

Gujarati Wikipedia Article Competition – 10 schools, 200 students, 20 articles on Gujarati Wikipedia

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This was a competition to raise Wikipedia awareness and help students discover the joy of writing articles in their native language and an attempt to connect producers having knowledge in Gujarati to a wide audience of more than four lakh readers.



A picture of students at the Gujarati article writing competition

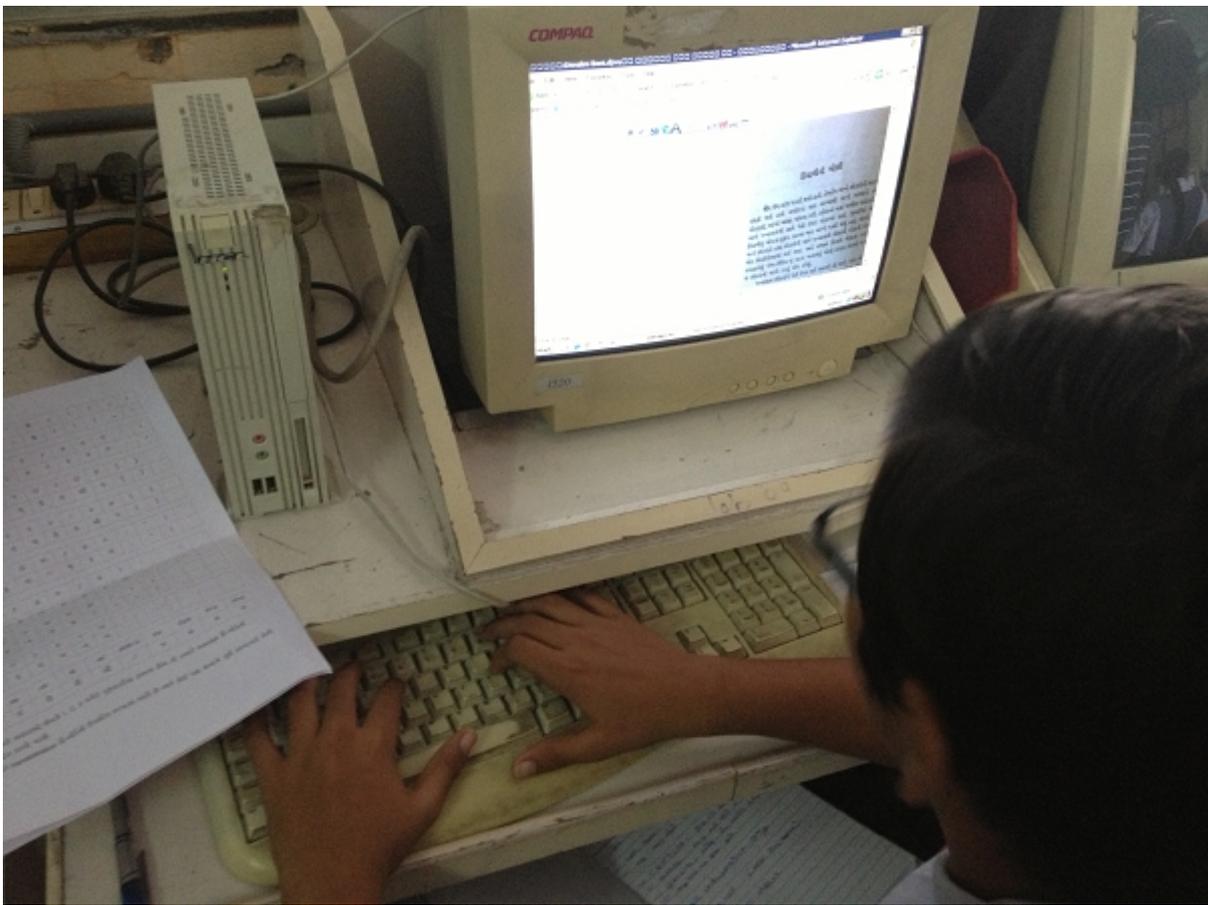
[The Gujarati Wikipedia article writing competition](#) was held among 10 Gujarati medium schools of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat with the support and cooperation of [The Open Page](#) publication and [Gujarati Lexicon](#) in two phases over a period of two months.

Initial discussions about doing something to promote Gujarati language on the internet started when Shiju Alex, Indian language Wikipedia consultant met Yatrik Patel from [Inflibnet](#). With Mr Yatrik Patel's intervention we were able to meet Mr Archit Bhatt, the director of [Tripada Education Trust](#) in Ahmedabad.

After a round of presentations from Wikipedians, Gujarati Lexicon and interested schools in August, we charted out a rough sketch of the article competition. Then, this plan was proposed to Gujarati editors online. Again, without the cooperation and encouragement of long term members like Mr Dhaval S Vyas, Mr Ashok Modhvadia, Mr Sushant Savla and Mr Maharshi Mehta, these students would not have had the freedom to make mistakes and learn as they progressed. Apart from these online members, constant guidance and support was provided by Mr Ashok Vaishnav, Mr Harsh Kothari and Mr Konarak Ratnakar. They coordinated with Ms Hemangini Kanth from The Open Page and Ms Shruti from Gujarati Lexicon to materialize the competition.

Structure

Phase I: Over 200 students from the ten schools were invited to write articles with references on Gujarati literary personalities (poets and writers) on paper. These entries were then collected and checked by Mr Yogendra Vyas, a consultant to [GSEB](#) (Gujarat Education Board) and Mr Ashok Vaishnav.



The above picture shows a student learning Gujarati typing

Phase II: 20 students were selected from these entries and invited for a workshop on Gujarati typing, introduction to GU WP and were briefed on how to write articles. Once the deadline was over, these on-wiki articles were checked by Mr Dhaval Vyas and Mr Ashok Modhvadia and two winner entries were selected. They were subsequently awarded trophies and certificates in a small ceremony on 21st October. Here is a [list of articles](#) written by the students.

Learnings

Given that this was a pilot program and I have read about only one such prior [attempt in Javanese Wikipedia](#), we had much to learn:

- It was a wise decision to take primary speakers of Gujarati because their proficiency in spelling, punctuation and vocabulary was good. This may not be possible for students with Indian languages as secondary language.
- While we had estimated a maximum of one month's time, it took us nearly two months to accomplish it because of the huge number of entries. Perhaps, the work should be distributed amongst more people.
- The biggest challenge that lies ahead is retaining these editors – we are working to get feedback from students to see how this could have been better and what attracted them about Wikipedia.



This competition has given the community a batch of new editors along with valuable content and we hope to retain the momentum by engaging more Gujarati students further.