



WORDSPIRE ACADEMY
Where Words Take Flight

WORDSPIRE GAZETTE

The Children's Newspaper

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Our students currently learning **Creative Writing, IGCSE English, and Public Speaking** have shared their knowledge for the first ever, Wordspire Academy's Gazette. Our smart intellectuals have researched and written on the theme of Navratri and Sports. From the number of students that are undergoing our courses, we have selected a few writers as our September Edition Wordspire Journalists!

Our Founder, Sunita Bansdawala, and Co-Founder Riddhi Jani have curated the Gazette with minimal story editing. Our research team, Maanya Shah and Tanvi Vaya, researched the topics for our students to write.

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✨ **Navratri Across India & 2 Countries:**
9 States, 9 Origins, 9 Traditions ✨

Purpose of this Gazette: Offer an in-depth, state-wise journey through Navratri—focusing on the origin/backstory of how each place came to celebrate it the way they do, the rituals and arts they cherish, the form(s) of the Goddess they invoke, and one distinctive (sometimes quirky!) local tradition to spotlight.



Inspiring Stories this Navratri
from our
Wordspire Journalists



The Epics of Navratri

Intro: 9 Endeavors into the Realm of Goddess Durga!
Wordspire Journalist: Naisha Jariwala (Mumbai)
Age: 12 years

Nine nights, nine states, nine origins and nine traditions! The number nine sure is a special number! However, you know 12 is also quite a special number! It is on October 12, 2025, where dreams take flight and dedication is finally rewarded! It is the day when the much-awaited Wordspire Gazette is launched, to reveal to the world a collaboration of writers, armed with their pens to give knowledge to the youngsters of the world!

Maya Angelou once said, "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." Today's phenomenal journalists share with us their anecdotes, tales and parables crafted with their assiduity itself.

These stories are produced by nine writers on the distinct forms of the Goddess Durga. The Navadurga consists of nine sacred goddesses. Shailaputri (devotion), Brahmacharini (penance), Chandraghanta (courage), Kushmanda (creative energy), Skandamata (nurture), Katyayani (valor), Kalaratri (fearlessness), Mahagauri (purity) and Siddhidhartri (perfection).

Navratri aligns with the seasonal transition of Sharad Ritu (post-monsoon). Devotees invoke Shakti for protection, renewal, wisdom and victory over inner/outer negativity, culminating in Vijayadashami (the day of victory). Each day concedes its own brilliant hue; the day starts with an Aarti at least twice a day. At night, the wait finally ends when the DJ announces the enigma of Garba!

The nine states we will be presenting today are Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Punjab, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Gujarat. A unique inclusion is Singapore, a country that India shares long-standing cultural, commercial and strategic relations with.

What is Garba? Garba is a folkdance originating from Gujarat and the areas of Kutch in the western parts of India. People dress up in vivacious ghagras that are as bright as the moon! These writers from the corners and hearts of India collaborate to celebrate the divine Goddess. The powerful deity, known as Kali, Ambika Gauri and is none other than the valiant Goddess Durga! Let's read our writers' display of their interpretation of this dandiya-laden festival, Navratri!



Gujarat - From Garbha-Deep to Garba
Wordspire Journalist: Heer Shah (Mumbai)
Age: 13

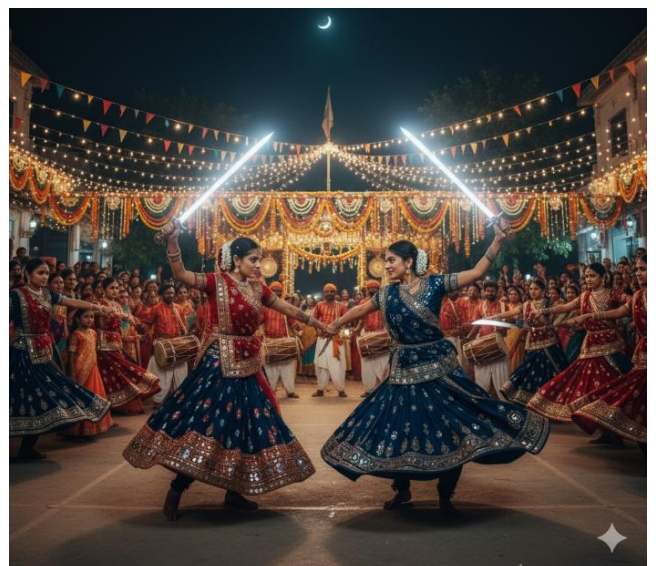
Gujarat's urban hubs light up major cities like Surat, Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Gandhi Nagar- but tucked away is Rajpur, a village that's succumbing into the aura of a unique dance called talvar-ras.

Leela is about 5 feet and 3 inches tall with bruises on her fragile hands due to learning expertise in her skills. A pillar of strength in Rajpur, Leela is unyielding and fiery, with a spirit as bold as the swords she wielded in talvar-ras. Matriarchal influences ran deep into her family; she led the village women with a blend of grace and command. Priya is Leela's best friend, now a successful engineer in Ahmedabad, returning to Rajpur for Navratri.

Priya's determination rivalled Leela; she had broken barriers in male-dominated tech spaces. Both the friends-bound by shared passion, gradually formed a circle of like-minded women in Rajpur-a blossoming cohort of friends who embraced talvar-ras with fervor. Leela's group practiced the skill in Rajpur's open square adorned with vibrant bandhanwar intricately woven with gleaming gajras. They wore chaniya-choli with Kutch's signature mirror-work embodying Gujarati's textile artistry.

Priya joined, drawn to the potent mix of martial skills and Ambe Maa's spiritual essence. Her Kerala Kalaripayattu background created fascinating synergies with Gujarat's Garba blending southern martial fluidity with western India's rhythmic intensity. As Navratri approached, Priya faced inner tension-her analytical engineering mindset grappled with talvar-ras's intuitive flow. Priya harmonized her precision with the instinct; and crafted movements with swords and swirls. On the Navratri's peak night, beneath a canopy of twinkling lights and fervour dhol beats representing the village's heartbeat. Rajpur's women performed the skill with the best friends leading the dance form.

Swords glinted; feet embraced the dance in devotion. The crowd gasped as Priya executed a breath-taking sword spin infused with her fusion, presenting Leela's bold style. Post-performance they were honoured with mogras and gajras, amidst cheers. Leela embraced Priya warmly while her eyes sparkled ecstatically. Priya's eyes showed fusion of two different parts converged breathtakingly. Inspired, Rajpur's young girls now eagerly sought to learn talvar-ras, drawn by Leela and Priya's compelling blend of heritage and culture of the Gujarat traditions.



Himachal Pradesh — Kullu Dussehra: When Navratri Begins After Everyone Else
Wordspire Journalist: Hriday Sheth (Mumbai)
Age: 13

Every October, the quiet Kullu Valley in Himachal Pradesh bursts to life like a painting splashed with colors. Drums echo through the mountains, costumes dazzle like rainbows, and the whole valley seems to dance to the heartbeat of tradition. This is Kullu Dussehra—a festival unlike any other.

While most of India believes Dussehra as the end of Navratri, in Kullu, the story takes a magical twist. Here, the festival begins on Vijayadashami and stretches joyfully for an entire week. No wonder thousands of devotees and travelers flock here—it is faith and festivity rolled into one..



The story goes back to the 17th century when King Jagat Singh of Kullu, weighed down by guilt, sought forgiveness from Lord Raghunath. In humility, he placed the idol of the Lord on his throne, declaring him the true ruler of Kullu. From that day, Kullu Dussehra became a living symbol of devotion, repentance, and unity. As the proverb says, “*Faith can move mountains*”—and in Kullu, it surely moves valleys filled with people

The grand procession at Dhalpur Maidan is like the heart of the festival. Hundreds of village deities arrive on palanquins—wooden chariots or carriers, richly decorated with cloth, flowers, and ornaments, carried on the shoulders of devotees. Imagine rivers of devotion flowing together into one sea of faith. The air is filled with the thunder of drums, the blare of trumpets, and the swirl of the famous Nati dance. Men and women, clad in bright costumes, move as though the mountains themselves are swaying in rhythm.

For a whole week, rituals, fairs, feasts, and performances turn Kullu into a cultural carnival. People believe this is an auspicious time because it marks the victory of good over evil—a season when prayers are answered, and hearts feel lighter. Finally, a blazing bonfire is lit, its flames licking the sky like a golden reminder that darkness can never defeat light.

Kullu Dussehra is not just a festival—it is a living poem of faith, culture, and community in the lap of the Himalayas.

Karnataka — Mysuru Dasara & the Slaying of Mahisha
Wordspire Journalist: Vedant Pathak (Mumbai)
Age: 15 years

I had recently visited Karnataka. On my first day in this enchanting and majestic city, I was fortunate enough to witness the Mysuru Dasara festival. This festival is celebrated over a 10-day period filled with traditional and cultural performances, wrestling bouts, exhibitions and a royal court or durbar which is attended by the Mysuru royal family.

These celebrations have their deep and historic origins in the Vijayanagara Empire and were continued and supported by the Wodeyar rulers of Mysuru. It mainly signifies the victory of good over evil, when the goddess Chamundeshwari, an avatar of the Hindu Goddess Durga killed the ferocious and atrocious demon Mahishasura. Mahishasura has been depicted from ancient times as a person with a human body and buffalo head.

Every evening for the ten days of the celebrations the Mysore Palace is illuminated with almost 100,000 bulbs creating a majestic, mesmerising and spectacular view. During the 10-day long celebration, prayers, dance and then on the final day, a procession takes place.

The procession showcases the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari placed on a golden pavilion atop an elaborately decorated elephant. The parade has a huge gathering of people eagerly watching the features: a vibrant display of adorned elephants, horses, and camels, accompanied by traditional folkdance groups, music bands, and colorful floats that create a festive and majestic atmosphere throughout the city.



Maharashtra - *Ghatasthapana, Bhavani, and the Warrior Ethos***Wordspire Journalist: Karthik Dhogi (Mumbai)****Age: 14**

Maharashtra's celebration of Navratri beautifully blends devotion, prosperity, and the warrior spirit. The festival begins with Ghatastapana, the installation of a sacred pot filled with grains, symbolizing prosperity sprouting under the blessings of the Goddess. This ritual highlights the deep cultural belief that abundance and growth come from divine grace.

Historically, Navratri in Maharashtra has been closely tied to the Maratha tradition and the worship of Tulja Bhavani, a revered form of Goddess Durga. The temple of Tulja Bhavani in Osmanabad has been an important pilgrimage site for centuries, drawing kings, warriors, and devotees alike.

Legends narrate that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj would seek the blessings of Goddess Bhavani before setting out on his campaigns, symbolizing his faith in divine guidance. Over time, her worship became inseparably linked with the spirit of resistance, righteous duty, and the protection of the land. People respect Shivaji Maharaj not only for his military brilliance but also for his vision of swarajya (self-rule), his just governance, respect for women, and devotion to his people. This legacy gave Navratri in Maharashtra a distinctive warrior ethos, where spirituality and history are woven together, honoring both the Goddess and the ideals Shivaji stood for.

The celebrations are vibrant and community-centered. Daily aartis are performed at the ghat, while Gondhal (devotional performances) keep the festive spirit alive. On Navami, people observe Ayudha Puja, consecrating tools, weapons, and vehicles to honor the instruments that support their livelihood and protection.

On Dussehra, people exchange Apta tree leaves, revered as sona (gold). This custom reflects prosperity and goodwill, inspired by King Raghu, an ancient ruler famed for his generosity, who once gave away all his wealth in charity. The tradition carries forward his spirit of abundance and selflessness.

Thus, in Maharashtra, Navratri is not only a celebration of the Goddess but also a remembrance of valor, duty, and community spirit, making it a festival where devotion meets cultural pride.



Odisha — Shakta Peethas & Silver-Screened Pujas**Wordspire Journalist: Ayaan Yadav (Mumbai)****Age: 14**

India's rich history of Durga worship is evident in ancient texts like the Markandeya Purana (circa 300 BCE) and 6th-century CE depictions of Mahishasuramardini Durga. In Odisha, Durga worship has deep roots in the Shaktism cult, which emerged distinctly in early Orissan history with notable Brahmin and non-Brahmin devotees of Devi Bhavani practicing Gurumantra.

A significant Shakti Peetha in Odisha is the Tara Tarini temple, dedicated to the Twin Goddesses Tara and Tarini, considered incarnations of Adi Shakti. Tarini, also called Maa Tarini, is revered widely in the region. The name "Chandni" is associated with Cuttack's Chandni Chowk, famous for its exquisite silver filigree (tarakasi) work and grand Durga Puja festivities. The Biraja Temple in Jajpur, dedicated to Maa Biraja (Durga), is an important Hindu pilgrimage site.

During Durga Puja in Odisha, rituals such as Chandi Paatha (chanting Durga Saptashati), fire havans, and symbolic animal sacrifices are performed at Shakti temples. The goddess Durga, known as Bhagavati, is worshipped in various Shakti Peethas across Odisha, each with unique forms and legends—for example, Maa Biraja in Jajpur holds a spear; Maa Bimala in Puri is linked with Jagannath's prasad and tantric rites; Maa Tara Tarini in Ganjam; and Maa Samaleswari in Sambalpur.

Other revered Goddesses in Odisha include Maa Charchika (Banki), Maa Mangala (Kakatpur), Maa Hingula (Talcher), Maa Sarala (Jhankada), Maa Bhagabati (Banapur), Maa Bhattarika (Badamba), and Maa Gouri (Bhubaneshwar). Celebrations feature "ghanta" (bell) sounds and traditional folk music, enriching the vibrant atmosphere.

Tarakasi, the ancient silver filigree art from Cuttack, showcases its brilliance during Durga Puja when artisans create intricate silver "medhas" (canopies) for idols, some weighing hundreds of kilograms. Cuttack's Chandi Medha—large silver tableaux and backdrops—highlight this craftsmanship, making the city an "open-air museum of silver art." These artworks represent devotion, financial prosperity, and competition among puja committees aiming to outshine each other annually.

Finally, the unique Gosani Jatra in Puri provides a cultural experience with traditional Durga iconography, colorful pandals, music, community feasts (bhog), and the symbolic burning of Ravana's Effigy during the Ravana Podi ritual, celebrating the victory of good over evil and the power of women.



Punjab - A Living Tapestry of Faith, Family, and Divine Feminine Power
Wordspire Journalist - Shanaya Katkoria (Mumbai)
Age: 13

Navratri in Punjab has both a communal and family spirit, combining ritual devotion with the region's lively culture. For families in north-western India, the nine sacred nights are a time for worship, vows, thanksgiving, and personal spiritual practices. The proximity to Himalayan Shakti shrines, especially Vaishno Devi, adds depth to the celebrations. Families often embark on journeys of mannat, which are promises made to the Goddess in prayer and later fulfilled as acts of gratitude. These vows, passed down through generations, strengthen connections between households and the divine, making devotion a close part of family life.

Each day of Navratri features a routine of worship: fasting, lighting oil lamps at dusk, and reciting verses from the Durga Saptashati. The evenings come alive with jagrans, all-night gatherings filled with devotional music. The atmosphere buzzes with collective energy as dhol beats, harmonium melodies, and passionate singing fill the air. These events create spaces that are both spiritually intense and socially joyful, blending faith, music, and community.

The festival peaks on Ashtami or Navami with the Kanjak ritual. Groups of young girls, honored as living symbols of the Goddess, are invited into homes with great respect. They receive red dupattas, bangles, or coins before enjoying the festive meal of halwa, puri, and chana. This ritual captures the essence of the festival—an affirmation of feminine divinity, purity, and nurturing strength.

Throughout the nine days, all forms of Durga are worshipped, but in Punjab, the powerful presence of Vaishno Devi stands out. Devotional spaces fill with brass aarti thalis, lace-bordered dupattas draped around the deity, and community langars that reflect both faith and Punjabi hospitality.

A striking aspect of Punjabi Navratri is the phenomenon of Devi-āvasthā during jagrans, when devotees enter trance-like states thought to be moments of divine presence. Oracles are spoken, blessings are given, and participants are swept up in waves of ecstatic devotion. In these moments, Navratri goes beyond ritual and becomes a living drama of faith, blending reverence with powerful spiritual energy and communal intensity.



Day 1 – Shailputri (Strength & Roots)

Devi Shailputri represents strength and stability. Today's children carry the same spirit—rooted in their parents values, strong enough to understand the value of relationships.

Day 3 – Chandraghanta (Balance & Courage)

Devi Chandraghanta symbolizes peace and courage together.

Children must learn to balance politeness with strength—managing social norms while alerting elders about harm to their life, respect and honour when needed.

Day 2 – Brahmacharini (Devotion & Focus)

Devi Brahmacharini embodies dedication and perseverance.

Like her, children today juggle multiple roles with peers and friends, but they must do it with patience, discipline, and focus, turning challenges into stepping stones.

Day 4 – Kushmanda (Creation & Radiance)

Devi Kushmanda is the creator of the universe, radiating energy.

Every child creates—with their ideas, their story, their imagination, and their experiences. Each child adds light, laughter, and warmth to every space they enter.



*Artwork Created by
Mrs. Shruti Shah*

Day 5 – Skandamata (Motherhood & Nurture)

Devi Skandamata embodies the unconditional love of a mother.

Today's woman nurtures not just her children but also fuels their goals, visions, and allows her children to make mistakes, but also learn from those mistakes — with the same motherly heart.

Day 7 – Kalaratri (Fearlessness & Protection)

Devi Kalaratri destroys ignorance and darkness.

Children are learning to fight silent battles — against classroom bias, peer pressure, and eliminating egos — emerging as protectors not just of themselves but of others around them.

Day 9 – Siddhidatri (Wisdom & Fulfilment)

Devi Siddhidatri grants wisdom and clarity.

Today's children are learning to accept their parents decisions, as they have years of experience and knowledge. Certainly, parents are the guiding light and mentors for their children's choices.

Day 6 – Katyayani (Courage & Justice)

Devi Katyayani is the warrior goddess, a protector of dharma.

Children today are learning to stand up for themselves, for their friends, and for their parents — breaking glass ceilings and fighting for fairness with fearless determination.

Day 8 – Mahagauri (Purity & Transformation)

Devi Mahagauri symbolizes purity and transformation.

Every child carries the ability to renew themselves with proper guidance — to heal, to forgive, and to rise stronger from life's tribulations, empowering themselves better than before.



*Artwork Created by
Mrs. Shrutī Shah*

Tamil Nadu - Navratri amongst Devotees

Wordspire Journalist: Reyaansh Goradia (Mumbai)

Age: 13

The vibrant market burst with colours of Navratri, as merchants displayed their pattu pvdai, which translates for 'silk skirt' in Tamil. Their collections were created by artists making them masterpieces, especially for Navratri - a yearly festival in the Hindu month of Ashvin. While ambling along congested bazaar, I bought nine different coloured veshti, which is a type of dhoti, worn on each day of the festival.

On my stroll while returning to the hotel, the sight of decorations truly mesmerized me. All the temples were being decorated with Hindu epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana. Inside them was a lengthy marigold garland around the deity. A vibrant and magnificent rangoli was made in front of the entrance to warmly welcome the devotees.

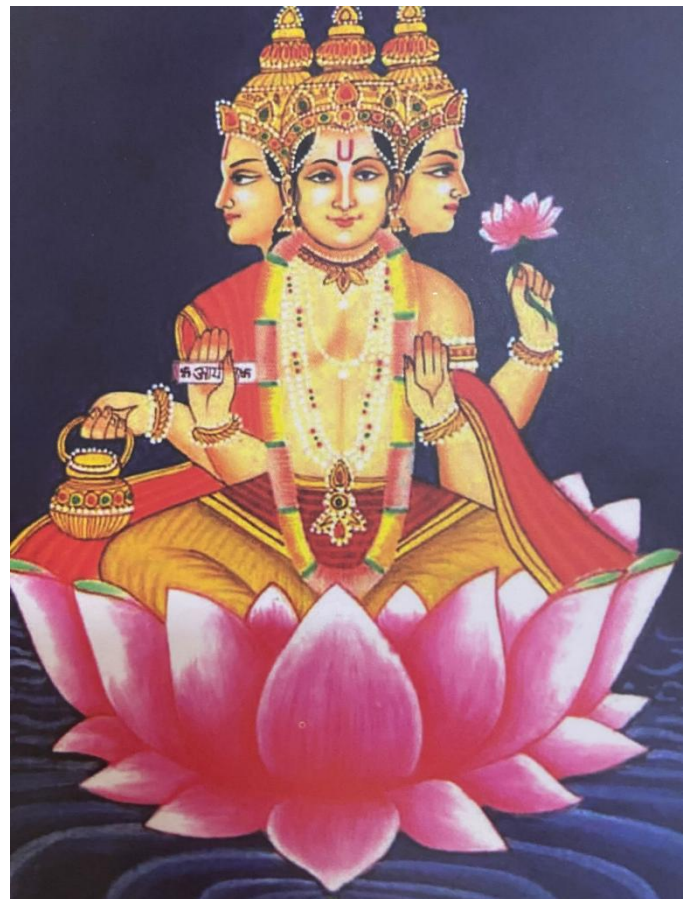
In the evening, everyone gathered inside the temple for Durga Pooja. After that, multiple songs related to Goddess Lakshmi, Sarasvati, and Durga were sung by everyone which was followed by a Golu display of dolls, and the popular folk dance, Kummi. According to me, Tamil Nadu is the best place to celebrate Navratri not just with family, but also with friends and neighbours.

4.2 TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥

evaṁ paramparā-prāptam
imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā
yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa

This supreme knowledge, the ancient Yoga, was unbroken and preserved through a chain of disciplic succession and passed on to saintly kings. As time passed, the chain of succession was broken, and this knowledge was lost.



Telangana— *Bathukamma: When Flowers Become a Goddess***Wordspire Journalist: Dhriya Khianra (Mumbai)****Age: 13**

As the season of spring waltzed in, the essence of flowery scents and a celebratory occasion immersed into the air. The shift of weather brought in the festival of Bathukamma— rejoicing the arrival of Maa Gauri. The streets were decorated with ravishing displays of flowers. While striding towards the holy temple, my ears were filled with the melodious sounds of the 'taalam', a traditional instrument of Telangana. It radiated serenity in the devotees' hearts. There were gorgeous women, moving gracefully to the rhythm, like swans on a lakeside.



When my feet stepped upon the marble of the holy temple, a surge of tranquility calmed me in a matter of seconds. The divinity of the goddess instantly pulled me in. I glided aimlessly, letting my 'atman' (soul) guide me towards the celestial idol of the goddess Gauri. The entire temple was enveloped by the fragrant mogra flowers and the positive energy of the devotees. The second I laid my eyes on the statue of Maa Gauri, all my doubts were instantly cleared. The only sound in that moment was the slight shuffling of the flowers on her revered form. As I bowed down to her feet, I felt every negative thought escape my mind. It felt as if she had drawn the darkness from the deepest corners of my soul.

While leaving the temple, I was instantly greeted with the energising sounds of the Bathukamma dance. The soft harmony of the 'kooya' was lost in the beats. The world around me suddenly stopped, as I got lost in the graceful yet electrifying movements. I decided to join them, as I surrendered myself to the pulsating rhythm. The music wrapped around the crowd, circles swirled in harmony. The fragrant 'chamanti' flowers embellished the center, as though every deity observed in awe.

Time flew by, as the 9 joyous days of Navratri ended. The city fell into a quiet sorrow, as our beloved Maa Gauri departed towards the heavens. As the last few beats escaped the 'dappu', the atmosphere changed to despair. The festive air shifted to solemnity. Women, adorned with trinkets, dipped their Bathukamma idols in the sacred river, gently immersing them into the pure waters. All the devotees gazed at the 'murthy' consigning to the stream in revered silence. A single flower floated back up, a sign of Maa Gauri's eternal presence and blessings. Witnessing every blossom arranged, every hymn intoned, and every cadence of dance, I was truly mesmerised. I realised Bathukamma signifies that culture is not enshrined in mere chronicles. It resides in the spirit of every devotee that keeps it alive through Navratri.

West Bengal: Akol Bandhan & the Homecoming of our Goddess Mother
Wordspire Journalist: Adeetya Patel
Age: 16 Years

The air pulsed with spirituality and artistry as I stepped into Kolkata during Durga Puja. Every street glistened with light like jeweled offerings, every pandal rose like a temple born of pure devotion. The roads echoed with Rama's plea in the tale of Akal Bodhan - his faith summoning Maa Durga beyond season, proving that the Goddess listens when the heart calls Her with sincerity.

As I stood before the idol of Mahishasuramardini, I felt miniscule, yet sheltered. Her ten arms stretched to not only strike down the demons but to also gather her children into safety. Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartikeya, and Ganesha stood beside her like stars around the sun. Staring in the eyes of the cosmic mother, I felt her gaze pierce through me, fierce yet motherly, as though Goddess Mahishasuramardini listened to every promise and desire intently, I ever had.

At the Kumari Puja, a young girl, worshipped as the living Devi, was welcomed with the beats of the 'dhak' which not just echoed throughout Kolkata, but entire galaxies. I bowed low, tears trickled down my eyes as I witnessed the welcome of Shakti in its purest, most innocent form. The smoke of the 'dhunuchi' swirled upward, removing all the negative aura and carrying our collective bhakti to the heavens, creating a positive atmosphere and marking the days of victory.

After 9 joyous days of stay with the Divine Mother, we needed to bid farewell to Her through the procession of Visarjan. I wept with the crowd, not in despair, but in longing - for I knew she was returning to Kailash, only to bless us again the next year. Durga Puja was not just a festival to me; it was the victory of good over evil, a homecoming of garba and raas as Maa Durga watches her devotees dance to the musical beats with enthusiasm.



Singapore - Navratri Devi in Singapore Blessing My Home
Wordspire Journalist: Shriya Kasat (Singapore)
Age: 11

During Navratri, a vibrant spirit of devotion and festivity sweeps through Singapore, which is also enthusiastically celebrated by the Hindu community. Being a Hindu, I have followed my mother to every temple to seek blessings from our Goddess. In the temple, I have noticed musicians playing the 'tabla' and 'harmonium' as it has a rhythm for traditional Indian music. Especially in Sri Srivan Temple, there is a wafting scent of jasmine flowers surrounding the Goddess as it may be her choice of a natural fragrance.

Beyond the temples, my home comes alive with intricate "Bomma Golu," also known as Navaratri Golu or Kolu. This traditional and artistic display of dolls and figurines has been celebrated for centuries in South Indian states, now it is a highlight of the Navaratri festival in my home.

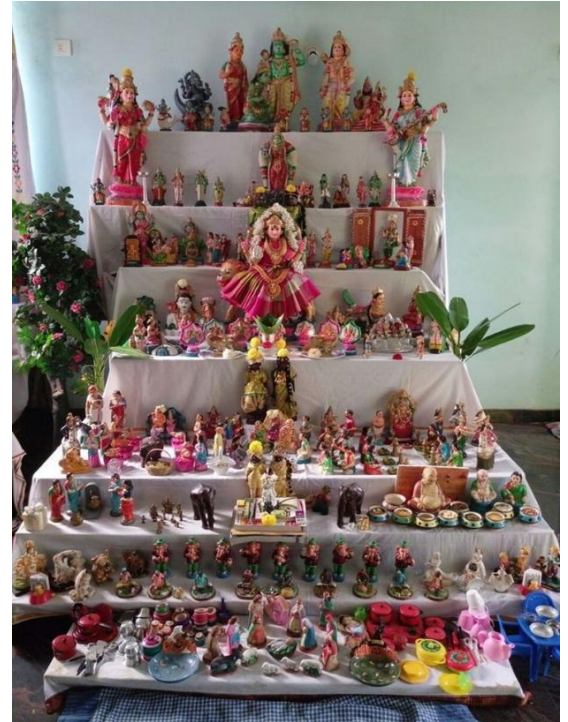
The name "Bomma Golu" in Tamil means "Court of Dolls". It displays multi-tiered platforms that are adorned with dolls representing gods, goddesses, and scenes from Hindu epics. While inviting friends and family to our home, we share the festive spirit, music, and delicious vegetarian meals with Bommai Golu.

A fascinating fact about Bommai Golu's display is that it is intricately designed by all devotees. We often arrange the pedestal with odd-numbered steps, depicting various themes from Hindu mythology and everyday life, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. During this time, my extended families and communities gather around our Goddess, exchange gifts, and share devotional songs and food.

The community spirit culminates in lively folk dances like Garba and Dandiya Raas where people of all ages dance in synchronized circles. Their colorful sticks gracefully clinked against each other to the beats of garba music. The devotees in my home are embodying a joyous celebration of good triumphing over evil, while in their own trance of dance!

After a few hours of dancing, the culinary experience of Navratri is a unique and deeply spiritual one, rooted in the tradition of 'vrat' or fasting. This nine-day observance transforms my kitchen and across Hindu communities into spaces of mindful cooking. The priests are invited to make a *satvik* diet—pure, light, and free from tamasic ingredients like onion and garlic.

As the Ninth Night of Navratri draws to a close, a sense of quiet reverence settles over my family and the Hindu community. This vibrant energy of the Garba and Dandiya nights gives way to a final, profound moment to worship our Navratri Goddess.



UAE - Navratri's Garba Evening in UAE
Wordspire Journalist: Mehar Patel (UAE)
Age: 14

The evening sky was turning saffron orange and amethyst purple. I felt so thrilled as it was the time of Navratri – the festival that I eagerly wait for every year. The garba ground was cool, with the scent of flowers and incense sticks everywhere. I couldn't stop smiling because this was my chance to dance to the Gujarati tunes. Dancing wasn't just a hobby for me – it is the moment that makes me feel alive to the rhythm.

When the ground was filled with people, everyone was dressed in vibrant colours and together we all looked like a vast rainbow encircling the Goddess Durga. The beats of the dhols were so loud, it felt like it was inside me, and the dandiya clicked like chimes. Simultaneously, I heard laughter, and aromas of the food cooking, along with tasting sweet jalebi melting in my mouth.

The best part was when the whole crowd danced in a rhythm. It showed me unity and in a powerful dance form – the Gujarati folk dance "Garba". What inspired me the most was the stress-free faces of the entire audience and the dancers. That's one reason I feel proud to be an Indian living in the UAE, because I am here sharing our Indian traditions with the world!



Food & Offerings (Prasad)**Wordspire Journalist: Rivansh Kothari (Mumbai)****Age: 11 years**

Gujarat is a diverse place for food, culture and offerings for Navratri. Navratri is a festival celebrated because good over evil prevailed.

Gujarat offers many culinary delicacies like sabudana khichdi, singhada pakoras, rajgira laddoos and many more. The offerings in Navratri include many kinds of ladoos, malpua, kheer etc. Devotees prepare these dishes especially during the prayer ceremonies.

West Bengal is a humongous state with many languages and food.

There are approximately 13 languages spoken there which are:

- Bengali,
- Radhi (Burdwan, Nadia, 24 Parganas),
- Radhi (Howrah, Hooghly),
- Barendri, Jharkhandi, Rajbangsi and Nepali (Indo-Aryan family);
- Mundari, Koda/Kora and Lodha (Austro-Asiatic family);
- and Bodo, Bhotia and Toto (Tibeto-Burman family).

They offer khichuri, labra, sondesh; bhog with ghee-laden rice and lentils to Goddess Durga.



Closing Reflection of Navratri in 9 States & 2 Countries
Wordspire Journalist: Navya Kshirsagar (Mumbai)
Age: 10 years

Across these nine states, Navratri is the most powerful and the most royal festival. In Maharashtra, people invite nine female youngsters as the Goddess of their house during Navratri. Children, parents and even elderly people wear mirror embroidery dresses (chanya-choli or kediyus).

It has been explained in this feature, that Ambe Maa's power to create, protect and transform is one of a kind. As from our feature, the Wordspire Journalists have mentioned 9 states that celebrate Navratri which are Gujarat, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in different ways of their special style. Also, our international writers in UAE and Singapore have been inspired by Navratri too, hence the Hindu communities celebrate in full faith.

Even though Navratri originated from Gujarat. Although Maharashtra also celebrates Navratri like Gujarat, but from all the states, I remember that West Bengal becomes an emotional festival, especially when Maa Durga's visarjan is in procession. Other states of India also celebrate Navratri but with different rituals for Goddess Durga. Yet, one important aspect is that the Navratri festival brings happiness in praying and unity in garba!



Fun with Navratri Colours



Write 2 good habits that you can inculcate this Navratri in your daily life.

1. _____

2. _____

India vs Pakistan Cricket Battle

Wordspire Journalist: Naman Shah (Mumbai) | Age: 11

Sport

As dusk broke, the first light of the evening painted Dubai's cricket ground in hues of cerise pink and saffron orange, a gentle welcome to the cricketers for a new match India vs Pakistan. It was evening in Dubai and the stadium was filled with thousands of fans anticipating that their teams would win. Meanwhile, all the people in both India and Pakistan were glued to their televisions for the match. The crowd were already cheering India-India, they were as loud as thunder booming across the sky in the stadium. They were becoming impatient to spot their favourite cricketers walk on to the green pitch...

So, the two fierce country captains walked through the gates: Surya Kumar Yadav and Salman Agha. They came to the centre of the ground for the toss. When India won the toss and chose to ball, the captains were supposed to shake hands but the umpire stopped them. Till date nobody except the umpire knew why he stopped them in handshaking. Then the captains went to the pavilion to prepare themselves for the match. The question in everybody's mind was that, "Will the game be a match or battle on the cricket field?"

After a short period of time the two Pakistani openers were ready to bat and the Indian team were in position to field. The countdown started and the crowd began cheering in amazement. Within moments, the bowler, blond-white haired Hardik Pandya, held his season's ball firmly ready to aim at the wickets.

Just then, it was the first over's second ball and Hardik Pandya knocked off the wicket's bails - Wham! At that moment, Indian fans were serenading in full glory, "India-India! India-India!" as gleeful as India's national bird - Indian peacocks! When the match's wickets all crashed, the sign board read: "Pakistan 127 runs".



It was a challenging target for India as they were aware of the Pakistani bowlers' skills. So, everybody had a doubt, if India would win or not, but India prayed faithfully.

After a short break of approximately 10 minutes, the two Indian openers confidently strode with vigour to win the match against Pakistan. Yet, faces showed stress and tension as the first over of the second innings was done, and the ball was given to Shaheen Afridi - India made just 12 runs in the first over. Yet, tables turned as the match progressed when India took just a few wickets - to be precise just 3 wickets, but had hit 13 fours and 5 sixes.

In just a few hours that's when the umpire declared the winners of the match in just 15.5 overs - India Won! Indian fans were in tears of joy, hugging each other, but the Pakistani fans were shattered. It was one of the best days for me and my fellow Indians, on that Sunday 14 September 2025 for the India vs Pakistan Cricket Battle!

Cricketer's Character Sketch - Rohit Sharma

Wordspire Journalist: Vir Jangla (Mumbai) | Age: 9

Rohit Sharma is an Indian cricketer with a wheatish complexion who plays for Mumbai Indians in Indian Premier League (IPL) matches. I notice him as a heavy and large built man, and about 5 feet tall, when he is at the gym wearing his baggy clothes. His forehead is lined when he pumps muscles, but he is so fit that he can do flying pushups at the gym. His hair cannot be seen under the helmet when he plays cricket, but when he lifts it off his head, Rohit's hair is not so messy but is definitely sweaty!



Everyone believes Rohit has an innocent face because he is true to his personality. Yet his eyebrows frown when a fellow cricketer hits a bad shot! So, he wears his cricket team's jersey that makes him feel motivated, to bat his favourite pull shot - that's when the audience is in full cheer. He is given the Captaincy title for One Day International (ODI) matches, and that's when his dark eyes become joyful when winning for India!