are the Aranmula Snake Boat Race feasting, elephant procession and various forms of classical and south Indian dance.

### **2. DUSSEHRA, ALL OVER INDIA**

Dussehra marks the end of Navratri and mythologically it is believed that on this day Lord Rama killed the Demon Ravana and freed Goddess Sita from Lanka.



It is also believed that Ram fought for nine days in Lanka to win over Ravana. Although it is celebrated throughout the country, still there is something special about the Mysore and Kullu Dussehra festivals.

Mysore Dussehra is a royal festival that celebrates the killing of Mahishasura by the Hindu Goddess Chamundeshwari.

As a part of the royal celebration, the day includes elephant processions and lighting up of the city with nearly 1 lakh light bulbs.

Kullu Dussehra is a seven day festival in the city of Kullu, that commences from the day of Dussehra. On this very day in the seventeenth century, King Jagat Singh of Kullu valley made an idol of Lord Ragnatha. From that day it is believed that Raghunatha is the ruler of the whole valley.

### 3. PONGAL, TAMIL NADU

Pongal is a celebration of harvesting season by the Tamilians, the celebration goes on for 4 days, generally between the 15th of January and the 18th of January. The word pongal in Tamil signifies abundance of crop. It is mainly celebrated as thanksgiving to the Sun, the primary source of energy for crops to grow.

The symbolic ritual of boiling fresh milk in a new clay pot at sunrise is a major part of the Pongal festival.

### 4. DURGA PUJA, WEST BENGAL

The Durga Puja in Kolkata is a jubilation of the Bengalis and is 4-5 days of extravaganza bringing in kinship among people belonging from different caste and creed.

Locally the festival is also known as “Akal bodhan”, an uncustomary time for commencement of the worship.

Mythology says that the customary time of worshipping goddess Durga is April, but Lord Rama worshiped Durga Mata during this period to get a boon to kill Ravana.

It is the time when you will come across the vibrant mood, art and colours of the Bengalis mostly in traditional wears and temporary thematic and artistic pandals and idols of goddess Durga.

### 5. MAHA SHIVARATRI, ALL OVER INDIA

This is the day when Lord Shiva got married to Goddess Parvati.

The night of Maha Shivaratri is called the “Great night of Lord Shiva” and is observed every year in the month of Falgun. According to the Georgian Calendar it falls in the month of February/March. The day is celebrated by night long Puja and offering Bael or golden apple leaves.

**6. PUSHKAR FAIR, RAJASTHAN**

One of the five sacred sites of the Hindu devotees, Pushkar is internationally famed for hosting

the Pushkar Camel Fair which is an annual festival.

The weeklong gala affair spread various shades of the royal state of Rajasthan.

With marvelous art and architecture from the bygone era being major attractions, the Pushkar Fair is a wonderful eye candy for the travellers around the world.

The main aim of the Pushkar Fair is to promote trade of cattle such as camels, horses, cows, goats, sheep etc.

For tourists the Pushkar fair is an experience of a lifetime that with camel safari, local music, and cultural performances.

**7. JANMASHTAMI, ALL OVER INDIA**

Janmashtami or Krishna Ashtami marks the annual birth celebration of the Hindu deity Lord Krishna.

The day is celebrated on the eight night of the dark fortnight in the month of Shravana

the celebration continues for a minimum of 2 days to 8 days.

The sacred towns of Mathura and Vrindavan host several events like Rasa lila, and dramatic enactments depicting the life of Lord Krishna.

Regions following Vaishnavism in Manipur also host such events. Janmashtami is also celebrated in other parts of India by different names

**8. PURI RATH YATRA, ODISHA**

Dedicated to Lord Jagannath the Chariot Festival in Puri, popularly known as the “Puri Rath Yatra”, witnesses a huge gathering of Hindu pilgrims and travellers from different corners of the world who seek to explore the cultural diorama of India.

The Puri Rath Yatra is a sacred journey on a richly decorated chariot of the Hindu deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Subhadra from the Jagannath temple to Gundicha temple via Mausī Maa Temple, which is near Balagandi Chaka in Puri.

- It is a part of the festival that Lord Jagannath along with the other Hindu deities remain at the Gundicha temple for nine days and later return back to the main temple.

The return journey of the Puri Rath Yatra is termed as Bahuda Jatra

**9. DIWALI, ALL OVER INDIA**

Often dubbed as the “festival of lights”...  
 Diwali today is not an ancient  
 Hindu festival that is celebrated to mark  
 victory of light over darkness,  
 knowledge over ignorance, good over evil,  
 and hope over despair... but  
 has also religious significance in Sikhism and  
 Jainism religions.

That’s not all!!! People hailing from  
 Buddhism, Muslim and Christian  
 religions also partake in the eventful occasion  
 by lighting up candles or  
 traditional lamps (Diyas) and firecrackers.

**- RIYA SINGH  
 21HSPS**

**THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH**

Before the fasting and prayer,  
 The ashes and crosses,  
 That somber reminder and reconciliation  
 mark;  
 A myriad of people thronged the streets.

Like simmering silky caramel,  
 The sun’s warm amber touch  
 And the winds mellow whispers  
 Spread an irresistible savory aroma  
 Engulfing all beating hearts,  
 Rustling leaves and still stones.  
 Dionysus hath, most assuredly, blest our lands.

Barbeque and empadas,  
 Pastels and pão de queijo.  
 A delicious, smooth liquid  
 slid down her throat.  
 Fruits blossomed in her mouth,  
 While pleasure burnt through her very being.  
 Her eyes blazed passionately,  
 And sweet melodies erupted from her  
 cherry-tinted velvet lips.  
 A symphony of merriment and indulgence  
 played for a week.

Now a plethora of lights surround her,  
 Music flows through her veins,  
 She sways to the rhythm of the beats,  
 Her feet move as if on burning coals.  
 Come and watch the fabric flutter;  
 Beads, ribbons, feathers, sequence  
 And embellishments glisten.  
 A masquerade of people,  
 An exotic parade,  
 And sensual parties.

The magical samba echoed throughout the  
 land,  
 A nostalgic historic movement of freedom  
 resurfaced there.  
 And many a spectator thought  
 It truly was  
 The Greatest Show on Earth.

**- NIKITHA KISHORE  
 BA HEP 4TH SEM**

# FESTIVALS

The rich and vibrant festivals of India are a testimony to our diverse tradition and culture. Festivals in India revolve around Lord's birthdays, traditional myths, seasonal changes, relationships, and much more. Festivals are celebrated irrespective of religion or caste in the country, bringing people closer and creating a strong bond of humanity. Right from childhood, infants in India are part of every festival celebration in the house. This helps them understand the rituals of each festival and they develop a liking for the festivals and celebrations. As they grow older, they get fonder of these festivals and they want to celebrate it in its full potential to enjoy it thoroughly. You will notice a lot of youngsters participating in festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Durga Puja and Christmas. These festivals bring them closer to each other as well as the country, and instil a feeling of patriotism as well. The spirit of India is expressed year-round in festivals as diverse as the country's landscapes and as lively as its people. Enthusiastic celebrations of gods and goddesses, saints and prophets, history, culture and the advent of new seasons occur almost daily throughout the country. By taking part in these colorful festivities, you will see the vitality of India today as it embraces the traditions of its fascinating past.

## THE SPIRIT OF CELEBRATION :

Our age-old traditions have gifted the country with various festivals and fairs. Many tourists come to India to witness the various celebrations and revel in the enjoyment. Indians celebrate various moments like ploughing day, harvesting day, changing seasons, and many more. Earlier, there was something to celebrate every single day, so people had festivals for 365 days in a year. However, now with our busy schedules, we can manage to celebrate only 8-10 festivals on an average in a year. Some of these include :

## DIWALI

This festival of lights is probably the most important festival in Hindu culture. It is celebrated with lots of pomp and enthusiasm and is known to bring wealth and prosperity to individuals and homes. A five-day festival representing the start of the Hindu New Year, it also honors the moral victories of good over evil. Specifically, Lord Rama and his wife Sita's return to their kingdom after defeating an ominous and evil demon. The festivities are dependent on the lunar cycle, but they usually take place between October and November. The main event of this festival occurs on the third day. Clay lamps called "diyas" are lit, signifying the victory of good over evil within the individual. The widespread glow of diyas gives the festival its nickname, the "Festival of Lights." The fourth day is New Year's Day and is culturally regarded as the most auspicious day to begin any new endeavor. To experience a truly beautiful Diwali celebration, head to the "pink city" of Jaipur. Each year the town holds a competition for the most brilliantly lit market.

## DURGA PUJA / DUSSEHRA

This festival is majorly celebrated in Western India. It celebrates the victory of good over evil. It is also known as Navratri and celebrated over a period of 9 nights. Dussehra, also called Dasara or Vijayadashami, in Hinduism, holiday marking the triumph of Rama, an avatar of Vishnu, over the 10-headed demon king Ravana, who abducted Rama's wife, Sita. The festival's name is derived from the Sanskrit words dasha ("ten") and hara ("defeat"). Symbolizing the victory of good over evil, Dussehra is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Ashvina (September–October), the seventh month of the Hindu calendar, with the appearance of the full moon, an event called the "bright fortnight" (shukla paksha). Dussehra coincides with the culmination of the nine-day Navratri festival and with the tenth day of the Durga Puja festival. For many, it marks the beginning of preparation for Diwali, which occurs 20 days after Dussehra.

**NAVATARI**

Navatari is the longest Hindu festival, lasting nine consecutive nights. It is celebrated throughout India, and the first nine days honor the goddess Durga while the tenth day pays tribute to the spiritual hero Lord Rama. He is the hero of the epic Ramayana and a man who upholds loyalty, honesty and love. The epic is an important part of the Hindu canon and is an integral part of several Indian festivals. To take part in some of the most joyous Navatari celebrations, head to Gujarat, Palakkad, Tamil Nadu or Bengal. In Gujarat, people gather nightly to watch beautiful dance tributes to Lord Rama. However, in practice, it is the post-monsoon autumn festival called Sharada Navaratri which is the most observed in honor of the divine feminine Devi (Durga). The festival is celebrated in the bright half of the Hindu calendar month Ashvin, which typically falls in the Gregorian months of September and October.

**HOLI**

This festival of colours is celebrated all over the nation and marks the beautiful season of spring. Spraying colours on each other, enjoying traditional music, dancing together and wild processions are some of the common features of Holi. This could be the liveliest of all Hindu festivals and is observed throughout North India. It marks the end of winter and the dawn of spring; it is a festival of joy and rebirth. The festival technically falls on the day following the full moon in March each year, but the celebrations always begin the night before. Crowds of people gather around bonfires, burning dry leaves and branches in a gesture symbolizing winter's end. While Diwali is the "Festival of Lights," Holi is the "Festival of Colors." The birth of spring is marked with color, and people embrace this by dressing in vibrant clothes and throwing colored powder at each other.

It truly is a unique and beautiful sight fostering a lightness of spirit and hopefulness in all who attend. In Anandpur Sahib, Sikhs celebrate a special festival held the day after Holi called Hola Mohalla. It involves displays of ancient martial arts and mock battles commemorating the martial spirit of this ancient town. Other notable Holi celebrations occur in Braj Bhommi, Rang Gulal, Barsana and Nandgaon.

**CHRISTMAS**

This festival celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and promotes love, tolerance and brotherhood. People love to decorate the tree and their homes and bring gifts for family members during this time. A feast central to the Christian liturgical year, it is preceded by the season of Advent or the Nativity Fast and initiates the season of Christmastide, which historically in the West lasts twelve days and culminates on Twelfth Night. Christmas Day is a public holiday in many countries, is celebrated religiously by a majority of Christians, as well as culturally by many non-Christians, and forms an integral part of the holiday season organized around it. The traditional Christmas narrative recounted in the New Testament, known as the Nativity of Jesus, says that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in accordance with messianic prophecies. When Joseph and Mary arrived in the city, the inn had no room and so they were offered a stable where the Christ Child was soon born, with angels proclaiming this news to shepherds who then spread the word.

**EID**

This prominent festival is celebrated by Muslims all over the world. It is celebrated in the fasting month of Ramzan and people enjoy with delicious food, new clothes and prayer ceremonies.

Other famous festivals of India include Lohri, RakshaBandhan, KarvaChauth, RathYatra, Kumbh Mela, etc. With so many festivals to celebrate, Indians surely have millions of reasons to rejoice! Furthermore, when students from different countries experience this joy of festivals, it truly enhances the Indian culture.

**PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR**

While religion and spirituality are the basis for most festivals in India, there are some that are purely cultural. The Pushkar Camel Fair is such a festival, where 50,000 camels converge on Pushkar, located in the state of Rajasthan. The fair originated as a business attraction, where local camel and cattle traders would convene during the holy Kartik Purnima, yet another Indian festival. The fair is now a major tourist attraction and has more to do with fun and entertainment than Kartik Purnima. For five days, camels are dressed up, paraded, entered into beauty contests, raced and traded. A huge carnival is held that includes magicians, musicians, dancers, acrobats and snake charmers. With activities like this and camels as far as the eye can see, it truly is a one-of-a-kind experience. The fair usually takes place in November over the course of five days. Activities start early, so be sure to come early to enjoy all the fair has to offer.

**GANESH CHATURTHI**

This festival pays respect to the beloved Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of all good beginnings and success. A large number of idols, made of clay or metal in varying shapes and sizes, are worshipped for 10 days within houses and businesses. On the tenth day, the idol is ceremoniously removed and carried in a procession through the streets. An amazing place to witness the Ganesh Chaturthi is Mumbai -- where people flock to the sea on the tenth day to submerge their idols. Maharashtra also has a festival that includes traditional dancing, musical performances, poetry recitations and theatrical performances. Here, the festival lasts 10 days, and the procession is a joyous and widely attended event. Ganesh Chaturthi is usually celebrated in August or September, once again, dependent on the lunar cycle. If you don't have 10 days to devote to Lord Ganesha, make sure you are present on the last day for the procession, celebration and feast.

**- NAOMI ALPHONSO  
VI BA HTJ**



## CELEBRATION OF LIFE THROUGH FESTIVALS

Festivals are a tool to bring life to a state of exuberance and enthusiasm. History has shown us that festivals were started as a way to pass on knowledge, traditions and culture to the upcoming generations. In order to create a bond of love festivals have taught us in the past and is still teaching us to forget enmity and embrace one another.

When we look back, there was a time where everyday was considered a festival. Hence, 365 festivals in a year. This seems to be a big number if we think about it now but this shows us how each festival was a tool to bring life to a state of exuberance and enthusiasm. Not just everyday was a festival but every culture was in a state of celebration. The celebrations we see were started when people were just farmers and small merchants. For them ploughing was a festival and so was planting day and harvesting. But we see the difference now because only harvesting is considered a festival and why is that?. The main reason behind this is poverty which struck our country 400 or 500 years ago and everyday couldn't be celebrated. There were no town gatherings anymore and people started getting satisfied if they just had food to eat everyday. Out of the 365 festivals, only 30 to 40 remained yet due to the changing times, time constraints, work schedules and various other daily factors led to celebrating just 8 to 10 festivals yearly.

Over the years the meaning of festivals have just been reduced. There is no more starting preparations a week prior or getting up at four in the morning. There is no more children running around the house and the house being in a state of chaos, excitement, and buzzing. Festivals nowadays means, us being happy because we get a holiday and us waking up only at twelve noon or we going out with friends to hangout or just sitting at home and binge watching Netflix.

### The Isha celebrates four important festivals

Pongal, Dussehra, Mahashivratri and Diwali. This was done in order to bring back the culture in people, so that the coming generation wouldn't forget about festivals. Festivals not just in India but around the world are celebrated as a celebration to life. Festivals like 'Thailand's Yi Peng Lantern Festival' is one such festival which is celebrated during the time of the twelfth full moon where good fortune in the new year is wished for. Another festival we see is Diwali which is considered as the festival of life. It is the time when one can dispel darkness and bring in the light of clarity and make life a celebration.

If we consider everything in a celebratory way then we learn to be non-serious about life but at the same time be absolutely involved. Hence, we can see that festivals all around the world were brought into different cultures in order to make our whole life into a celebration.

- SHANNAN SARVANAN  
20HU2A1024

# CULTURE

By definition, “culture” consists of arts, practices, rituals and celebrations, passed on from generations and it has many different aspects to understand it. Every individual is born as a blank slate and we learn more about our culture as we grow older, we meet new people and socialise. Humans are social animals and hence these practices help to form relationships and maintain them throughout the phases of our lives. Even though some individuals end up in a completely different city or country, some forms of their culture will always remain in them, it is an integral part of who we are as individuals and our role in the various social groups we belong to. No doubt some cultural practices will seem alien to someone else, but those practices define one’s identity and give us that sense of belongingness to a certain group.

The world currently has 7.9 billion people, one cannot fathom how many different cultures and groups exist.

Culture could be language, clothing, food, traditions, practices, customs, rules, beliefs, superstitions, dance, music, architecture and the list goes on. Culture is a means to stand out, promotes individuality, promotes social relationships, peaceful gatherings, celebrating one’s role in the community, it unites and binds different people to spread the joy and maintain peace between groups.

The best example of Culture are festivals. Festivities and celebrations are prime indicators of how a community or social group gets together to share, to celebrate and to enjoy any social activities that are part of their culture, for example celebrating births, marriages, festivals, annual gatherings etc.

Taking the example of births, we have many different rituals that are practiced around the world, such as baptism, male circumcision, head shaving, ear piercing, pre baby showers, naming ceremonies etc.

During festivals, we see people of all ages, different walks of life, gathering together to celebrate, there are unique rituals, festival oriented food, music, dance, ceremonies, prayers etc.

All of these practices originate from culture, passed on from one generation to the next, although the traditions could be similar, there are different ways and different aspects to it, but it will be unique to the group that practices it.

It is quite upsetting to see that culture is slowly dying these days, the younger generations are confused individuals pushed into the chaos of the world. With such vast diversity, they cannot be blamed, it is a very confusing age, where they are trying to identify who they are, molding their identity.

The technological advancements in this new digital world has undoubtedly bridged the gap between families who live far apart, but the joy and feeling of celebrating the festivities of their culture, in person and not through a digital medium has made it difficult to keep the culture alive. The formation of social relationships, maintaining and strengthening of bonds has become an impossible task, but with the ever changing times, there will be cultural changes taking place. There will be new practices that will be passed on, old socially evil practices will be abolished and a fusion of old and new cultures will take place.

- KIRAN PATEL  
BA HTJ 6TH SEM



## ORIGIN OF ASSAMESE BIHU FESTIVAL

The festival of Bihu is a harvest festival celebrated in the state of Assam. Though its inclination is more on the agricultural side than the religious, it nonetheless is celebrated with much joy and abundance by all the tribes and other people, regardless of what their faith or beliefs may be. Historically, it is believed that the festival of Bihu originated in the pre-Aryan days around the 3500 century BC. From then onwards to the following many centuries until the recent, celebrations used to last for a month or more, which now have been reduced to a week. Even the word “Bihu” is said to have been derived from the language of Dimasa Kacharis, an agrarian tribe that has existed from many a centuries. Since long, Bihu has been a festival to rejoice, offer thanks, and pray for a bountiful harvest.

Also, the folk songs known as Bihu geet or Bihu songs have been associated with the first and most popular of Bihus, Rongali Bihu, for long. These songs are composed in couplets that rhyme and each couplet depicts a different emotion altogether.

This festival is celebrated thrice a year. The festival which coincides with Makar Sankranti is known as Bhogali Bihu, celebrated in the month of January. The other two Bihu festivals are Rongali Bihu celebrated on Vishuva Sankranti and Kongali Bihu celebrated in the month of Karthik. Bhogali Bihu is a festival of abundance of food and grains. Celebrated in the local month of Magh, Bhogali Bihu is also called Magh Bihu. The word ‘Bihu’ has been derived from the Sanskrit word bishu which means “to ask for prosperity from the Gods during the harvesting season”.

The night of feast, ‘Uruka’ is observed the night before Magh Bihu. Community kitchens made of bamboo huts ‘Bhelaghor’ are where the preparations are made for the for the feast. Dishes made of vegetables, meat and rice are prepared. Pitha made of rice, Laru made of sesame, molasses and coconut, and Khar, a special dish of Assam. Bonfire called ‘Meji’ is made the next morning around which the community gathers and prays for a good harvest in the coming year. After offering to the sacred fire, people have traditional ‘jolpan’ breakfast and play indigenous games like pot-breaking, egg-fights and buffalo-fighting. In large wetlands, celebrations are also marked by community fishing by the tribes.

- NIKITA LAHKAR  
BA(HTJ) 6TH SEM

## ECCENTRIC 9 DAY KARAGA OF BANGARAPET

Everyone is aware of the famous Bangarpet Pani Puri chats in Bangalore, but today I bring to you all along with traditional festivity that is celebrated in the small town of Bangarapet, Kolar district. Bangarapet was originally called Bowringpet, named after an officer working in the Kolar Gold Fields. This town came into existence as the connecting point of traffic between the goldfields and Bangalore. The people of Bangarapet depend largely on jobs in Bangalore for earning money. People generally work in IT and private companies in and around Bangalore.

The town is very well connected with Bangalore, facilitating a huge daily population travelling to Bangalore to earn their living. A portion of the people works in the nearby public sector factory of Bharath Earth Movers Limited.

That was a little about this quaint little town, how about we move into the celebration part of it. The 9-day Karaga – (karaga in Kannada, in English the word Karaga referred to two terms: “kara,” meaning “hand,” and “ga,” meaning “that which is held) was started by Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar of the Kingdom of Mysore from 1940 to 1950, who later served as the governor of Mysore and Madras states. The celebration lasts for nine whole days where it has many attractions like Hasi Karaga, Utlujathre, Agnikunda Pravesh, Vasanthotsava, and flower Karaga. The devotees will gather in large numbers eagerly to watch all these programs. It is formerly to have been originated from the state of Tamil Nadu, and eventually moved to Karnataka and is being celebrated grandly especially in Kolar, Hoskote, Malur, Magadi, and Bangarapet since then. Due to the farming activities in these areas, the people would entertain themselves with songs and dance, such did the culmination of the Karaga Mahotsav begin. The elders believe the Karaga as the Shakti Goddess Drapathi and her children and the Kshatriya class – Vahnikulas follow strict rules the 9 days it’s celebrated. On the first day, the village heads and priests are welcomed. They stay in the temple premise throughout the 9 days. On the seventh day, a pooja will be offered in the evening by the elders, Gowdaru, and Karaga priests. On the eight-day, they travel in eight directions and bring water from the nearby lakes, the women of the Vahnikula cleanse themselves observing a fast will carry small logs in a basket and with lamps enter the temple, cook Pongal and offer it to the Veerakumars.

On the ninth day, the priest will be made to wear bangles and will be married to the five Pandavas. He will wear his wife’s mangalya – (a sacred hollowed piece of gold plate that is worn by the woman after marriage) and along with the elders will wear a yellow or red cloth returning to the temple carrying the Hasi Karaga, the priest carrying the karaga on his head, comes out of the temple and starts dancing. The priest carries this through the town and around and should return before the sun rises during which he should not partake any food till he puts the Karaga down. The next day beholds a sight where the priest participates in a vasanthotsava, keeps a copper vessel on a grinder, and fills turmeric water after offering pooja and places it on his head and dances. The people believe this experience to be spiritually elevating. Karaga festival is celebrated each year to mark the return of Draupadi in the form of Adishakti. Karaga begins on a full moon day of the Chaitra Masa according to the Hindu calendar.

As enriching the experience was in writing about this unique festival as one of the lesser known festivals among us, so was it listening about it for the first time from my grandfather who stays in this little town that also happens to be his family hometown. While hearing about these festivals at a young age, I grew up researching about them according to my understanding that truly elevates one’s knowledge about our country’s rich cultural heritage. I hope this reaches those who love our culture and heritage because “Sharing will enrich everyone with more knowledge.” – Ana Monnar.

- RACHEL ANGELINA  
BA HTJ VI SEM

## THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas is celebrated on 25th of December every year. This festival commemorates the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ, the son of Joseph and Mary.

Most Christians today probably can't imagine Christmas on any other day than December 25th, but it wasn't always that way. In fact, for the first three centuries of Christianity's existence, Jesus Christ's birth wasn't celebrated at all. The religion's most significant holidays were Epiphany on January 6th, which commemorated the arrival of the Magi after Jesus' birth, and Easter, which celebrated Jesus' resurrection. The first official mention of December 25 as a holiday honoring Jesus' birthday appears in an early Roman calendar from AD 336.

Although it is a Christian festival, people from different communities celebrate it with great fervor and enthusiasm. Christmas is the season of joy, peace, and happiness. It is the special season set aside to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christmas, and has grown to become a symbolic time for living in peace and love.

The origin of Christmas led many people to assume that it is strictly celebrated by Christians and they would be right if historical evidences are to be considered, but in today's cultural and diverse world, it has become a holiday season, where love and peace fosters inside every home.

There are different way of celebrating Christmas. It usually start at midnight by celebrating the birth of Jesus, and goes on for the whole day with many festivities, especially childrens singing the Christmas carol.

Plum cakes, cookies, brownies and other confectionery items are made in each family and also share with friends and neighbours. The streets are decorated with lights and one can find beautifully decorated Christmas trees at various nooks and corners.

Christmas reminds us of the importance of giving and sharing with friends and family. Christmas shows the importance of joy and happiness and it is also an opportunity to reflect on ourselves, as we enter a new year.

- JOSEPH

## CELEBRATING CULTURE THROUGH FESTIVALS

In India, a cultural festival is a celebration of the traditions of particular people or place. These festivals features certain art or an event specific to a particular culture, especially the ones celebrating and promoting that culture in a wider public context.

PONGAL is one of the most famous and essential festivals which is also referred to as Thai Pongal, it is a Hindu harvest festival celebrated by the Tamilians in India and Sri Lanka. History suggests that the festival Pongal came into existence between the Sangam period (5th century to 3rd century BC) and the medieval Chola dynasty (up to 13th century CE). During the Sangam era, Pongal was observed by the name of "Pavai Nonbu" in which young girls prayed to god in the hope of rain and good harvest.

The three days of the Pongal festival are called Bhogi Pongal, Surya Pongal and Maattu Pongal. And some tamilians celebrate a fourth day of Pongal as Kaanum Pongal. The significance of Pongal festival is it's a harvest festival where they thank the Sun God for agricultural abundance 4 days long.

According to tradition, the festival marks the end of winter solstice and the start of the sun's six-month-long journey northwards when the sun enters the Capricorn. The festival is named after the ceremonial "Pongal", which means "to boil, overflow" and refers to the traditional dish prepared from the new harvest of rice boiled in milk with jiggery (raw sugar). To mark the festival, the Pongal sweet dish is prepared and offered to the Gods and Goddesses.

Bhogi Pongal is the day Pongal festival begins, and it marks the last day of the Tamil month Marghazi. On this day people discard old belongings and celebrate new possessions. The people assemble and light a bonfire in order to burn the heaps of discards. Houses are cleaned, painted and decorated to give a festive vibe. The deity of the day is Indra- the god of rains, to whom prayers are offered with thanks and hopes for plentiful rains in the year ahead.

Surya Pongal- also called Suryan Pongal or Perum Pongal, is the second and main festive day, and is dedicated to the Hindu god Surya. It is the first day of the Tamil calendar month Tai, and coincides with Makara Sankranti- a winter harvest festival celebrated throughout India. The day is celebrated with family and friends, with the Pongal dish prepared in a traditional earthen pot in an open space in the view of the sun. The pot is typically decorated by tying a turmeric plant or flower garland, and near the cooking stove are placed two or more tall fresh sugarcane stalks. As the dish begins to boil and overflow out of the vessel, one or more participants blow a conch called the sanggu while

others shout with joy "Pongalo Pongal" which means "may this rice boil over". This symbolize for the shared wish of greater fortunes in the year ahead.

Mattu Pongal is celebrated the day after Surya Pongal. Mattu refers to "cow, bullock, cattle", and Tamil Hindus regard cattle as source of wealth for providing dairy products, fertilizer, transportation and agricultural aid. On Mattu Pongal, cattles are decorated- sometimes with flower garlands or painted horns, they are offered bananas, a special meal and worshipped. Events during Pongal include community sports and games such as cattle race, the Jallikattu. The major cultural festivals on Pongal occur near Madurai. Kanu Pidi is a tradition observed by women and young girls. They place a leaf of turmeric plant outside their home, and feed the leftover pongal dish and food from Surya Pongal to the birds particularly crow. They pray for their brothers well being. Brothers pay special tribute to their married sisters by giving gifts as affirmation of their filial love.

Kanum Pongal , the fourth day of the festival, marks the end of Pongal festivities for the year. The word Kanum in this context means "to visit". Many families hold reunions on this day. Communities organize social events to strengthen mutual bonds. Villagers cut and consume farm fresh sugarcane during the social gatherings.

Overall Pongal is an important tamil cultural festival to the tamilians, where they do different activities, take part in different events to make the day more special and memorable with their family, relatives and friends.

- NANCY



## Independence Day: Unity in Diversity

Every year on 15 August, the streets of India are dressed up with the tricolors of the national flag as the country celebrates its day of independence. In the weeks mounting up to 15 August, landmarks and government buildings are gleaming in the country's national colors. Shops, malls and houses are decorated in similar colors, and shopkeepers can be found selling flags, dupattas and kites for the occasion. Documentaries, patriotic films and programs related to India's freedom are aired on TV channels to get people into the spirit of Independence Day. It is a day marked with a whirlwind of celebrations. Although celebrations take place throughout the country, India's capital city, Delhi, home to the 17th-century Red Fort that used to serve as a political center, is the main staging area for Independence Day festivities.

That's how people of different cultures and religions unite on this very auspicious day. India is regarded as one of the most diverse nations in the world, India has always coexisted and maintained its diversity in a great way. Independence Day is one of the festivities, where it is not Hindus vs. Muslims or one culture against another, it is just one identity and that is being an 'Indian'. Everyone is just in the spirit of celebrating their independence as a nation, there is no discrimination. To quote, David Binder, "Festivals promote diversity, they bring neighbors into dialogue, they increase creativity, they offer opportunities for civic pride, they improve our general psychological well-being. In short, they make cities better places to live."

- RHEA PEARL FERNANDES

## The Legend Behind Easter

What is the most important holiday in Christian traditions? A lot of people may say Christmas, on which Christians celebrate the birth of Christ, but actually that's not it. The most important Christian holiday is actually Easter, celebrating the resurrection of Christ, the miracle upon which the Christian faith was founded. However, Easter is not an isolated event. Most Christian churches celebrate various moments leading up to Easter as well.

Now, Christians celebrate Easter on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. That means the date of Easter, and its preceding events, change every year, but not in relation to each other. One of the most important of the preceding events is Good Friday, the day on which Christ was crucified, celebrated the Friday before Easter Sunday.

The Christian faith is based around the story of Christ's crucifixion, which occurs in a series of stages. We start on the Wednesday before Easter, called Holy Wednesday. According to the Christian scriptures, Christ's disciple named Judas Iscariot agreed to betray Jesus Christ and turn him over to the Jewish High Priests for a reward. On the next day, called Maundy Thursday, Christ and the disciples gathered together to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover. After this meal, generally referred to as the Last Supper, Judas betrayed Christ, who was arrested.

That brings us to Good Friday. This day commemorates the day after the Last Supper. According to the Christian Gospels, Jesus was sent before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate found no reason to punish Jesus, and told the Jewish priests to punish him by Jewish laws. The priests insisted that Jesus had broken Roman law, so Pilate went to King Herod of the Hebrew people. Herod too sent Jesus back to Pilate, who (literally) washed his hands of the affair and gave in to the demands of the Jewish priests to execute Jesus.

According to Roman custom, Jesus was beaten and crucified, which was a form of both torture and execution meant to instill fear in any who would oppose Roman rule. To mock Jesus for his reputation as a revolutionary leader of the Jews, Roman soldiers made him a crown of thorns and crucified him under a sign reading 'Jesus of Nazarene, King of the Jews'. At the end of that day, the Christian Gospels say darkness fell over the entire land and Jesus Christ died.

- GODWIN JOHNATHAN  
VI BA HTJ

## CELEBRATING CULTURE THROUGH FESTIVITIES

### What is Eid-al-Fitr?

Eid-al-Fitr (also written and pronounced as Eid-ul-Fitr) is the first of two Eid's of the Islamic (lunar) calendar year. It rounds off the month of Ramadan, which Muslims observe every year to acknowledge Allah's revelation of the Quran to prophet Muhammad.

Not to be confused with Eid-al-Adha, this Eid comes after the holy month of Ramadan, when many Muslims will not eat or drink during the daytime for a 29 or 30 day period. It's part of Sawm (fasting) commitment, one of the five pillars of Islam.

The holiday is all about the breaking of the dawn-to-dusk fast and is celebrated on the first day of Shawwal (The 10th month). It falls approximately 11 days earlier than the one the previous year when following the Gregorian (solar) calendar.

### When is Eid-al-Fitr?

The exact date is never certain far in advance, as religious authorities in various regions rely on the sighting of the Eid crescent moon to announce when it will officially begin. It can be delayed by a day if the sky is too bright when the moon is out, or if clouds obstruct it. This is also the reason Ramadan can start on different days in different parts of the world. People are not allowed to fast on this day of year, even if they want to continue.

### Why is Eid-al-Fitr celebrated?

Eid-al-Fitr is regarded as a time to celebrate, with Muslims gathering their friends and family to show gratitude toward God following the previous month of reflection. The holiday serves as a great reminder for Muslims to be grateful for what they have, and to share with those who may be less fortunate.

As well as giving thanks, Muslims give an obligatory payment to charity (zakat) but this one is a smaller donation compared with the usual 2.5 percent zakat that wealthy Muslims are taxed. This is another of the five pillars of Islam. In addition to these payments, some Muslims take the initiative to work voluntarily at soup kitchen and hand out their own food to those in need of relief.

As with Eid-al-Fitr, gifting is a big part of Eid celebrations. Children receive Eidia offerings in money bags, and sweet treats such as dates are exchanged among loved ones, neighbours, colleagues, friends and even strangers.

. Family members will also buy one another presents, although most of these are saved for the youngest members of each family.

Countries across the world hold huge events to celebrate Eid-al-Fitr. Days of fireworks shows are especially popular in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia as people take the opportunity to spend quality time together.

### What does the 'Eid Mubarak' greeting mean?

You'll hear Muslims wishing each other 'Eid Mubarak', which refers to having a blessing day during Eid. It is said on both Eid days and is the expected greeting when meeting a fellow Muslim for the first time on Eid. Many non-Muslims who are familiar with the phrase and meaning of it also offer 'Eid Mubarak' as a greeting on this day when they see Muslim friends and colleagues.

### EID PRAYERS

Muslims usually dress up to attend their local Mosque, where as well as taking part in prayers, it's a time for many people to have the first breakfast during sunlight hours they've had in month. Before dawn, the Salaat ul-Fajr prayer takes place, and then it's time to bathe before the Eid prayer, also known as Salaat al-Eid.

As Salaat al-Eid is performed only twice a year, the Imam leading the congregation will usually explain how to perform this particular prayer before it begins.

**-SHAHISTA**



# Diwali

Diwali is a festival of lights and one of the major festivals celebrated by Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs. The festival usually lasts five days and is celebrated during the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika (between mid-October and mid-November). The festival is widely associated with Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, with many other regional traditions. In some regions, a celebration of the day Rama returned to his kingdom Ayodhya with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana after defeating Ravana in Lanka and serving 14 years of exile. The five-day long festival originated in the Indian subcontinent and is mentioned in early Sanskrit texts. Diwali is usually celebrated twenty days after the Vijayadashami (Dussehra, Dasara, Dasain) festival, with Dhanteras, or the regional equivalent, marking the first day of the festival when celebrants prepare by cleaning their homes and making decorations on the floor, such as rangolis. The second day is Naraka Chaturdashi. The third day is the day of Lakshmi Puja and the darkest night of the traditional month

In some parts of India, the day after Lakshmi Puja is marked with the Govardhan Puja and Balipratipada (Padwa). Some Hindu communities mark the last day as Bhai Dooj or the regional equivalent, which is dedicated to the bond between sister and brother, while other Hindu and Sikh craftsmen communities mark this day as Vishwakarma Puja

and observe it by performing maintenance in their work spaces and offering prayers. Some also believe in discarding old things and buying new ones, a refresher once in a year. This also involves discarding unused old items at home and buying new ones in the name of Diwali, so the festival brings in everything fresh and new. It is believed that Goddess Lakshmi visits the place of worship (maybe house or office) on Diwali and blesses them. Hence there is a lot of discipline and devotion that goes into the celebration of this festival. The preparation for the festival commences many days prior to the festival. It starts with the thorough cleaning of houses and shops. Many people also discard all the old household items and get all the renovation work done before the onset of the festival. It is believed that Goddess Lakshmi visits people's houses on Diwali night to bless them. Hence, all the devotees clean and decorate their houses with fairy lights, flowers, rangoli, candles, diyas, garlands etc. for the festival. The festival is usually celebrated for three days. The first day is called Dhanteras on which there is a tradition to buy new items, especially ornaments. The next days are to celebrate Diwali when people burst crackers and adorn their houses. There is also a custom to visit your friends and families and exchange gifts. Lots of sweets and Indian specialities are prepared on this occasion.

Diwali is a festival enjoyed by everyone. Amid all the festivities, we tend to forget that bursting crackers lead to noise and air pollution. It can be very dangerous for kids and can even cause fatal burns. Bursting crackers reduces air-quality index and visibility at many places which are responsible for accidents that are often reported after the festival. Hence, it is important to have a safe and eco-friendly Diwali.

Diwali is rightly called the festival of light as the whole world brightens up on this day. The festival brings joy and hence, it is my favourite festival!

It is aptly given the name Diwali as the whole world lights up on this day of the festival. Many satellite images show how India looks on Diwali. These days Indians all over the world celebrate Diwali by lighting lamps, and hence it is a global festival. So let us all join hands and take an oath to celebrate this traditional festival with responsibility so that everyone, including mother earth, is safe and free from pollution.

### HISTORY

The celebration of Diwali can find its roots in ancient India and it is likely that it began as a significant harvest festival. And as with many Hindu festivals, the origins of Diwali differ from region to region, which can be vastly attributed to the culture of stories and legends being passed down through generations through the spoken word.

Some are of the belief that Diwali is the celebration of Goddess Laxmi's marriage to Lord Vishnu. Some even consider this day as the auspicious occasion of her birthday, as it is a popular belief that she was born in the month of Kartika on a new moon (Amavasya).

In certain regions, like Bengal, this festival is dedicated to Goddess Kali, the dark Goddess of strength. In other regions, devotees offer prayers to the elephant-headed God, Lord Ganesh. But in all mythology and history, Diwali marks the day that Lord

Rama returned to Ayodhya, after being in exile for 14 long years, to reclaim his throne and fulfil his duty. His return is all the more significant due to his victory over the demon king Ravana. It was in celebration of their King's return, that the people of Ayodhya illuminated the kingdom with diyas, to light his way home

- PRANAV RAGHUNATH  
21HSPS18



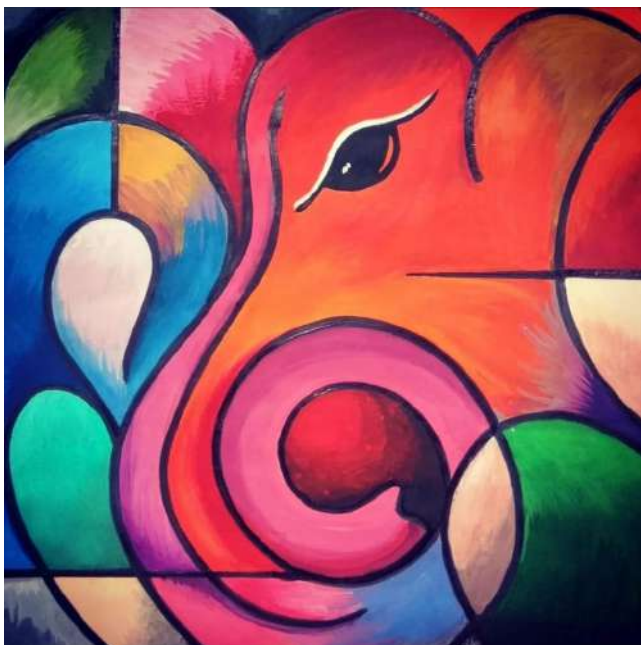
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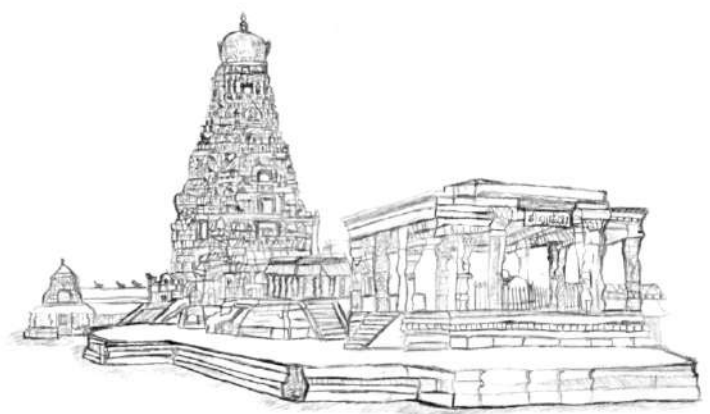
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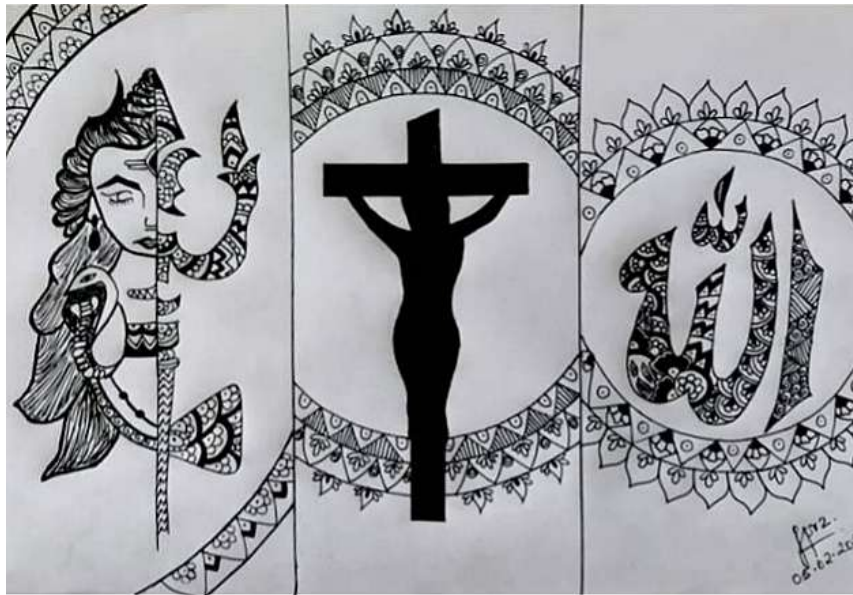
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- SWASTHIKA CHOUDHARY  
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- SUDHARSON  
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- PRADEEP AK  
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- SUSAN JONATHAN  
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- KRITHIKA  
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