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Culture of Gujarat

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[edit]Gujarati engagement ceremony

In many Gujarati communities, the engagement ceremony is known as Gol Dhana (in Gujarati script, ગોલ-ધાના), or Gor Dhana,[1] which literally means "Jaggery and Coriander seeds" and refers to the practice of distributing a small amount of jaggery mixed with coriander seeds.

[edit]Gujarati Wedding Ceremony

HINDU WEDDING

Marriage is a highly auspicious occasion in the Indian culture. According to the Vedas, the Hindu scriptures, marriage is a sacred life long commitment between a man and a woman. It is considered to be the strongest of all social bonds and is the initiation into a lifetime of togetherness. The Vedic wedding ceremony consists of prayers, invocations, and vows recited in Sanskrit, the most ancient surviving language. The Vedic wedding ceremony dates back to over five thousand years. The ceremony is performed under a decorated canopy, the Mandap. The four pillars that surround the madap represent the four parents. This signifies the important part they have played in raising their children to become the responsible adults they are today. The ceremony is performed before a sacred fire, or Agni, which is the eternal witness of the marriage and all vows taken.

HINDU WEDDING CEREMONY

Baraat (Wedding Procession) The original form of a baraat is a procession from the groom's house to the bride's house for the wedding ceremony. The joyous wedding day begins with the Mangal Vadya, the playing of Shehnai (a traditional wind instrument) and Dhol (Indian drum).
Swagatam (Welcoming of the Groom and his Family) The groom and his family are greeted at the doors of the Mandir (Temple) by the bride's parents and family. The mother of the bride then greets and welcomes the groom and his family into her own family. She blesses the groom by placing a tilak (red dot) on his forehead. The groom is then led to the mandap where the wedding ceremony will take place.
Ganesh Puja (The worship of Lord Ganesh) Every Hindu ceremony begins with the worship of Lord

Ganesh, deity of peace and wisdom. This is done so people can find strength within themselves to remove any obstacles that may arise. Madhuparka (Welcoming the Groom) While the groom is sitting under the mandap the Madhuparka is performed where his feet are washed by the bride's parents. He is then offered Panchamrut, a liquid composed of milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, and sugar. Kanya Daan (Giving away of the daughter) The bride accepts her change of status from an unmarried woman to a wife by spreading turmeric powder on her hands. Kanya Daan is performed by the father (or uncle or guardian) of the bride in presence of a large gathering that is invited to witness the wedding.

Vivaaha (Wedding) The bride and the groom face each other, and the priest ties their garments (the bride's saree to the groom's shirt) in a knot, symbolizing the sacred union. The bride and the groom garland each other and exchange the rings. Next the nuptial fire, symbolizing the divine witness, and the sanctifier of the sacrament, is installed and worshipped.

Both the bride and the groom grasp their hands together and pray to God for His blessings.

Samagree, consisting of crushed sandalwood, herbs, sugar, rice, ghee (clarified butter), and twigs is offered into the sacred fire to seek God's blessings for the couple.

Mangal Phera (The Circumambulation of the Sacred Fire) The groom holds the bride by the hand and both walk three times around the sacred fire. Both offer oblations and recite appropriate Vedic hymns to Gods for prosperity, good fortune, and conjugal fidelity. They touch each others heart and pray for union of their hearts and minds.

Saptapadi (Seven Sacred Steps - Oaths) This is the most important rite of the entire ceremony. Here the bride and the groom take seven steps together around the sacred fire (Agni) and make the following seven promises to each other: As per the Vedic rituals, the groom sings "With God as our guide, let us take":

1. The first step to nourish each other
2. The second step to grow together in strength
3. The third step to preserve our wealth
4. The fourth step to share our joys and sorrows
5. The fifth step to care for our children
6. The sixth step to be together forever
7. The seventh step to remain lifelong friends
8. The perfect halves to make a perfect whole!

The Satapadi ceremony concludes with a prayer that the union is indissoluble. At the end of this ceremony, the groom and the bride become husband and wife.

Mangal Sutra The Mangal Sutra Dharana is the tying of the thread containing the marks of the Vishnu or Shiva on the neck of the bride by the groom.

Suhaag or Sindhoordana The groom places sindoor (red powder) on the bride's hair symbolizing her as a married woman.

Aashirvaad (Blessing) The groom's parents bless the couple and offer clothes or flower to the bride, symbolizing her joining the groom's family. All those assembled at the ceremony shower flowers on the couple and bless them completing the marriage.

[edit]Gujarati Dances

Navratri Celebration in Gujarat

Dandiya Raas

Dandiya Raas is a very energetic, colorful and playful dance originating in the state of Gujarat. Its roots lay from the days of Lord Krishna who played raas on the shores of Yamuna river on a moonlit night with his beloved Gopis.

Men and women dressed in colorful clothes dance in two concentric circles - one moving clockwise, one moving counter-clockwise. Men and women carry two bamboo sticks called dandiyas in their hands. In addition to footwork, one of the most enjoyable part of this dance is the creative use of dandiyas.

The song sung on the occasion is essentially an amorous one. Raas is a very playful dance providing opportunity for acting and exchanging messages through eye contact. It is no wonder that many romances bloom during Navaratri and hence the popularity of the dance among the younger generation.

Garba

Garba is a very graceful form of dance mainly performed by females in a circular formation, it is in reverences of goddess Ambaji. The basics of the dance are singing and clapping rhythmically while going around the goddess. Today many modifications are prevalent to the basic pattern and even men are free to join in. Women are dressed in exquisitely embroidered, set in mirrors cholis, ghaghras and bandhani dupattas! Extensive jewelry in the form of necklaces, bracelets and anklets are also worn. The typical dress code of men is kehediya, chudidhar and a turban.

Garbi

Originally men use to perform this dance. It was on the way back from a battle that the victorious army would start dancing to couplets and amorous songs sung by the Charanswar, or the narrators who used to go to the front to raise the spirit during the battle by singing songs of valor. The dance was characteristic for its forceful movements which would fascinate viewers. Today, however, even females participate in the dance.

Padhar

It is performed by a rural community living around NalLake. In it, performers simulate the rhythmic movements of roving mariners and the undulating sea waves. The Bhil tribes, who live close to border tracts, and the Adivasis of Dangs district, have particularly lively folk dances.

[edit]Gujarati Cinema

Gujarati cinema completes 75 years in 2007. Gujarati filmdom with its actors, actresses, directors, producers and technicians is preparing to celebrate the year with much fanfare. Although Gujarati cinema has not given to the Indian movie house that honor and joy the Bengali and Malayalam films have provide, but it has its own share of glory.

Gujarati film started its journey in 1922 and during its run since then to this day it has much to state. From mythology to history, soial to political, Gujarati cinema has experimented with such stories and issues all these years.

A special mention should be made on the film Guasundari which was thrice made from 1927 to 1948. The film was such a success in its first appearance in 1927, that director Chandulal Shah remade it in 1934. The film was again remade in 1948 by Ratilal Hemchand Punater. In its last version Hindi films' eternal Mother Nirupa Roy made her debut as its heroine.

Gunasundari is the story of an Indian poor woman who is disliked by her husband for her moral stand. The woman finally lands in the street where she meets with a person who is just like her – a social outcast. The story ends here. The three versions of the film, however, have made some changes here and there to meet the demands of the time.

In a filmdom which was theatrical and melodramatic and often shunned by the audience, Akhand Saubhagyabati, that starred Bollywood queen Asha Parekh, made a success in 1963. Asha also has immense contribution to Gujarati television serial making. Her TV production 'Jyoti' was a household show for a long time. About recent Gujarati films, Suresh M Thakkar's Sajan Haiye Sambhre, Gormano Var Kesariyo and Dikro Kahu Ke are huge hits.

Gujarat has immense contribution to the Bollywood in the form of sending actors and actresses of fame to make the base of Hindi films. Much of Bollywood rest on the performance of these Gujarati film men and women.

The list of such film personalities is scintillating. It includes Parveen Babi, Sanjay Leela Banshali, Manmohan Desai, Ismail Darbar, Sanjay Gadhvi, Kalyanji Anandji, Deepika Chikhalia, Bindu Desai, Dimple Kapadia, Ben Kingsley, Sanjeev Kumar, Ketan Mehta, Tina Munim, Namitha, Neelam, Asha Parekh, Amisha Patel, Upen Patel, Falguni Pathak, Paresh Rawal, Himesh Reshammiya, Nirupa Roy, Mallika Sarabhai, Shruti Seth, Satish Shah, Farooq Shaikh, Shravan, Ayesha Takia, Alka Yagnik, Deven Bhojani, Prachi Desai, Sanjida Shek, Ketaki Dave, jaikishan, Ashrani.

[edit]Languages

Gujarat is inhabited by people belonging to varied castes, religions and communities. Due to this reason, a number of varied languages are spoken in the state. The official language of the state is Gujarati. It is an Indo-Aryan language derived from Sanskrit. Gujarati is the 26th most widely spoken language in the world. In addition to this, it has eleven dialects, spoken in different parts of the state. Gujarat shares its borders with other neighboring states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Therefore, there is a small population which speaks the respective languages of the different states also, namely Marwari, Hindi, and Marathi. Apart from this, Urdu and Sindhi are also spoken in Gujarat. Kachchh is one of the important areas in the state. It has an independent identity and is growing popular amongst tourists. The mother tongue of the people of Kutch is Kachchi. It is

an important language of the region.

[edit]Literature

Gujarati literature's history may be traced to 1000 AD. Since then literature has flourished till date. Well known laureates of Gujarati literature are Hemchandracharya, Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai, Akho, Premanand Bhatt, Shamal Bhatt, Dayaram, Dalpatram, Narmad, Govardhanram Tripathi, Gandhiji, K. M. Munshi, Umashankar Joshi, Suresh Joshi, Pannalal Patel and Rajendra Keshavlal Shah .

Kavi Kant and Kalapi are famous Gujarati poets.

Gujarat Vidhya Sabha, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, and Gujarati Sahitya Parishad are Ahmedabad based literary institutions promoting the spread of Gujarati literature. Saraswatichandra is a landmark novel by Govardhanram Tripathi. Writers like Suresh Dalal, Jyotindra Dave, Tarak Mehta, Harkisan Mehta, Chandrakant Bakshi, Vinod Bhatt, Kanti Bhatt, Makarand Dave, and Varsha Adalja have influenced Gujarati thinkers.

A huge contribution to Gujarati language literature came from the Swaminarayan paramhanso, like Bramhanand, Premanand, with prose like Vachanamrut and poetry in the form of bhajans.

Gujarati theatre owes a lot to bhavai. Bhavai is a musical performance of stage plays. Ketan Mehta and Sanjay Leela Bhansali explored artistic use of bhavai in films such as Bhavni Bhavai, Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India and Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. Dayro (gathering) involves singing and conversation reflecting on human nature.

[edit]Religions

In Gujarat, there have been several great religious figures. Sant Dadu Dayal (1554–1603), a saint-poet and a major Bhakti figure from Ahmedabad treated equally both Rama as names of God and became popular in Northern India. He wrote, "The illusion of Rama hath been dispelled by my mind; since I see Thee in all."^[2]

Gujarat is also the home of Gandhi who preached the unity between all religions and became a worldwide figure for peaceful struggle against tyranny.

[edit]Hinduism

Lord Ram, Laxman, and Sita Devi

Gujarat is a part of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.

Many Hindu religious traditions developed in Gujarat. Gujarat is the birth-place of Lord Shiva's avatar Lakulisa (Staff-God). He established the Pasupata Shaivite tradition (one of the six major schools of Shaivism) in 2 A.D. or 3 A.D. According to some traditions he was born in Kayarohana or Kayavatara in Saurashtra while other traditions hold that it was Karavana, in the modern-day town of Dabhoi Taluka near Baroda,^[3] another that it was Ulkapuri (modern Avakhal)^[4] and another that it was in Braoch or Bharuch.^[5] From Gujarat it spread north to Kashmir,^[6] South to Tamil Nadu,^[7] East to Nepal^[8] (where the Pashupatinath Temple stills exists popularly.)

[edit]Bhakti movement

The Bhakti movement was very popular in Gujarat where devotees of both Islam and Hinduism focused worship of God, trying to rid any separations based on faith in God.

Swami Chakradhara was another major figure of the Bhakti movement, born in Gujarat in 1194 A.D.^[9] and he is believed to be the avatar of Vishnu. Chakradhara Maharaja established the Manhubhava Vaishnavite sect which spread to Maharashtra as well. The sect still exists today in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Sant Kilha was another Vaishnavite saint of Gujarat born to a Subedar (army man) father.^[10] He was the disciple of Krishnasdas (of Jaipur) and became his successor at the seat of Galta - Kilha's branch became known as the "Tapasa branch."^[11] Besides Ram Bhakti (devotion to Lord Rama), he was also inclined towards yog-saghana and this is why he was made acharya of the Galta Gaddi.^[12] He is said to be the founder of the Khati sect.^[13] Jalarama, a devotee of Lord Rama is another popular figure. Jalarama's birthday is still celebrated by Gujarati (in Gujarat and abroad) as Jalaram Jayanti. Swami Sahajanand, better known as Swaminarayan settled in Gujarat from Uttar Pradesh. Today the Swaminarayan movement is very large in Gujarat.

[edit]Zoroastrianism

This religion founded by Zarathustra Spitma (better known as "Zoroaster") resembles Hinduism in many ways (although differing as a strict monotheism too.)

For example, in this religion, the cow is very sacred. In the 9th chapter of the Vendidad of the Avesta,

the purificatory power of cow urine is dilated upon.[14] It is declared to be a panacea for all bodily and moral evils. It is drunk as well as applied externally as is done by Hindus also.[14] Urine of the bull, called "nirang" is brought to the house of an orthodox Parsi every morning and is (like cow milk) applied to the face, hands and feet.[14]

They Zoroastrians—a.k.a. Parsi and Irani, due to their ancient heritage—entered Gujarat from the Persian Empire.

They have many businesses in India and are economically very powerful.

[edit]Gujarati Muslims

Main article: Gujarati Muslims

The term "Gujarati Muslim" is usually used to signify an Indian Muslim from the State of Gujarat who speaks the Gujarati language as a mother-tongue (first language) and follows certain customs different from the rest of Indian Muslims.

Gujarat was one of the first places the Muslims came to India. King Arjun of Gujarat permitted a Muslim trader from Ormuz to build a mosque in Gujarat and even paid for the expenses of a certain Shiite festival. (P. 185 An Advanced History of India By Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Kalikinkar Datta, Hemchandra Raychaudhuri)

The Sufi saints are very popular in Gujarat. Shaykh Makhu was a Sufi saint of the Shattari lineage (P. 185 An Advanced History of India By Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Kalikinkar Datta, Hemchandra Raychaudhuri). Since Gujarat is situated on the western border of India, there was a direct interaction with people of Arabia and Persia. Many Gujarati Saints and Sufis became famous. Among them names of Sheikh Ganjul lim (1381), Syed Burhanuddin (1411) and Sheikh Wajihuddin Gujarati are well known (P. 169 Islam and Indian Culture By Mohammad Shujaat, Shujaat Muhammad).

Gujarati Muslims are very prominent in Industry and Sports, and there is a very large Gujarati Muslim community in Mumbai. Several Gujarati Muslim communities are:

Memon

Dawoodi Bohra

Khoja

Sunni Vora (aka "Vora Patel")

Surti Muslims

Pathan

There are many famous Gujarati Muslims:

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Azim Premji (son of founder of multinational Wipro and current chairman)

Badruddin Tyabji

Ismail Merchant

Tiger Memon (infamous)

Irfan Pathan

Yusuf Pathan

Zaheer Khan

Munaf Patel

Sajid Nadiadwala

Farooq Shaikh

Parveen Babi

Ismail Darbar

[edit]Fairs and festivals

[edit]Fairs

Around more than 1000 festivals are celebrated in Gujarat—the state is known as the land of fairs and festivals. Some of these fairs and festivals are as follows:

Bhavnath Mahadev Mela (February)

The Bhavnath Mahadev Temple, situated at the foot of Mount Girnar in the city of Junagadh, is the site of the Bhavnath Mahadev fair held for five days in February, during the festival of Mahashivratri. The Mahapuja of Lord Shiva takes place at midnight in this temple on the 14th day of the dark half of the month of Magh. When the puja (prayer ceremony) starts, Naga Bavas (naked sages) living nearby move towards the fair seated on elephants, holding flags and blowing conch shells. It is firmly believed that Lord Shiva himself visits the shrine on this occasion. Visitors are served free meals by the organizers. Special stalls sell idols, rosaries, or holy beads (brought by vendors from Ayodhya and Mathura), utensils of brass and copper, sweets and fruits. The Bhavnath Mahadev Temple is

surrounded by many equally ancient and holy places.

Dangs Darbar (March)

Dangs Darbar is the name of the annual fair held every year in Ahwa, the most important town in the Dangs a few days before Holi. The Dangs is one of the most delightful districts of Gujarat and is located high in the Saputara hills, the original home of the adivasis, the tribal population of Gujarat. The name "Darbar" dates back to the time of the British, when a darbar of Rajas and Naiks of neighbouring area used to assemble there. Today it is called Jamabandi Darbar, and the District Collector officiates at it. Thousands of tribal people flock to Ahwa from all over the district, dressed in bright colours, sounding the Shehnai, and beating their drums. Folk dances, dramas, and songs enliven the air during the festival.

Chitra — Vichitra Mela (March)

This fair, one of the largest purely Adivasi (tribal) fairs, is attended by around 60,000 to 70,000 tribal people. It takes place every year in the village of Gunbhakhari in Sabarkantha district, very near the borders of Rajasthan. It is held a fortnight after Holi, the festival of colours. The site of the fair is attractive as the temple overlooks the rivers Sabarmati, Akul, and Vyakul. The name of the fair is derived from Chitravirya and Vichitraviraya, the sons of King Shantanu, who are believed to have lived there and been cured of diseases which afflicted them. The fair attracts large numbers of Bhils (tribals) who come from all the surrounding districts using every imaginable form of transport. The Garasis and Bhil tribals dress in their customary colourful costumes. The costume of the men generally consists of a blue shirt, dhoti, and a red or saffron turban. Women don ghaghras (embroidered skirts), which have a circumference of as much as 20 yards (18 m), and are covered from head to foot with ornate and heavy silver jewellery. They use liquid kumkum (vermilion) to colour their cheeks and lips a brilliant red, while their eyes are outlined with kajal (kohl). Every group that comes to the fair carries its own drum making the atmosphere come alive with the incessant beat of numerous drums. The women sing folk songs, and everyone dances. The dancing and drumming continue for hours until everyone is exhausted. Over a hundred stalls hold food and drink and sweets of various kinds. Silver ornaments can be bought, and household articles, as well. Here, as in other fairs, there is a giant wheel and a merry-go-round which never ceases to spin.

Dhrang Fair (April)

Around 40 km from Bhuj, it is known for the samadhi of the famous saint Menkan Dada who served the community with great love and dedication and won their devotion. He was supposed to be the incarnation of Lakshmanji. A large fair is held on Magh Vad when a large number of Dada's followers from different parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan come to the Samadhi and participate in religious rituals.

Trinetreshwar Mahadev Fair (September–October)

The small hamlet of Tarnetar, about 75 kilometers from Rajkot, is the site for one of Gujarat's most well-known annual fairs, held here during the first week of Bhadrapad (September–October). This fair is primarily a "marriage mart" or "Swayamvar" for the tribal youth of today who still visit Tarnetar, to find them a suitable bride. The tribal youth elegantly dressed in colourful dhotis, waistcoats and eye-catching turbans come to be chosen by village belles dressed in colourful finery. Like all important tribal fairs, it is attended by tribes from the adjoining areas who indulge in dancing, competitive sports and other such forms of entertainment. There are over 300 stalls selling food, refreshments, exhibiting embroidery and cattle shows. The bachelors are usually identified by their large, colourful embroidered umbrellas and their distinctive hairstyles. These umbrellas, which have become emblems of the fair, are embroidered by the tribal youth for over a year. The fair is held around the Trinetreshwar Temple, which was dedicated to the three-eyed Lord Shiva and built at the beginning of the century. There is a kund (reservoir) here, and it is popularly believed that a dip in its waters is as holy as a dip in the sacred River Ganges. The reservoir is also known as papanshu (the destroyer of sins).

Vautha Mela (November)

This fair is held every year at Vautha where two rivers, the Sabarmati and the Vatrak, meet. Like most fair sites in India, this also has both mythological and current religious associations. The Vautha Mela site is 3 square miles (7.8 km²) in area. Legends hold that Kartik Swami or Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva, visited the site. This is why the fair is held during Kartika Purnima, the full moon night of the month of Kartik, corresponding to November. The site, also known as Saptasangam, is at the confluence of seven rivers. The most important Shiva temple here is the temple of Siddhanath. What is most significant about this fair is that it is the only major animal trading fair in Gujarat and is on par with the famous camel fair at Pushkar, Rajasthan. However, the only animals traded here are donkeys. About 4,000 donkeys are brought every year for sale, usually by Vanjara (gypsy) traders.

The pilgrims who visit Vautha during the fair are from several communities and include farmers, labourers, and people belonging to several castes.

Shamlaji Melo (November)

The Shamlaji Melo, also called the Kartik Purnima fair is held in the month of November every year and lasts for about two weeks. It is attended by almost two hundred thousand people from adjoining districts and even from Rajasthan. Devotees belonging to various castes and communities including the Garasias and Bhils throng to this festival. These pilgrims come in groups, singing devotional songs and carrying religious banners to have a darshan (worship) of the deity at the Shamlaji Temple. The Shamlaji Temple is a renowned Vaishnav Shrine and the deity housed here is known by various names included Gadadhar (bearer of the mace) and Shaksi Gopal. The fair is also popular with the tribal people of the area, particularly the Bhils, who revere Shamlaji, the deity they refer to as "Kali Bavji", the dark divinity. The temple is of great archaeological significance as it was built in the 11th century. Apart from a darshan of the deity in the temple, the pilgrims consider a bath in the river Meshwo essential.

Tarnetar Fair

The Venkatarreddy Tarnetar Fair is one of the most happening events in Gujarat and is held at the Temple of Shiva or Trinetrishwar (three-eyed god), popularly known as Tarnetar. Popular belief associates the village with the Swayamwar (marriage) of Draupadi after Arjun performed the Masyavedh, an unparalleled feat of archery. Villagers from all over the state, dressed in their brilliant traditional costumes and exquisite jewellery, flock to Tarnetar. A veritable feast for the eyes is the Rasada, a captivating folk dance performed by hundreds of women moving gracefully in a single circle, dancing gaily to the accompaniment of four drums and jodja pava (double flutes). It is in district Surendranagar.

Kutch Utsav

The Kutch Mahotsava, is usually organised during the end of February and the beginning of March. The Kutch region in Gujarat abounds with splendid beaches, fascinating wildlife, and beautiful palaces and monuments.

Sanskriti Kutch Fair

The Sanskriti Kutch Festival shows the different cultures of the states of India. It is organised in the winter session in the capital city, Gandhinagar. All the competitors of India come during this fair and show their state's culture & dance.

Shamlaji Fair

The Shamlaji shrine and the site boast of an ancient and glorious heritage. Thousands of tribal people flock to the Shamlaji fair.

Chitra Vichitra Fair

Chitra- Vichitra means "Different," and this fair is held near the Border of Rajasthan, in Sabarkantha District, in the village named as Gunbhakhari. There is an interesting story behind the name of this fair. Folklore says that the two sons of Shantanu, Chitraveer and Vichitraveer, wished to repent for the sins they had committed. They were advised by a meditating saint to locate the confluence of three rivers where a Shiva shrine was located. During their quest, the two came to this ancient spot, which is now known as Chitra Vichitra, and immolated themselves. Since then the tribal folk celebrate the fair every year at the place where the Aakar, Vakar, and Sabarmati rivers meet.

Vautha No Melo

Situated at the confluence of two rivers near Ahmedabad, the site attracts people of all communities. Animals, particularly donkeys and camels, are sold in large numbers during this fair. Parab Vavdi Fair (July) Ashdhi 2

[edit]Festivals

Other than those festivals observed throughout India, there are festivities specific to Gujarat.

Makar Sankranti and Kite Flying Festival (14 January)

The Kite Flying Festival takes place in mid January and marks the time when the Sun's direct rays reach the Tropic of Capricorn after the winter solstice. It is celebrated with lots of folk music and dance as well as kite flying. People of Gujarat gather on terraces to fly kites of various colours to celebrate Makar Sankranti or Uttarayana, the welcome to the sun after the cold winter months. Glass strengthened threads of the Indian fighter kites are matched against each other in the air — the kite fighter who cuts the other thread is the victor. At night, kites with Chinese lanterns are flown and held aloft. Food such as Undhiya, sugar cane juice and local sweets is typically served to celebrate the day.

Dance Festival — Modhera (January)

Resting on a knoll in the village of Modhera are the ruins of the 11th century Sun Temple. The outer walls of the temple are covered with sculptures in which the figures of Surya, the sun god, are prominent. The Sun Temple is the site of an annual festival of Indian classical dances organized by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat. The idea is to present classical dance forms in an atmosphere they were originally presented in.

The Kutch Mahotsav (February–March)

The 'Kutch Festival' or the 'Rann festival' is celebrated at the time of the Shiv Ratri in February/ March. The centre of the festival is Bhuj in Kutch. It has crafts, fairs and folk dances and music and cultural shows, all organized by the Gujarat Tourism. Tours are also conducted out to the ruins of Dhola Vera, a city that was once a part of the Indus Valley civilization.

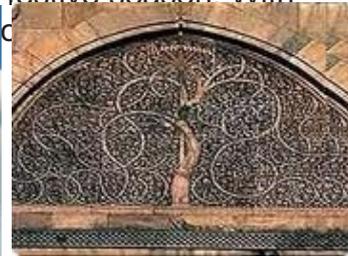
Bhadra Purnima (September)

The full moon of Bhadrapad is one of the four most important festival days of the year when farmers and agriculturists come to Ambaji, a place that derives its name from Goddess Ambaji, whose shrine is located there. On this occasion, a large fair is organized on full moon days. In the evening, performances of Bhavai, the folk drama of the state, is held and Garba programmes are organized. The devout attend readings of the Saptashati, the seven hundred verses in praise of the goddess, and visit the temple for a darshan (worship) of her. The Ambaji shrine is the principal shrine of the goddess in Gujarat, and its origins are still unknown. The Temple of Ambaji is recognized as one of the original Shakti Pithas (religious texts) where, according to the ancient Scriptures, the heart of the goddess Ambaji fell to earth when her body was dismembered. A triangular Vishwa Yantra, inscribed with figures and the syllable 'Shree' in the centre, represents the deity. There is no idol, which testifies the temple's antiquity. Idol worship became popular much later.

[edit]Gujarat Cuisine

The food served in the South of Gujarat is influenced by the cuisine of Maharashtra. In South Gujarat, people usually consume Jowar, whereas in Saurashtra and North Gujarat, the diet consists mainly of Bajra and Maize. In Baroda, you will find a blend of all tastes due to its location. In earlier times, wheat was consumed only by the elite and by the middle class during the festive season. With changing time, things used in a number of

Gulab Jamun



Jalebi



Kachori



Pav Bhaji

Bhajias (Pakoras)



Sweets

Basundi

Doodh Pak

Gajar Halwa

Gulab Jambu

Jalebi

Ladoo

Puran Puri

Shrikhand

Mohan Thal

Magas

Barfi

Gari

Sutarfeni

Kaju Katri

Snacks

Bhajias/Pakorras

Pav Bhaji Recipe here: <http://mitholimdo.wordpress.com/category/recipe-by-name/pav-bhaji/>

Chana Dal Wada

Kutchi Dabeli

Dal Wada

Dhokla

Farsi Puri

Ganthias

Handvo Recipe here: [http://mitholimdo.wordpress.com/category/recipe-by-name/handvo-recipe-here/](#)

Kachori

Khandvi Recipe here: [http://mitholimdo.wordpress.com/category/recipe-by-name/khandvi-recipe-here/](#)

Muthias

Sev-Usual

Bhel

Pani Puri

Fafda

Chevdo

Bhakarvadi

Chavanu

Jain Chevdo

Patra

Gatha

Pulses (Dals)Kadhi

Mixed Dal

Moong Dal

Plain Dal

Tuver Dal

Udad Dal

Kadhi

Dhal Dhokli

Vegetables

Batata Suki Bhaji

Cabbage Peas

Cauliflower-Green Peas

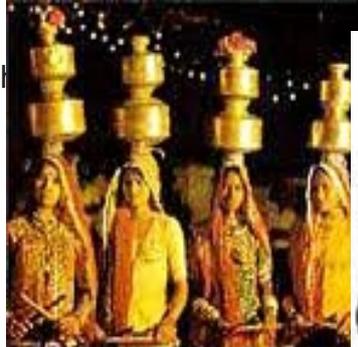
Methi Mutter

Okra

Sev-Tomatoes

Undhiyu

[edit]Paan Chewing in Gujarat



Betel chewing is a part of many Asian cultures, and preparation techniques vary from region to region. The nut is either slivered or grated, often flavored with spices according to local tradition and usually wrapped in a betel leaf (betel leaf comes from the betel pepper plant, Piper betle, which is not botanically related to the betel palm, Areca catechu), along with some lime (calcium oxide or calcium hydroxide) to better extract the alkaloids. Some people also chew tobacco with betel nut. After about 20 minutes of chewing, the fibrous residue which remains of the nut is spat on the street, where it remains visible due to its characteristic bright red color. Trails of bright red sputum lining the sidewalks are a sure indication of the popularity of betel chewing in an area.

In Gujarat, betel (called paan) chewing is as popular as tobacco smoking in the whole world. Paan is often served wrapped in a betel leaf,

In Gujarat, in fact in the whole of India, paan has been playing an important part in social life and customs for hundreds of years. In the courts of Medieval Rulers, the betel leaf or paan was offered as part of hospitality, friendship and love.

The Different types of paans are:

Saada paan: Just a filling of cardamom, betel nut and cloves.

Culture & Lifestyle

Gujarat is a flourishing state with cultural diversity. It is vibrant with its true colors of rich heritage and cultural traditions. Dating back to history with the Harappan civilization, the state becomes a confluence of many religions – Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Buddhism. The Gujarati culture blends in arts, beliefs, customs, traditions, institutions, inventions, language, technology and values.

What language do the people speak?
What do the people of the society wear?
How do they prepare their food?
What kind of Dwellings do they live in?
What kind of work they do?
Faith and beliefs

Gujarat is influenced with enculturation; a culture shared with members of the society and passed on from one generation to the next. Enculturation has unified people with common sense experience and influence that lead to knowledge and appreciation of cultural traditions and lifestyles. The aspect of joining hands to greet or bow down comes through age influences as offering reverence.

Social systems of learning, religious practices and forms of artistic expressions have led way to more balanced lifestyles in Gujarat. People of Gujarat are found to be sharing cultural traits and patterns with other regions and also extend beyond national boundaries towards International culture.

As Gujarat stands as 'Heart of India', Multiculturalism is traced in Gujarat. Shared cultural background making people feel to home ground and more comfortable with other people from their own culture. Culture shock unlike other countries is therefore, a missing point which makes people more confident and energetic as they stand for a challenge in global scenario.

Originally known as Gurjars, Gujaratis are influenced by the waves from the past that inherit values of arts, culture and traditions. Gujarat has a strong cultural influence of socio-economic-political history. It has a special significance in Indian Political History as it is a birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi and the main influence to the people of Gujarat with his system of non violence movement.

Festivals and fairs, arts and crafts, folk dances, music, cuisine and lifestyles form a major cultural background of the people who belong to Gujarat. The customs and beliefs make the culture more homely and truly blended with values and moral characteristics.

Language

Though the local language spoken is 'Gujarati' – it remains a mother tongue for people of Gujarat and is widely spoken all over the world wherever a Gujarati exist. Surti, charotari, kathiawai and kutchi languages are among the many others languages like Marathi, Sindhi, Punjabi etc. are spoken in Gujarat regions.

Costumes

For costumes, several outfits are worn by the people of Gujarat as per the living in rural or urban areas. Generally, men wear trousers and shirts or t-shirts and younger women wear normal western outfits like skirts, dresses, jeans, etc. Older women usually wear saris or salwar kamiz. In rural parts, people are found to wear dhotis and kurtas or bandhis. Even traditional outfits like chania choli by women and kedia dress is worn by men in rural areas or during cultural festivals.

Food

Majority of the Gujaratis are Vegetarian. A traditional 'Gujarati Thali' consisting of dal (lentils), roti, rice and vegetables apart from salads, farsan and sweet dish followed by chaas, forms the morning meal.

Evening food consist of 'bhakri-shak' or khichdi kadhi. Mainly, the diet of the people of Gujarat consists of cereals, pulses, green vegetables, fruits, milk, ghee, butter-milk, etc. A variety of Cuisine sub-ordinates like pickles, chutney, papad, yoghurt, etc serve as fillings on main menu. A variety of dishes are prepared by Gujarati women who also add spice to kitchen with eateries from other regions like the South Indian food, Continental, Chinese cuisines, etc.

Homes

Gujarati urban living offer sophisticated living lifestyles. Well ventilated, furnished, glazed tiled or marbled homes and flats are found in Gujarat. Modern living with landscape gardening and fountains is the new flavor home stay in big cities of the state. Rural living is flourishing with development. However, the traditional hut dwellings and wooden houses still exist with a rich heritage feel and ethnic living. Wood carved houses with the 'Chabutras' for bird feeding are the beauty of many traditional homes in Gujarat.

Work Culture

Majority of the Gujarati thrive as Business persons. However, Gujarat is a leading Industrial State that ranks its commercial capital and textile city Ahmedabad as 7th in India. It possesses highest number of operating airports, the Gujarat cities are connected worldwide. Many business opportunities see way to development with the Vibrant Gujarat in various sectors as:

Faith and Beliefs

Gujarat has major multicultural religious faith system with the inception of all-embracing religious faith ranging from caste to caste. The major religions followed are Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Groups like Bohras and Moresalaam garasias, Kutchis who had been converted to Islam still have eqaunimous way of life of a typical Gujarati. Sunni Muslims are second largest group ,followed By Jains,Parsis of Iranian descent of south Gujarat and Christians. People of Gujarat are god fearing, friendly and good natured. They live in harmony and respect each other's faith and beliefs. Gujaratis are often found to mingle and enjoy all religious festivals with no caste or creed differences.

Jya jya vase gujarati, tya tya vase Gujarat
(Meaning: Wherever in the world Gujaratis live, there exists a Gujarat)



ALL ABOUT GUJARAT

All About Gujarat Art Culture & Lifestyle

Art Culture & Lifestyle

Experience the aesthetic appeal with the Arts, Culture and Lifestyles in Gujarat. It earns the reputation of finer things in life as Arts reflects medium of expression and communication, culture reflects the finer details of moral and traditional values and Lifestyles is the very existence of Gujaratis, unmatched 'lifestyle living' in the country.

In Gujarat, Arts is an expression. The brilliant blend of Arts, culture and Lifestyle make spaces for peace and soulful well being. In Gujarat, there is freedom for Artists as they create an image on a canvass or click a photograph that appeals to the eye. With ample mediums to work on innovative, witty and submissive forms, Arts present something to our sense – perceptions as they make way to articulate lifestyles. Gujarat stand unique with Arts as a form of expression as it is a home to many world renowned Artists and flourishing talents shaping up the Art World. The State also has a fantastic pool of artists and a new breed of collectors and investors in the Art Talents.

In Gujarat, Music is speech of angels. The music and dance blend the rich traditions with its folk music and dance. The Garba dance is the spiritual expression of Gujarat and the spirit of festivity of the traditional festival reaches worldwide. Music and folk dances have evolved since ancient times and continues to lure people to its rich tradition even today as it retain its original form or even blend to modern forms. Folk songs, classical music and array of distinctive classical ragas have exemplary features with distinctive music variations. Gujarat is known to have produced its own folk instruments besides the vast contributions to classical and folk music. Also modern culture of pop thrive its existence with the youth catching faster on western and other music forms pertaining to other countries.

In Gujarat Crafts is an exclusive talent. Handicrafts of Gujarat, differs in its proportions of its patterns to the element of wonderful exquisite artifacts in various forms. Ancient crafts exist in Gujarat blend with unique traditional intricate work and finer details with artistic and aesthetic appeal. The handicrafts products of skilled craftsmanship are popular all over the world. It mirrors vibrant culture of the State.

In Gujarat, Traditions speak. Gujarat is a land of traditions. Festivity spirit continues all round the year as spirituality is in every breath of the Gujarati soul. Gujarat has fairs and festivals apart from many other rituals and traditions. Gujarat is also popular for the lifestyle and cuisines that go with the celebrations. Traditions almost remain unchanged and you get acquainted with the modern living as Gujarat develops on a faster growth to modernity, influenced by outside culture. Unmatched traditions in the world, it speaks of 'Home is where the heart is.'

In Gujarat, Life matters, Living Justifies :

Arts

Culture & LifeStyle

Music & Dance

Handicrafts

Literature

Festivals

Fairs

In Gujarat, Knowledge is Power. Literature is traced back to the bygone Sultanate era. Gujarati Literature stand as a mix of classics and contemporary Literature with its Prose, Poetry, Plays, Biography-Autobiographies, Fiction and non fiction. More, the State is sound with many Literature writers and poets with contributions of multi language Literature like English, Hindi and esp. Sanskrit Literature.

Enculturation and Culture: Gujarat is influenced with enculturation; a culture shared with members of the society and passed on from one generation to the next. Enculturation has unified people with common sense experience and influence that lead to knowledge and appreciation of cultural traditions and lifestyles. The aspect of joining hands to greet or bow down comes through age influences as offering reverence. Social systems of learning, religious practices and forms of artistic expressions have led way to more balanced lifestyles in Gujarat. People of Gujarat are found to be sharing cultural traits and patterns with other regions and also extend beyond national boundaries towards International culture.

In Gujarat, Lifestyles sustain. Gujarat is 'heaven on earth'. Ask anyone in the world and Gujarat is the most cherished place to visit in India. Gujarat is the Land of the Legends – where individuals have peace of mind, are spiritual and live in harmony. The people are enterprising oriented, cooperative, and supportive. They possess warm and friendly nature with qualities of humanity, Gujaratis are found to be most generous and loyal. It is said, Attitude and all is that 'Makes a Big Difference'

ref : for students of ptc in gujarat.

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Music & Dance

In Gujarat - Music is the Speech of the Angels

Gujarat is quite famous and well known for its dynamic traditions of classical and folk music. They are the heart and soul of Gujarat. The traditional culture of Gujaratis with their traditional music and dance form of Garba, Garbi, Raas and other are well known and finds attraction to tourists. Raas and Garba dance forms are said to have been passed on by Lord Krishna, who spent his childhood at Gokul while he played the flute.

Folk songs, classical music and an array of distinctive classical ragas have exemplary features with distinctive music variations.

A special variety of music which can be classified as temple-music was indeed produced by the Vaishnava cult in Gujarat. Communities like Charans and Gadhavis are some communities whose hereditary profession is folk music and arts have indeed done a great deal to preserve the tradition of the folk music of Gujarat in its pure form itself.

The different types of folk songs in Gujarat include lullabies, nuptial songs, festive songs and Rannade songs.

Gujarat is also known for having produced its own folk instruments besides the vast contributions to classical and folk music. It is indeed worth mentioning that wind instruments like Turi, Bungal, Pava and string instruments like Ravan Hattho, Ektaro, and Jantar, and percussion instruments like Manjira and Zanz pot drum are omnipresent in the folk sounds of Gujarat. Territorial names of Gujarat such as Gujaqri Todi, Bilaval (from Veraval), Sorathi, (from Sorath), Khambavati (from Khambhat, Cambay), Ahiri and Lati are the names borne by a number of ragas in the field of classical music. Thereby they are indeed quite noteworthy as they are very valuable gifts of Gujarat contributed to the classical music tradition of India.

Bhavai-Folk Drama
Dance
Garba and Raas
Hallisaka

Among the folk Music, Duha, Sorathaa, Chaand, Belaads, etc are traditionally performed especially in Saurashtra, Gujarat.

Bhajans and Haveli Sangeet are the religious music performed in Gujarat.

Factopedia

Maharaja Sayajirao Rao Gaekwad who ruled Vadodara till 1947, was a patron of Indian Classical Music. He was pioneer for technical arts and music education in Central Gujarat since 1879. AD Ustad Moula Bux, founded the Academy of Indian Music under the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad. This Academy later became the Music College and is now the Faculty of Performing Arts of the Maharaja Sayajirao University (M S U) of Vadodara. The Department of Indian Classical Music (Vocal – Tabla) is the biggest department of the Faculty previously known as Gayan Shala established in 1886 by The Maharaja of Baroda later Converted into The Department of Indian Classical Music (Vocal – Tabla) as part of Faculty of Performing Arts.

Great masters of vocal and instrumental music, such as Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, Ustad Hazrat Inayat Khan, Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur and many others, adorned the court of the Gaekwads in Baroda. It was during the reign of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad that the first all India Music Conference was held in 1914 in Baroda.

In Gujarat, Navratri Festival is celebrated with great religious fervor and appreciated all over the World. The tradition of 'Nine days of Singing and Dancing' is a festival enjoyed by all communities, all age groups and at all Gujarat cities and towns. Gujaratis and other communities residing out of Gujarat, also celebrate this Festival. A blend of music and dance with rich traditional wear, fasting for nine days and dancing in various forms is the highlight of the festival. Music is from traditional singing to instrumental beats or fusion. The singing cater to prayer offerings to Maa Durga and related to Lord Krishna.

The modern stage and pop culture is the in-thing among the younger generation in Gujarat. Christmas and New Year celebrations are equally gaining popularity in Gujarat. Western music, Pop, Hip Hop and Jazz music apart from many other Indi Pop and Hip hop, Punjabi Bhangda and other music and dance is in thing among the Youth. As such, Gujarat cities, especially Ahmedabad is flooded with artists, who throng for the Music Live shows.

The culture and the traditions are both alive and being forever experimented in the State.

Festivals

Fantastic Festivals put Gujarat into a World Stage

Festivals in Gujarat have popular celebrations and observations that include major religious, business and entertaining festivals apart from fairs and heritage tours.

Festivals in Gujarat signify socio-cultural-religious and even economic aspirations of the people of Gujarat. Vibrant Gujarat Kite Festival marks a new record of religious tradition blend with economic development. The Festival and fairs of Gujarat promote unity, spiritual well being, self discipline and austerity. They act as refreshers to monotonous routines and are form of recreations.

Among the most popular festivals celebrated in Gujarat are:

Navratri

Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram - Ramzan

Gujarat celebrates more than 3500 fairs and festivals round the year. They highlight religion, culture and traditions with its rich cultural and traditional history of the yester years.

Gujarat is known as the 'Land of the Festivals' which keeps its traditions alive as they revolve around an occasion such as the turn of a season, the time for harvesting a golden field, or a religious event from India's extensive and rich mythological traditions.

Navratri

Gujarat's Navratri Festival, is "a circle of ecstasy" that throbs non-stop for nine nights with millions of fantastically costumed devotees swaying in a fusion of dance and devotion. Although this festival is celebrated throughout India, nowhere is it performed with more panache and fervor than in Gujarat. The significance of Navratri is offering devotion to Goddess Amba (Durga), who is believed to exist in many forms. These Goddesses are believed to be known as "Shakti" as the tales narrate their power over killing of demons. Parvati, the wife of Shiva is said to have taken different forms of goddesses. Devotees perform the 'devi-sthaapna' in their homes wherein they invite the Goddess and perform 'pooja-path' for nine days with fasting.

The nine days of Navratri are also an opportunity to rejoice in the three primeval qualities that make up the universe. Human life is governed by the three gunas and Navratri festival gives an opportunity to recognize and reflect values over it. The first three days of Navaratri are attributed to tamo guna (it leads to depression, fear and emotional instability) the second three to rajo guna (this leads to anxiety and feverishness) and the last three days to sattva guna (when Sattva dominates then we are clear, focused, peaceful and dynamic). Human consciousness sails through the tamo and rajo gunas and blossoms in the sattva guna of the last three days. The three primeval gunas are considered as the feminine force of our magnificent universe. By worshiping the Mother Divine Ambaji Mata (Durga Mata) during Navaratri, we harmonise the three gunas and elevate sattva in the atmosphere. Whenever sattva dominates in life, victory follows. The essence of this knowledge is honoured by celebrating the tenth day as Vijaydashmi.

The festival is enjoyed by all communities, all age groups and in all cities in Gujarat. People all over the world come to Gujarat especially to enjoy this traditional and religious festival.

The word Garbo or Garaba has originated from Sanskrit word "Garbhdeep"- an earthen pot with circular holes is popularly known as Garbo. The earthen pot is symbol of human body and the lighted lamp inside signifies the divine soul.

Religion is a holistic approach. Significance of the deities pointing the need for deriving solutions to problems and as believed, Durga triumphs over evil, Saraswati removes ignorance and Lakshmi brings prosperity.

Dating back to the ancient era of Krishna, singing and dancing with 'Flute' and other Instruments with the dance forms like Garba, Garbi and Raas is the most popular Dance celebrations during Navratri in Gujarat.

- Navratri
- Deepavali
- Kite Festival
- Shivratri
- Holi
- Janmashtmi
- Ganesh Chaturthi
- Mohorram – Ramzan

A legendary unique Folk Dance form also has variations with Dandia or stick Raas. There are different styles of executing dandiya steps like Dodhiyu, simple five, simple seven, popatiyu, Trikoniya (hand movement which forms an imagery triangle), Lehree, three claps, butterfly, hudo, two claps and many more.

Every year, Navratri festival brings in innovations in music, choreography, and costumes and has enthralled audience with its beauty and cultural tradition.

Gujarat celebrates 'Navratri - Where Life is a Celebration' with tourists flowing to Gujarat to enjoy the traditional 9 days of Music and Dance. It reflects spiritual values of Gujarat. Navratri exhibits the rich culture and heritage of the State. Those who visit Navratri festival carry a message of vibrant Gujarat, spiritual Gujarat and holy Gujarat.

About Ambaji Temple

Some Folk Dance forms of Garba :

Deepavali

"Deepavali" is a Sanskrit word - Deepa meaning light and Avali, meaning a row. It means a row of lights and indeed illumination forms its main attraction. It symbolises that age-old culture of India which teaches us to vanquish ignorance that subdues humanity and to drive away darkness that engulfs the light of knowledge. Diwali, the festival of lights even to-day in this modern world, projects the rich and glorious past and teaches us to uphold the true values of life.

In Gujarat, Deepavali is celebrated for five days. Every home - lowly or mightly - the hut of the poor or the mansion of the rich - is a lit with the orange glow of twinkling diyas-small earthen lamps - to welcome Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth and prosperity. Floral decorations, fireworks and rangoli add grandeur to this festival which heralds joy, mirth and happiness in the ensuring year.

There are many versions about the origin of Diwali. According to some, it was on this day that goddess Laxmi was married to god Vishnu. According to popular legend, Lord Rama had returned to Ayodhya on this day after completing fourteen years of exile and after killing Ravana, releasing Sita from his grip. People of Ayodhya welcomed them with rows of lights outside their homes. Another legend says on this day, Lord Krishna is said to have killed the great demon Narakasur and liberated humanity from the cruel clutches.

The five days of Deepavali has its own significance. Dhan Terash, Kali Chaudasa, Diwali, Padva or Varshapratipada (starting of Vikram Samvat, new year) and fifth day is Bhai Bij. Seventh day is the auspicious day for any good things to begin.

Navratri

Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram – Ramzan

In Gujarat, people celebrate the festival by lighting lamps and offering prayers. New year shopping spree, cleaning homes, preparing dishes, wearing new clothes, bursting crackers, meeting people and going places – It's all about socio-religious-recreation.

Deepavali brings in hope, hope brings in faith and when there is faith, there is love in our Hearts –

Kite Festival

Gujarat is vibrant with the Kite Festival (Makar Sankranti) which is celebrated with colors of joy, colors of life. The Kite Festival signify Gujarat's 'Cultural Strength' and like the kites, Gujarat soars high to touch the skies to be the 'best in the world.'

All over the State, in the Month of January, the serene blue sky with colorful kites look splendid and since morning to evening remains dotted with vivid splashes of color with kites in a variety of hues, shapes and sizes. The excitement continues with the onset of night. As the sun sets and darkness hovers over, youngsters continue competing each other in supremacy in the sky, now with the paper lanterns tied to their kite-strings. These lanterns known as tukkal swaying at the mild stroke of wind presents a lovely image while some try to cut off these tukkals and enjoy the fun.

Makar Sankranti (Kite Flying Day) marks the end of a long winter with the return of the sun to the Northern Hemisphere. According to the Hindu astronomy the sun enters the zodiac of Makara (Capricorn). Hence, it is called Uttarayan or Makar Sankranti.

The special significance attached to the celebration of Makar sankranti, is Kite Flying. The gods who are believed to have slumbered for six long months are now awake and the portals of heaven are thrown open!

Uttarayan is celebrated all over Gujarat but the excitement is high at Ahmedabad, Surat, Nadiad and Vadodara. Surat, especially is known particularly for the strong string which is made by applying glass powder on the row thread to provide it a cutting edge.

Navratri
Deepavali
Kite Festival
Shivratri
Holi
Janmashtmi
Ganesh Chaturthi
Mohorram – Ramzan

To be in any one of these places during this festival is to feel the heart and pulse of Gujarat and its people. On a night prior to the festival special markets are held and you need a gujju skill for bargaining and clinch a right deal in the crushing crowd of kite enthusiasts.

Gujarat Tourism also hosts the International Kite Festival drawing crowds to witness the show of eminent kitists from many states and countries. This International Kite Festival is held at Ahmedabad , to coincide with the festival of Uttarayan or Makar Sankranti. People from all over the world display their exotic kites of various designs. It is a splendid spectacular show to see the sky with colourful kites, huge size and varied designs and shapes This gives the people of Ahmedabad the change to see the unusual kites brought by the visitors some of which are truly works of art. Cuisine and Crafts display are also enjoyed by the participants and spectators.

The International Kite Festival in Gujarat has become a major tourist attraction. The Kite Festival is also significant for the Vibrant Gujarat – Global Investor's Summit held during this time. Since 2003, the word 'Vibrant' has become associated with Gujarat in yet another manner, enhancing the national and international reputation of the state. In spite of the economic slowdown, the two-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors' Summit 2009, which concluded in Ahmedabad on January 13, attracted promised investments of over Rs. 12 lakh crore. More than 8,500 Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the State government and the intending investors. These have the potential to create

Shivratri

Shivaratri is the birthday of Lord Shiva and celebrated on the 6th night of the dark Phalgun (Feb or March) every year. Mahashivaratri marks the night when Lord Shiva performed the 'Tandava'. It is also believed that on this day Lord Shiva was married to Parvati Ma.

The festival of Shivratri is celebrated throughout the state of Gujarat and is also known by the name of "Mahashivratri" – the celebrations go with divinity, fasting and offering milk and bili leaves to Lord Shiva.

In India, there are about 30 Million Linga in temples. Among the most worshipped Linga is the Ice formed Linga at Amarnath and in Gujarat, at Somnath Temple. It is believed that Shiva sleeps in all the Lingas in Chaturmasya and if one worship during this time, it is very auspicious. Going for Pilgrimage to all 12 Jyotirlinga (golden linga) means one washes away the sins of last seven births and also reciting the mantras purifies the soul and can attain peacefulness.

Somnath Temple Jyotirlinga is situated at Somnath Patan (the south coast of Saurashtra), near Veraval in (Prabhas Kshetra) Kathaiwad district in Gujarat. Somnath is considered to be the first of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Shiva and is a revered pilgrimage center in India. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda. Somnath means "The Protector of Moon God". The Somnath Temple is known as 'the Shrine Eternal', as the temple has been destroyed six times, but was rebuilt on each occasion.

Navratri

Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram – Ramzan

The Somnath temple is a testimony to an amazing mix of art and science and obvious history - Dramatic in build, the splendid architecture, intricate stone carvings and breath-taking sculptures in the Somnath temple, reflect the great artistic skill of the 'Sompuras', Gujarat's master masons.

During Shivratri, Somnath Temple festival is the tourist attraction and a place for pilgrimage as scores of people of all faith visit the temple to worship Lord Shiva. A major festival is held at Somnath during Mahashivratri which coincide with the Kutchh Desert festival held at the same time. Somnath also celebrates a large fair on the day of the full moon of Kartik Purnima in November/December..

Also in Gujarat, Bhavnath Festival is celebrated during Mahashivratri. Situated at the foot of Mount Girnar in Junagadh, the Shiv Temple 'Vastrapata Kshetra' celebrates the vitality of the Shiva cult. A five day festival, on this day prayers are offered to the Lord Shiv, after the devotees take a dip in the holy 'mrig Kunda.' Over thousand of pilgrims come to this holy shrine. Prior to the start of Mahapuja, a huge procession gets started. This procession is headed by the 'Naga Bavas' who ride on elephant back with a flag in their hands followed by cultural programs. Folk songs and folk dance forms a part of the tourist attractions. Bhavai, a typical Gujarati folk dance, folk songs and folk dances attracts a large audience to gather in this place during the Bhavnath Festival of Gujarat.

Holi

Holi : Colors of Love, Colors of Life

Gujarat celebrates Holi with colors of love, colors of life. Festival of colors, Holi is celebrated with great fanfare in the Gujarat state of India. Holi is celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Phalguna. It is a major Hindu festival and marks the agricultural season of the Rabi crop.

There are many stories associated with the origin of Holi. For some Holi marks the day when devotees of lord Vishnu, Bhakt Prahlad who was seated on the lap of demoness Holika was saved from the effect of the fire by God and instead the demoness got burnt. For others the festivals relate to the death of demon Putana at the hands of lord Krishna while some associate the festival with the worship of Karma, God of pleasure and destiny.

Holi is basically a harvest celebration, marking the end of winter and bonfires are lit marking the ending of evil. The two day festival, Holi is a day of fasting and in the evening, offer prayers to the lit bonfire. People offer raw mangoes, coconut, corn, toys made of sugar, khoya to the 'Holika' and apply tilak on each other and hug their dear ones. Virgins from Gujarat create images of their goddess 'Gauri' out of the ashes left by the bonfire of the night before.

Dhuleti, the second day is marked by sprinkling of colored water and applying gulal on each other. Singing, dancing, eating delicacies and mingling with friends and family.

Navratri

Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram – Ramzan

Holi is celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm in Gujarat. The tribal-dominated eastern districts of Panchmahal and Dahod, the Bhil and Bhilala tribals celebrates Holi with special enthusiasm. The vibrant and colourful Bhagoria festival coinciding with Holi attracts tourists in large number to the tribal heartland.

Gujarati Holi is famous for its certain characteristics. In Gujarat, it is customary to break earthen pots filled with buttermilk, which is tied high up on a rope on this day. Hundreds of people join hands to make a human pyramid, so that they can reach the pot. But the crucial factor is that people who

Janmashtmi

Krishna Janmashtami or the birth of Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu on earth, is observed on the eighth day of the dark half (Krishna Paksha) of the month of Bhadrapada according to the Hindu calendar.

Dwarka, the kingdom founded by Lord Krishna is located within the territories of the present day Gujarat and therefore, Krishna Janmashtami in Gujarat India is one of the most popular of the fairs and festivals in Gujarat. Every Vaishnav home with Krishna belief and even people from other faith, follow Janmashtmi.

The festivities begin with fasting on the previous day (Saptami, seventh day) which is followed by a night-long vigil commemorating the birth of Krishna at night, and his immediate removal by his father to a foster-home for safe-keeping at Gokula. At midnight, the idol of the infant Krishna is bathed, placed in a cradle and worshipped.

After ablutions, morning prayers and worship, the devout break their fast with food that has first been offered to Krishna. During the fore-noon hours, the "Dahi-Handi" custom is celebrated. It is customary to break earthen pots filled with buttermilk, which is tied high up on a rope on this day. Hundreds of people join hands to make a human pyramid, so that they can reach the pot. But the crucial factor is that people who surround the pyramid, keep throwing water on the group forming the pyramid.

The breaking of Handis is followed by sumptuous mid-day feasts, where extended families customarily get together. Sweets made of milk and other dairy products, especially butter, are traditionally prepared for this occasion.

Navratri

Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram – Ramzan

Devotional songs and dances mark the celebration. Rasa Lila is performed to recreate incidents from the life of Krishna and commemorate his love for Radha. Homes and temples are filled with Krishna chants of 'Hare Ram, Hare Krishna' and every Gujarati worship Lord Krishna and celebrates his birth with great faith and joy.

Janmashtmi fairs are held at various places in Gujarat. It is believed according to a legend that the Yadavs, the clan Lord Krishna belonged to, left the town of Mathura and settled down in the town of

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Ganesh Chaturthi

Inspirations from Lord Ganeshjee

Lord Ganesh's BIG HEAD inspires us to 'Think Big' & 'Profitably'.

Lord Ganesh's BIG EARS prompt us to listen patiently to new ideas & suggestion.

Lord Ganesh's NARROW EYES point to deep concentration needed to finish tasks in hand well and quickly.

Lord Ganesh's LONG NOSE tells us to poke around inquisitely to learn more.

Lord Ganesh's SMALL MOUTH reminds us to speak less and listen more.

Ganesha, also called Ganapati, is the god of wisdom, prudence, and salvation. Ga means "knowledge", na means "salvation", and isa and pati means "lord". Ganesha is also said to mean 'lord of the ganas', Shiva's multitude of attendants. In south India, Ganesha is worshipped as Pillaiyar. Ganesha is represented as a short, pot-bellied man with an elephant's head with one tusk, four arms, and yellow skin. In mythology, the elephant symbolizes devotion, patience and truth. His corpulent figure conveys prosperity as represented by the laddoos he is always shown with. In his hands, he holds a conch shell, a discus, a club, and a lotus. Ganesha rides on a mouse, signifying the unity of the small with the big. He is also the most widely worshipped deity. All ceremonies, religious or secular, begin with an invocation to Ganesha. His image is printed on cards sent out for any happy occasion. Usually before beginning any religious writing, he is invoked with words 'Aum Shri Ganeshaya Namaha', literally meaning "Ganesha, I pray to you". Most people, from student to shopkeeper, movie producer to nuclear scientist, begin work by invoking Ganesha, however briefly. The Puranas differ considerably in their account of Ganesha's origin.

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Deepavali

Kite Festival

Shivratri

Holi

Janmashtmi

Ganesh Chaturthi

Mohorram – Ramzan

He is not mentioned before 500 AD and was quite insignificant until the mid-15th century. According to the Padma Purana, he is the younger son of Shiva and Parvati. According to the Shiva Purana, Ganesha was born of the scurf from Parvati's body. Once, when Shiva was away, Parvati wanted someone to guard the door while she bathed. Ganesha from the scurf of her body, she moulded a boy and gave him life. She told him to attend the door and not allow anyone to enter. Shiva returned, and when he tried to enter, was stopped by Ganesha. An argument arose, and enraged, Shiva cut off Ganesha's head and entered. When Parvati discovered that Shiva had entered by beheading her son, she was inconsolable. Repentant, Shiva ordered that the head of the first living being that was found should be brought to him. This happened to be the head of an elephant calf. He placed this on Ganesha's body and restored him to life. A legend explains why Ganesha is worshipped before any other deity or prior to any important event. It happened that Shiva asked Kartikeya and Ganesha to circle the world and return. Kartikeya hurried off on his peacock, but Ganesha walked around Shiva and Parvati. He explained that for him, his parents constituted the world. Pleased, Shiva granted him a boon, saying that before undertaking any important task, people would pray to Ganesha. According to the Narasimha Purana, if he is not worshipped at the beginning of a ceremony, he creates obstacles for the performers. Therefore, no matter what the occasion or ceremony be, Ganesha is worshipped before all other deities. For this reason, he is called Vighneshwara, the remover of all obstacles. Ganesha's mouse, by gnawing its way through everything, is said to symbolise the god's ability to destroy all obstacles. Ganesha is believed to have written the Mahabharata to Veda Vyasa's dictation. When the sage asked Ganesha to write down the epic, the learned god agreed on condition that his pen should not stop moving until the story was completed. Vyasa agreed but said that Ganesha should write only if he completely understood what was dictated. So whenever Ganesha stopped to consider Vyasa's complicated compositions, the sage would use the time to compose more verses. Ganesha is also known as Ekdanta, or the one with one tooth, because one of his tusks is broken. The reason for this, according to the Padma Purana, is that one day when Shiva was sleeping, Parashurama came to visit him. However, Ganesha would not allow Parashurama in, for his father's sleep would be disturbed. When Parashurama insisted he be permitted entry, a fight broke out. In the course of their struggle, Parashurama threw his axe at Ganesha. This axe had been given to him by Shiva. Recognising the axe and out of reverence for his father, Ganesha refused to

intercept the weapon. He bowed and took its impact on one of his tusks, which broke. The Puranas say that the fourth day of the month, known as Chaturthi, is specially auspicious for Ganesha worship. It is believed that Ganesha was born on the Chaturthi of bright night of Bhadra (August-september). It is however, considered unlucky to look at moon this night. It is said, once Ganesha was fell off its rat and moon laughed at him. This annoyed Ganesh and he cursed the moon saying that ill luck would befall on anyone who looked at the moon on that night. Lokmanya Tilak revived the observance of Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra where it is worshipped more, for 10 days and on the 10th day procession carrying Ganesh idol accompanied by singing and dancing is immersed in water, this known as Visarjana.

Reincarnated in different yugas in different forms to right wrongs, it is believed that Ganesha will be born again as 'Dhoomaketu' in Kali Yuga, to exterminate the evil and restore peace and harmony.

Ganesha Namah

Ganesha has many names. The main ones are Ganapati, Vigneshwara, and Vinayaka. (Lord of the tribe, Controller of all obstacles and Prominent leader).

Om Vigneshvaraye Namaha

Om Samukhaye Namaha

May all tasks be completed without any unwarranted delays or obstacles
beauty and grace, or visual appeal

May it be full of

Om Ekdantaye Namah

Om Rajanathaye Namah

May the task and its purpose be our priority list till goal is accomplished

May we become

large heartened and attain power to see difference between positive and negative

Om Rajkaranaye Namah

Om Lambodaraye Namah

May we be blessed with the powers of self actualisation

May we be blessed to possess

powers to keep to ourself and keep focused till the task is completed

Om Dhumraketuvaye Namah

Om Bhalchandraye Namah

May we attain fame by possessing clarity of thought

May we possess good thoughts and

ideals, maintain our humility and hold head high with respect

Om Vikataye Namaha

Om Vinakaye Namaha

May we be blessed with energies to overcome negatives and win over enemies

Bless us with

qualities of Leadership

Om Ganakshaye Namaha

May we lead the Leaders

Ganesha is popularly depicted with his right hand in abhaya mudra, conveying his protectiveness towards mankind. In his other hands, he carries an ankush to goad us towards the path of forthrightness, a noose as a constant reminder that material life and earthly bonds are no more constrictions that inhibit piety, and modak to denote the sweetness of inner spirituality. Ganesha reminds us to be 'Disciplined' and exercise to live life as per the Shahstras as good human beings.

Mohorram – Ramzan

Religion is a faith observed by a mass of people in their own special way in Gujarat. Muslim Festival Mohorram is celebrated somewhere in Feb or March. Muslims walk with the faith of Mohammed whatever their division be, the sunni or the shites. The principles of truth lies with charity, generosity, love, unity with the Koran preaching's, the five pillars of Islam :

- Faith in Allah
- Praying, five times a day
- Almsgiving
- Keeping the Fast and
- Pilgrimage to Mecca.

Mohammed once told his followers when they returned from battle that 'You have come back from lesser to greater struggle' On asking to elaborate the statement, he said 'The greater struggle is the struggle within'.

Mohorram marks the beginning of the Muslim Year. It is primarily associated with the period of mourning observed in commemoration of the martyrdom of 'Ali's son and Muhammad's grandson Husain. Ali and his elder son Hasan are also remembered during this period as having suffered and died for the cause of righteousness. On the tenth day of Mohorram Husain was brutally murdered by troops of the Ummayyad Caliph Yazid (d. A.D. 683) after having refused to take the oath to him. He left Medina for Kufa in Iraq with followers of his women and children and close relatives. As Husain and his following approached the plains of Karbala, they were intercepted by Yazid's troops under the command of 'Ubaydullah, the governor of Kufa. On the morning of the fatal day, 10th Mohorram, Husain fought bravely till he was slain, the last on the battlefield. His violent death to this day awakens the sympathy of the faithful who remember his martyrdom with sorrow and indignation.

- Navratri
- Deepavali
- Kite Festival
- Shivratri
- Holi
- Janmashtmi
- Ganesh Chaturthi
- Mohorram – Ramzan

On New moon, people assemble in imam bara (permanent meeting place) and recite fatihah, drinking sherbat or so remembering Husain and inside the decorated imam, the tazias or tabuts are placed, wooden structures with silver paper, colored paper and tinsel fringes. They are made with imagination and artistic sense and are meant to represent Husain's mausoleum. From the seventh to the tenth of Mohorram, processions are held to commemorate the martyrdom of Hasan's son, Qasim, who was slain shortly after his wedding, as well as the martyrdom of Husain. On the twelfth day, people sit up all night reading the Koran followed by act of charity.

The Koran Fatihah ...

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise belongs to God, Lord of all Being

the All-merciful, the All-compassionate

the Master of the Day of Doom

Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor

Guide us in the straight path

the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,

not of those against whom Thou art wrathful

nor of those who are astray.

Islam means 'submission' (to the will of God)

A Muslim is 'one who submits' who is guided in every daily act by the word of God. Koran preaches

man's fate, judgments, rewards, and punishment - Paradise & Hell. Koran says 'Peace is one of the

God's name. Those who seek to please god are assured of the sixteenth surah that they will be

guided by him to the 'paths of peace' and according to Koran, God does not love fasad or violence.

This is action which results in disruption of the social system, causing huge losses in terms of lives and property.

Fast of Ramadan (Ramzan)

The Ninth month of Moslem year is known as Ramadan when Mohammed is supposed to have received his first revelations. In commemoration of this, Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset during

the month leading upto Mohammed's "Night of Power" when according to tradition Gabriel first told him of his mission. It is said that on this "Night of Power" the gates of Paradise are open, the gates of Hell shut and the devils in chains.

Mohammed had known of fasting by ascetic Jews and early Christians. The Ramadan fast lasts entire month, but only during the daylight hours. "Eat and drink until so much of the dawn appears that a white thread may be distinguished from a black. Then keep the fast completely until night" says the Koran. The fast of Ramadan is the most carefully observed of all religious duties by many muslims. Not only must they refrain from food and drink between dawn and dark, but they must not commit any unworthy act. One lie can make a day's fast meaningless. The day is supposed to be spent in prayer and meditation. Once the sunset gun has sounded, the feasting begins. And at the end of Ramadan comes Little Bairam, a festival of good will and gift giving somewhat like Christmas in spirit.

HAJ at the Mount of Mercy 'Mount Arafat' in Saudi Arabia-More than 2 Million Muslims from world gather once a year for holy Pilgrimage on the Arafat. Under scorching heat, endless flow of pilgrims stayed until sundown on the Arafat plain where the prophet Mohammed gave his last sermon 14 centuries ago. The Pilgrims stay on the plain represent man's wait for the Last Judgement. According to Islamic tradition, it is also the place where Adam and Eve 'recognised' each other after being expelled from the Garden of Eden. Pilgrim men wore two seamless pieces of white cloth symbolising 'Equality' while women were entirely covered except for their hands and faces. Muslims scaled the rocky slopes as they listened to sermons and chanted calls to prayer with the chant 'Here I am, Allah, responding to your call, here I am, Allah, there is no other God but you'

Muslims from Gujarat are offered special HAJ pilgrimage tours as many of them visit the holy place every year. The cities of Gujarat celebrate Taja and Id festivals and many Muslim pilgrimage places are visited by muslims all over the world as they are tourist attractions.

Religious Places :

*Gujarat is also famous for many Muslim Pilgrimage places like the Miradatar, which is situated in the Northern part of the Gujarat State at the village Unava in Sidhpur taluka in the district of Mehsana. Thousands of pilgrims of all the religions visit this holy place and none of them returns empty handed as Peer Mira Datar fulfills the desire of each and every pilgrim. The meaning of Mira is the brave person and meaning of Datar is the person giving lots of donations to the poor and needy people.

*A famous Muslim shrine is Sarkhej 'Roja.' The Mogul King Mohammad Begda constructed this roja in the year 1452 in the memory of his guru Saint Sheikh Ahmed who died at the age of 111 years. He made this roja as his own grave during his life time only. He was buried here later in the year 1477 after his death.

* Sidi Syed Mosque in Ahmedabad is built in 1573. The mosque was built by Sidi Saiyyed, who was a slave of Sultan Ahmed Shah. The mosque has ten screen windows (jalis) on the side and rear arches. The rear wall is filled with square stone pierced panels in geometrical designs. The two bays flanking the central aisle have reticulated stone slabs carved in designs of intertwined trees and foliage and a palm motif. This intricately carved stone window is called the Sidi Saiyyed Jali. The mosque was pillage by the British and they extracted the central jali and took it to the London Museum for display.

Literature

Literature gives order to human experience. It explores cultural values. Literature in Gujarat stands for its Literary tradition in the form of folk songs, narratives, theater and aphorisms. Traced back to the Sultanate period, the stories and messages evolved as they passed through generations, leaving behind versions of myth and legends.

The early Literary journey began in Gujarat way back during 11th Century when Trade and commerce influenced Hinduism and Jainism. Before Gujarati emerged in its own linguistic identity, the works were notably in Sanskrit and Prakrit Languages. Literature with Hemachandracharya's Grammar Book, Siddha Hema Shabdanushasan, came into existence during 1088-1072.

History of the Language could be divided into three periods :

10th or 11th Century A.D. to the 14th. This can be called 'Apabrahmsa' or the Old Gujarati period

From 15th to 17th Century A.D. – Medieval Gujarati Period

From 17th Century A.D. – Modern Gujarati Period

Literature tradition in Gujarat is largely linked to the Bhakti Movement and as it swept across most of India during 12th and 17th Century, it began with the Poet Narsinh Mehta (1414-1481) Narsinh Mehta began the rise of Gujarati Literature and is referred as 'Father of Literature.' He spent his life practicing and advocating selfless human compassion while facing immense opposition from his community during 1408-80.

About the 12th Century, even the teachings of Acharyas, Ramanujcharya and Madhavcharya-the great refuters of Shankaracharya's philosophy, penetrated into Gujarat and influenced people. 1342-1800 was the period when many Jain Literaturetes influenced Gujarat with their writings which still remained hidden or possessed by individuals. During this period, Mirabai, the foremost woman poet, dedicated her life to the worship of Krishna and alongwith, a number of other saints-poets who wrote in praise of god, became composers and musicians.

In the period 1298-1420, when the Mohemeddan conquered Cambay, Anhilwad, Somnath, Junagadh, Idar and laid the foundation of Ahmedabad in 1412 A.D, the languages most in use were Sanskrit and Prakrit with Literature as entirely religious.

'Akhyan' – a form of story telling through verse was popularized by Premanand (1636-1734). He also was Mannbhaat, a poet who sang to the accompaniment of music created by Copper pot struck with ringed fingers.

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In 19th Century, it was Narmad, the Poet (1833-86) who pioneered prose and poetry through his work on social revolution. He promoted to adopt single national language and wrote about self government. He opposed religious orthodoxy and was a social fanatic. As a result, he published 'Dandiyo' – a newsletter to increase community awareness against British rule. He conveyed his ideas in new phrase forms while introducing western literary forms too.

The year 1886-1907 saw the Literature of Govardhanram Tripathi who was ignited of the Bhakti flame by Narsinh Mehta and Mirabai. He penned the novel 'Sarasvatichandra' and depicted the complexities of the society and bring about social reforms. This became the most influential Literature piece in Gujarati.

Girdhar wrote the only popular versified 'Ramayana' in 1815 A.D. Tulsivivah, a poem on the marriage of Krishna with Tulsii Plant and many other compositions were written by him. Ranchod Bhakta (1805 A.D), Ranchodji Divan, Hari Bhatt and many others produced Gujarati Literature on Krishna during this period of 1800-1900s.

K M Munshi brought history to life with the Solanki Dynasty from 1887-1971 and Zaverchand Meghani (1897-1947) compiled and published the rich repertoire of oral traditions of Saurashtra. Pannalal Patel wrote of rural Gujarat while Sundaram exploited the plight of the poor. Umashankar Joshi (1911-1988) introduced the free verse form of poetry and made a significant contribution in Gujarati Literature.

Beginning of World War I later marked the beginning of Gandhian era from 1915-45 in Gujarati Literature. It was characterized by humanism, social consciousness and with the perseverance of National spirit.

Gandhian era Literature was filled with Patriotism with critics like K M Munshi, Meghani, Rasiklal Parikh, Kaka Kalekar, Darshak as Nagindas Parekh, Mansukhlal Jhaveri, Anantrai Raval, Snehrashmi, etc. who contributed to Gujarati Literature. Among the short story writers and playwrights, Jayanti Dalal, Chunilal Madia, Gulabdas Brokers and others added to the critics list of new criticism and traditional criticism to post Gandhian period. Post Gandhian era Literature also has traditional critics like Niranjan Bhagat, a well equipped poet critic. Others are Yashwant Shukla, Dhirubhai Thakkar, Ramanlal Joshi, Chandrakanth Sheth, Suresh Dalal, etc. apart from other Philosophical and linguistic Gujarati Literature authors.

Gujarat Vidyapith became the centre of all literary activities where new values emerged and more emphasis was given on Gujarati Literature. Novels, short stories, diaries, letters, plays, essays, criticisms, biographies, travel books and all kinds of prose began to flood Gujarati literature. British Government's existence passé by and the new technology of printing and press, there began the English language and medium of Education. The new age reads with newspapers, magazines, etc. influenced information and awareness in Society. Literature flourished with modernity as creations reflect to new age thinking, social welfare, criticism, plays, patriotism, politics, spiritual, management, facts, fiction and stories, etc.

In current scenario, Literature in Gujarat with Gujarati Literature is no more limited to Gujarati language as English Literature has entered into the domain. Gujarat have more and more Literature Authors venturing into multi lingual writing and English Literature writers stepping to Gujarati translated versions for eg. Is Paul Coelho whose new age books are translated in local language. Children's Literature, Arts Literature, women's Literature etc. has paved in way with Gujarati and English language writing getting prominent boost in Gujarat as new writers flourish in State. It has been the current trend of Author meets, book launches, debating, review sessions and promoting knowledge is power.

The Book Publishing Industry and Internet has even given way to new age writers. Works are published in form of e-books, posted at Google Open book source and even Gujarati Authors are getting Self-published with the POD (Print on Demand services). Thereby, writing, marketing and promoting Literature throughout the world.

Fairs

Fairs were originated dating back to Biblical times. There have been several references to the Fairs which were associated with exclusive Religion.

Gujarat is well known for its Fairs and expositions. Over 3500 Fairs and Festivals are celebrated in Gujarat. Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Artistic, Religious, Trade Fairs and many more Exhibitions are held round the year in different parts of the State. Due to rich Cultural and historical existence, Gujarat enjoys the 'Festivity Spirits' with customs and traditions that brings alive mythological and heritage that reflects cultural diversity.

Fairs in Gujarat symbolize cultural, social and religious aspirations. Of lately, Gujarat's Fairs, Festivals and expositions are focused on Global map due to Vibrant Gujarat Festival which has attracted tourists to Gujarat for the Kite Festival and Investors' Summit. Thus, Industrial Fairs, Trade Fairs and many more Commercial Fairs are gaining popularity in Gujarat. Arts and Sculptor, Fashion and Lifestyles, Construction and Interior Designing, Food and Technology – Expositions are round the year Event in buzzing Industrial towns of Gujarat.

Gujarat show a new light to the Artistic development with its Kutchh Carnival which offers tourists a rich cultural festival of laser shows, dance recitals, delicious cuisine and exquisite Handicrafts – Thus, Kutchh has a vibrant culture is often called 'The Cradle of Craftsmanship.'

Tarnetar Fair has its own Charisma with traditional celebrations of life and Rural Olympic games. Exclusivity of Handicrafts, folk music and dance, match-making venue and three day fair with religious fervor at Trinetrashwar Mahadev Temple is attraction to local, national and International tourists.

Fairs in Gujarat reflect customs and traditions, ethics and values, faith and beliefs of the people of Gujarat. As it focus on religious and cultural diversity, fairs like the Industrial Fairs and expositions, forecast the Economic growth and reach of Gujarat worldwide as it attracts global partners.

Get a Glimpse of the many Fairs, Festivals and Expositions as follows :

Bhavnath Mahadev Fair	Vautha Fair
Chitra-Vichitra Fair	Modhera Dance Festival
Dangs Durbar Fair	Kutchh Utsav
Dhrang Fair	Ambaji Purnima Fair
Tarnetar Fair (Trinetrashwar Mahadev Fair)	

Arts

Gujarat experiences an aesthetic experience where the work of art results with the formal interest and commemorative interest making way together. Completely appealing and valuable, works of art in Gujarat differ widely in the proportions of its patterns to the element of Painting, Sculpture or any other – blend with beauty and usefulness. Arts present something to our sense – perceptions as they make way to articulate lifestyles. Gujarat stands unique with its verbal or nonverbal arts – a mixed combination with aesthetic appeal. It is famous for its dyeing, printing, bead and mirror work apart from traditional Bandhnis and Patolas which has a hand woven art for the traditional wear.

The arts and crafts have a rich cultural past and linked to the present modernity look. One can find diverse variety of Embroidery with Inheriting talent with a distinctive style of needlework and traditional arts. Wood carving, stone work, jewellery etc. are the other areas that make Gujarat, a classic hub of traditional arts and crafts.

In paintings, Oil, glass painting, kalamkari art form and Pethora, the tribal ritual paintings leave intricate frescos and the finesse with which the form comes alive with colors.

It is a watermark of Gujarati art styles. Paintings of decorative motifs on terracotta pots and clay made items are also very popular in the state of Gujarat.

The State also has a fantastic pool of artists, and a new breed of collectors and investors. The Painters and Photography artists are flourishing in Gujarat who are connected worldwide with their exhibitions and display of talent. The Academy of the Department provides opportunities for Group Exhibitions and show case talents at various places in Gujarat cities.

Government of Gujarat Undertaking: Gurjari and Garavi

Gurjari
(Gujarat State Handicraft Development Corporation Ltd.)

Garvi
(Gujarat State Handloom Development Corporation Ltd.)

The main objective is to identify, revive, development of handicrafts and handlooms of Gujarat. It has enhanced product base to deliver to cater to the needs of both the domestic and international markets. They are creating opportunities and set to open International Foreign markets for the artisans who create patolas, bandhnis, several types of leather products and are engaged in hand-block printing, terracotta, embroidery and weaving work.

www.gurjari.co.in / www.gujarathandicraft.com

ref : bharatonline.com

Gujarat Culture

The Gujarat state of India, boasts of a rich culture and heritage. The people of Gujarat are very particular regarding their value system. They have preserved the ancient art and craft techniques and still practice them with great determination. Gujaratis are proud of their customs and traditions and follow them with utmost pride. The people of Gujarat are very simple and live life to the fullest. The spirit of Gujarat is quite visible from the varied fairs and festivals celebrated in the state. It is further enriched by the tribal people residing here. They have their own set of customs and rituals. Thus, Gujarat has a cultural diversity which is a unique feature of the state and is randomly seen.

Dances

Gujarat is known as the land of festivals. A number of fairs and festivals are celebrated in the state with great fervor and joy. The celebrations of these occasions are accompanied with traditional dance and music performances. The state has been blessed with a rich tradition of performing arts.

Music

Gujarat is a state of music lovers and has produced some of the best musicians of India. It is said that the legendary musicians Baiju Bawra and Tana Riri belong to the state itself. Narsinh Mehta, of the 'Vaishnav Janto' acclaim, also hails from Gujarat.

Religion

Like all other states of India, Gujarat is also inhabited by people of different religions, castes and creeds. It is one of the most industrialized states of India and provides employment opportunities for the youth. As a result, people from across the country have settled in the state.

People

Gujarat boasts of a rich culture and heritage. The people of Gujarat are commonly referred as Gujaratis and the main language spoken by them is Gujarati. Gujarat is a flourishing state in all spheres and as a result, numerous people from different parts of India have settled here for various reasons.

History

Gujarat has an ancient history and origin to boast of. It was earlier known as Gujarata (Gurjar Rashtra), which means Gurjar nation. Gurjars was an old clan, which inhabited the area during the Mahabharat period. Another opinion regarding Gurjars is that they belonged to Central Asia.

Gujarat Dances

Gujarat is known as the 'Land of Festivals'. A number of fairs and festivals are celebrated in the state with great fervor and joy. The celebrations of these occasions are accompanied with traditional dance and music performances. The state has been blessed with a rich tradition of performing arts. The various song, dance and drama forms practiced in Gujarat are famous throughout India. The most fascinating fact of all is that the origin of these performing arts dates back to the ancient era of Lord Krishna. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Krishna spent the early days of his life in Gokul.

Here, he charmed the natives by playing the flute and dancing. He performed Raas Leela with the Gopis, which is remembered till date. After he became the ruler of Dwarka, he patronized folk songs and dances in his kingdom. Since, then the Gujaratis have maintained the tradition and preserved the heritage in all its glory. The folk drama popular in Gujarat is known as Bhavai. Other popular folk dances of Gujarat are Tippani Nritya, Siddi Dance, Padhar Nritya, Dangi Nritya and local tribal dances.

Dandiya Raas

Dandiya Raas is the most popular dance of Gujarat. The dance is so popular that it is performed not only in the state, but throughout India. Infact, it is a special feature of the Navratri festival. The festival is celebrated to pay homage to the nine incarnations of Mata Amb, the Mother Goddess. People observe fasts on all nine days of the festival and pay regular visits to temples.

Garba Raas

Garba Raas is a popular folk dance of Gujarat. The dance is said to have an ancient origin. Like the credit for popularizing Ras Leela goes to Lord Krishna, the credit for promoting Garba goes to Usha, the grand daughter-in-law of Shri Krishna. It was earlier known as Lasya Nritya. Ras Garba is a typical dance performed by women in the honor of Ma Jagdambe, the Mother Goddess.

Ras Dance

Ras is one of the popular dance forms of Gujarat. It is derived from the Ras Leela performed by Lord Krishna in Gokul and Vrindavan. Ras is usually performed by a group of youthful people. They take measured steps and move in a circle, on the beats of musical instruments, like Dhol, Cymbals, Zanz and Shehnai (Flute). The dancers wear colorful folk costumes for the dance. Men wear a small coat called Kedia, teamed with a kurta having tight sleeves, pleated frills at the waist and embroidered borders. They also wear tight trousers, colorful turbans and kamarbandha (waist band).

Gujarat Music

Gujarat is a state of music lovers and has produced some of the best musicians of India. It is said that the legendary musicians Baiju Bawra and Tana Riri belong to the state itself. Narsinh Mehta, of the 'Vaishnav Janto' acclaim, also hails from Gujarat. He was a Vaishnavite poet of Junagadh and wrote songs in the praise of the Lord. His Gujarati compositions had a profound influence on the devotees. It is believed that he came in communion with Lord Krishna when he sung 'Raag Kedar'. 'Vaishnav Janto' was very dear to Gandhiji also and remains a musical marvel till date.

Besides, Gujar Tod, Bilaval and Khambhavati are the names associated with Gujarat. Veraval and Cambay are also state's contributions to classical music. Musicians like Ustad Faiyazkhan, Maulabux, the 'Been' player Rahim Khan and many others have shone the name of the state in the field of music. Apart from this, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur, one of the greatest exponents of Indian classical music, is also from Gujarat. Dahyalal Shivram's Sangeet Kaladhar and Adityaram Vyas's Sangeetaditya have also made significant contributions to Gujarati music.

Ahmedabad is also significantly touched by the musical wave. A number of concerts are organized in the city to promote folk music of Gujarat, among the masses. One of the major musical events is organized here by a local financial institution. It is a three day festival, devoted truly to classical music. The festival is attended by an astounding number of people, who listen to the Hindustani classical ragas, amidst congenial ambience. A traditional setting is created in an open theatre where listeners sit in a 'baithak' style and enjoy classical ragas.

The concert is known as "Sur Sandhaya Samaroh" and is one of its kinds in Ahmedabad. It is held on a regular basis, providing a platform for the people to interact with the maestros like Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma and the charismatic Zakir Hussain. The concert continues till midnight and is conducted on a massive scale, wherein all the modern facilities are provided for ensuring the closest rendezvous of the artists with the audience. Such events have broken the myth that the people of Gujarat are more concerned with wealth making and do not have an ear for music.

Gujarat Religions

Like all other states of India, Gujarat is also inhabited by people of different religions, castes and creeds. It is one of the most industrialized states of India and provides employment opportunities for the youth. As a result, people from across the country have settled in the state. People in Gujarat mainly follow Hinduism and about 89.1% of the population is formed by the Hindus. They are mostly conservative and strictly adhere to vegetarian diet.

The main deity of the Hindus of Gujarat is Lord Krishna. He is worshipped throughout the state, in the form of Shrinathji. Besides Hindus, Gujarat is also home to a considerable number of Muslims and Jains. Muslims constitute about 9.1% of the population, while Jains form nearly 1.0%. Sikhs are quite small in number and just constitute 0.1% of the population. This confirms the reason for cultural diversity of Gujarat.

Gujarat is the birthplace of Gandhiji and the Swaminarayan sect of Hinduism. This has significantly contributed to the fact that Hinduism is widely followed in the state. Lord Krishna also built his terrestrial kingdom here, which has contributed significantly to the religious beliefs of the people. As major trade practices were carried out in Gujarat during the ancient times, a significant number of Parsi Zoroastrians are found in Gujarat.

Gujarat People

Gujarat boasts of a rich culture and heritage. The people of Gujarat are commonly referred as Gujaratis and the main language spoken by them is Gujarati. Gujarat is a flourishing state in all spheres and as a result, numerous people from different parts of India have settled here for various reasons like trade, education, etc. Though, with changing times the state has prospered and is on the path of development, its people are strongly bound by their ancient value system.

Gujarat still has a number of tribes like Jats, Harijans, Ahirs, Rabaris, etc. Where the Jats are believed to be herdsmen of Sindh, Ahirs are said to be the descendants of Lord Krishna. Meghwal people were named as the Harijans by Mahatma Gandhi. Originally from Marwar, Harijans are known for their exclusive handiworks. Unlike other tribal people of Gujarat, the Rabaris are nomads and have their own unique lifestyle. The women amongst all the tribes are essentially homemakers, who spend their time taking care of their children and house.

Whatever their origin, these tribes are an inseparable part of Gujarat. Both the Harijans and the Rabaris are known for their dexterity at making beautiful handicrafts and contribute their best to the Indian art and craft galore. The Hindus form the major part of state's population, followed by other religions. Infact, there are many castes lines - Koli, Kanbi, Brahmin, Vaishnava, Suthar, Luhar, Kadiya, Kumbhar, Rajput, Vaniya, Anavil and Lohana, which originate from the Hindu religion.

In Gujarat, women are given equal importance in the families. They are efficient and meticulous in their household work. Their usual attire is Sari, teamed with light gold jewelry and sindoor (vermillion). Being influenced by Gandhiji, Gujaratis do not prefer non vegetarian diet and alcohol. People also devote a considerable time towards religious practices. In concise terms, the people of Gujarat are lively and vivacious, who live in perfect harmony, while respecting each other's religious sentiments

Gujarat History

Gujarat has an ancient history and origin to boast of. It was earlier known as Gujarata (Gurjar Rashtra), which means Gurjar nation. Gurjars was an old clan, which inhabited the area during the Mahabharat period. Another opinion regarding Gurjars is that they belonged to Central Asia and came to India during the first century. Gujarat was also inhabited by the citizens of the Indus Valley and Harappan civilizations. This was fortified by the excavations at Lothal and Dholavira.

The strong historical background of Gujarat also owes to the fact that it was ruled over by a number of mighty kings, like the Mauryas, the Scythians, the Guptas, the Solankis and the Mughals. These rulers contributed to the culture of the state significantly, by building a number of monuments and popularizing other traditional practices. The state was later inhabited by other groups, like the Gurjars and the Parsis. These groups remained under the influence of Mughals as well as Marathas till the mid 18th century.

Around 1818 AD, British brought India under the colonial rule and ruled till 1947 AD. The British built the first headquarters of East India Company at Surat. It was later shifted to Bombay, now known as Mumbai. Gujarat was also the birth place of a number of freedom fighters, who served the country selflessly. The prominent leaders were Shri Dadabhai Nauroji - the grand old man of the freedom struggle, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel - the architect of a united India and Mahatma Gandhi - the Father of the Nation.

These great souls spearheaded the national struggle for freedom and helped in the construction of modern India. They preached the virtues like tolerance, brotherhood, non-violence and patriotism amongst Indians. Some other leaders who participated in the freedom fighting were K.M.Munshi, Narhari Parikh, Mahadev Desai and Ravi Shankar Vyas. After independence, Gujarat was a part of the former Mumbai state.

In the year 1960, the people of Gujarat decided to form a new state for themselves. This led to the partition and formation of two new states Gujarat and Maharashtra. On May 1, 1960 Gujarat was