

Nihil Ultra

School newsletter



To Infinity and Beyond

Celebrations & Festivals

One of the theories for Neanderthal extinction is that their deficiency in communication meant they would make the same mistakes over and over again. People make merry for various reasons all over the world and in different ways with varied traditions and fetes but at the end of the day it is all just an excuse to meet, talk and have a fun time with other people.

Each place has its own customs, causes and traditions but you will be surprised to know how similar some are. For example, in India Diwali is popularly celebrated by lighting fireworks, hence it is popularly known as 'The Festival of Lights'. Eighty



or so degrees of latitude to the west, in the U.K. a festival known as Bonfire's Night is celebrated, about a month after Diwali. And it too is traditionally celebrated by lighting fireworks. Now both festivals are celebrated because of entirely different reasons, one from mythology and the other from history, but they are practically the same.

India has an abundance of festivals. Most festivals in our nation have religious factors behind them. And since the country is teeming with different religions and cultures, there are a lot of things to celebrate. Besides these, there are national celebrations like the Independence Day and the Republic Day. In fact all countries have such occasions, even the ones with imperialist pasts.

There are some internationally recognised festivals as well. Christmas is the first thing that comes to mind. Eid too is popular in several countries.

There are very few such days when most of the free world is in high spirits. Everyone is happy or at the least content. People forget their worries and sorrows if they are truly in the festive mood and for a few brief moments they are blissful.

The true reason for human jubilation is to forget one's misfortunes and misdeeds, for a significant while. Let us ponder on this. Let us cherish the happy moments. Brooding on your pains and worries is futile. So just bid adieu to the sad moments. It is always the right time to renew old friendships and make new ones.



Soumyajit Saha

The Essence of our Celebrations

Have we ever thought as to why we celebrate festivals? As to why we have festivals in every religion? The reason is quite simple. From the time man came upon possessions, he has been lamenting about what he did not have. Not only that, he is never satisfied. If there is something that his neighbour has and he does not have, that is reason enough for anxiety and stress.

In a world where negativity overshadows positivity, the proponents of every religion felt the need for festivals to introduce positivity through celebration of festivals. During festivals we forget all our worries and focus on celebrating. This break from our negative thoughts helps create emotional balance and act as stress



busters. Festivals are like valves in the pressure cooker which releases the steam because in the competitive world our brains have become pressure cookers and are on the verge of exploding. If there were no festivals, our negative thoughts would have had a free and continuous run without any respite. Festivals and celebrations are necessary to break the vicious circle of negativity in us and introduce positivity.

Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and traditions. They are meant to rejoice special moments and emotions in our lives with our loved ones. They play an important role to add structure to our



social lives, and connect us with our families and backgrounds. They give us a distraction from our day to day exhausting routine of life, and give us some inspiration to remember the important things and moments in life.

Though the meaning both literally and symbolically is vanishing away from the minds of this virtual generation, it is our sole duty to preserve and protect our culture and heritage keeping celebrations and festivals as one of the mediators.

FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

A festival is a celebration of life. It is a celebration, entertainment or series of performances of a certain kind, often held periodically. Festivals break the monotony of life. They bring peace and joy to every soul.

Festivals can be of three types- religious, cultural or patriotic (national). All nations have their own religious and cultural festivals. As for Indians, we especially are more associated with festivals as we celebrate almost everything; from lights to darkness and colours to our crops' harvest. Thus our sentiments are intricately connected with our festivals.

We all know that Swamiji and Gandhiji said that India lives in villages. India is an agricultural country and is the leading producer of various crops around the world. The main occupation of the people here is farming. Apart from religious festivals there are also harvest festivals. They are celebrated with great enthusiasm and religious fervour. Basant panchmi, Bihu, Holi, Baisakhi are some of the harvest or seasonal festivals of India. Among the above mentioned festivals, the most popular one is Holi. Holi



marks the end of the winter season, full-fledged start of the summer. The spirit of Holi is very colourful and vibrant. Colours are flung into the air and also smeared on each other's face with great enthusiasm and joy. The best part of Holi which is the personal favourite of many people is the concept of playing with water. Another example is Baisakhi which is celebrated in north India, especially in the Punjab-Haryana region when Rabi crop are ready

for harvesting. In South India, Pongal is celebrated around the same time.

There are also national festivals which are also celebrated with the same enthusiasm and joy. National festivals bear national importance. Republic day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti are the national festivals which are celebrated by all communities throughout the country on a particular day. The Republic Day and the Independence Day are observed with sincere national feeling. They remind us about the numerous sacrifices and contribution made by our freedom fighters to our country which was strong and sound enough that they compelled the British to free us and leave India.

Day by day we are becoming more and more modernised and are sacrificing our leisure time for productive work. So, festivals and celebrations are a good excuse to break the monotony of life and spend time in recreational activities with our family and friends. They also make us mentally fit and alert. They bring about self-consciousness and act as a single roof under which all the Indians are assembled.



Saptarshi Majumder,

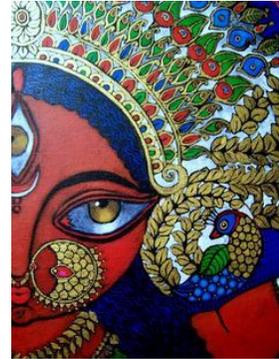
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Festivals and Celebrations-The True Spirit of Durga Puja

October. The official month of festivals for us schoolboys. The month of Durga Puja and Diwali. Thoughts of light, colour and warm, tasty food greet my mind as I think of this year's festivities.

The celebration of Durga Puja has been a biennial custom in my cousins' home for almost a century. Every two years, a *pandal* is set up, the idol of the Goddess Durga is brought and invitations are sent out to relatives and family friends from all four corners of the earth, and almost always they come. The thought of home, family and the ingrained spirit of Durga Puja bringing us together for nightly feasts, tea parties and long bouts of chatting is what I crave for the most. My cousins hire caterers, *dhak* players (or *dhakis*), cooks and priests to help in this massive operation lasting all five days of the puja. Towards the evening most of the family members sit before the idol conversing on various topics or exchanging the local gossip. These parties end with most of the relations partaking in lavishly set-out dinners.

Every year, the same *dhaki* is hired. This year, for the first time, Proshantada, as he was known, brought Raghu, the only child of his late son. Proshantada is in his sixties, a frail and often tired old man but Raghu was about the same age as I. Raghu would often relieve his grandfather from *dhak*-playing duties, as the latter would collapse into one of the chairs, drenched in sweat. My cousins and I found Raghu highly entertaining and we would often take the drumsticks away from him. For us, what was a fun and entertaining activity was to him a tiring and serious job. Sometimes when he had finished his morning chores, he would play football with us. As such, this year's Puja was probably the most enjoyable one.



On Dashami, every Puja, the magnificent idol would be taken to a *ghat* for immersion.. This year early on Dashami, my parents, most of our relatives and I packed some old clothes to give to Proshantada and Raghu. Proshantoda gratefully accepted them but on Raghu's face, I saw a slight frown.

That day, after the idol had been immersed, I thanked Raghu, rather nervously, for letting us play the *dhak* and asked him to come again the next year. And then, the frown I had observed on his face the whole day turned into a wide grin as he nodded.

So that was my Durga Puja and Raghu's too; like most festivals in India where people worlds apart can come together and celebrate.

Akash Roy

Class 7E

SCIENCE CLUB REPORT

X-PLAIN: THE PANEL DISCUSSION:

The activity clubs at St. Xavier's Collegiate School had organised a variety of activities spanning the academic year. The inaugural edition of X-Plain was the first of a kind, being jointly organised by X-perimentia (The Science Club) and X-calibre (The Debate Club).

On 19th November, the students of classes 9-11 discussed a plethora of issues, from Nuclear Weapons to Mass Surveillance to Artificial Intelligence and Genetically Modified Organisms, under the umbrella theme of- 'Considering the demerits of Science, should we improvise?' These topics are highly relevant in our current society where notions of Government funded surveillance programs, horrors of genetic modification and the bellicose rhetoric of "fire and fury" plague the civilized world, and it is, but natural to look to Science for answers.

The four House teams raised highly pertinent questions and presented thought-provoking yet credible solutions for the issues relating to their respective topics. After a gruelling one and a half hours of nerve-racking competition, Berchmans House emerged the winners and took home both the Best Team and Best Speaker awards. Both the judges and the audience were highly impressed by the knowledge and eloquence of the panellists.

SCIENCE EXHIBITION:

"I am not extraordinarily talented. I am just very curious" – Albert Einstein

The Science Club at St. Xavier's Collegiate School has always striven to be a pioneer – a leader not a mere follower; a creator and not a dogmatic believer. This year, X-perimentia expanded its horizons and invited three external schools- La Martiniere for Boys, ShriShikshayatan School and Sushila Birla Girls School to join our students in preparing various innovative static and working models based on scientific principles. It was inspiring to see what the unfettered human mind can achieve once it decides to create something new in order to surpass the precincts of the modern best and display true genius. La Martiniere for Boys placed first with their solar tracker, followed by the host school's Hovercraft and ShriShikshayatan's Burglar Alarm. The two judges were impressed by the spirit of innovation displayed by the students. In conclusion, it shall not be incorrect to say that X-perimentia successfully imbibed its motto of 'Explore, Create, and Imagine' among the impressionable young minds on 22nd and 23rd November, 2017.

- Digvijay Chakrabarti
Vice-President
X-PERIMENTIA, 2017-18

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