

# GUJARAT

CREATIVE INITIATIVES

## Navratri: Celebrating Dance Devotion Democracy

Imagine a state with more than 60 million people residing in more than 18000 villages, towns and cities. And then imagine millions of people across these 18000 villages, towns and cities dressed up in traditional outfits, dancing tirelessly for hours together, for nine consecutive nights.

Without any formal training, without any pre-planning yet completely in a concerted rhythm without a single step out of sync.

Sounds Interesting? Well, that's Navratri in Gujarat.

'Nav-Ratri' literally means 'Nine Lights', and is one of the most uniquely celebrated festivals in the world



*Nine Vows of Democracy*

and probably the largest dance event across the world as well. So, when the State Legislative Assembly Election is round the corner, then what's better opportunity than Navratri to reach out to millions across the state?

Festival based interventions have been a unique initiative under the SVEEP that is being implemented by Gujarat

since last two General Elections. Festivals are cultural threads that bind the society together. SVEEP has attempted to ride on this common cultural cohesive spirit to establish a close connect with people in all parts of the state. And so far, this has been one of the



જિલ્લા ચૂંટણી અધિકારી, અમદાવાદ

**Lokshahi Hum se,  
Vote Karo Gurr Se**

**યુવતી અને યુવાન,  
અચુક કરે મતદાન**



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most successful activities under SVEEP. This year, with the State Legislative Assembly Elections slated to be scheduled around the end of the year and Navratri being celebrated towards the end of the September, it turned out to be an ideal occasion to intensify the SVEEP activities.

Specific SVEEP interventions for Navratri were carefully planned and designed and the DEOs were asked to implement it in all the districts. 'Nine Vows of Democracy' were formulated for each of the nine nights of Navratri with catchy and festival appropriate slogans. The 'Nine Vows of Democracy' included messages on enrolment, participation and ethical voting. Designs for social media posts and banners & hoardings were created based on the vows.

Alongwith that a scripted Garba on electoral awareness was created and recorded with voice by a blind District Icon. For regions where dialects/languages are common, Garbas on electoral & democratic awareness were scripted in locally popular dialects like Kachchhi and Dangi. Different scripts were prepared to get ready for the forthcoming 'Festival of Democracy', that is the General Election and another focusing on Introduction

The scripted Garbas were disseminated by all 33 districts to different Garba venues and were played at all large Garba venues with lot of fervor. Particularly the Garbas in local dialect were very popular among the regions like Kachch and Dangs. Tribal Communities felt quite excited with the Garba on electoral awareness in their own dialect called Dangi. Apart from these, help desks were set up at prominent Garba venues and functionaries patiently addressed queries by the interested revelers. EVM and VVPAT demonstrations were also organised exhibitions at the Garba Venues, which were attended by a large number of people. Of the identified Garba venues had banners on 'Nine Vows' as well as other messages on electoral awareness. The social media was flooded with the 'Nine Vows' messages with one vow post being circulated every day.

The Navratri SVEEP initiative perfectly set up the mood for SVEEP and the forthcoming elections. Through this innovation, about 15 lakh people could be reached out with imparting education relating to electoral participation and EVM-VVPAT. No other channel would have managed to reach out to such a

large population in all parts of the state within such a short span of time. Particularly this initiative was not limited to the information but actively engaged the people through its different activities. And the best part was that it reached the two of the most important target groups for electoral awareness, which are Youth and Women. SVEEP for General Elections could not have hoped for a better start than this.



of VVPAT in the forthcoming elections.

The Nine Vows of Democracy were widely circulated through hoardings, banners and social media. Every night, at all prominent Garba Venues, the anchors announced the scripted announcements, which was followed by encouraging the participation to take up the 'Vow of the Night'.

The following lines from the specially scripted announcements for Navratri sum up the initiative most aptly:

**Whether it is Elections or Navratri**

**The one who never remains behind is a true Gujarati**

CEO Office, Gujarat