

REPUBLIC DAY

SPECIAL

FOR A SOCIAL CAUSE

Over the years, the focus of Republic Day celebrations has shifted more and more towards social issues

Vibha Singh

Achievements should be celebrated in life, and our freedom is one such achievement that followed a long struggle. So it becomes

all the more significant for us to celebrate Republic Day with great nationalistic fervour. While flag-hoisting ceremony and cultural programmes are organised in governmental and non-governmental institutions, housing societies, schools and colleges throughout the nation, many groups conduct heritage walks in the areas associated with freedom fighters or the history of the country. This day carries a long history and acknowledg-



CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

thing for our nation."

Showing their concern towards reducing green cover, a group of environmentalists is organising bicycle rallies where the riders would be planting trees and seeds in the area. According to Sharad Shah, one of the organisers of the event, the plan is to drop a seed bomb which is a technique of introducing vegetation by throwing or dropping seed balls on lands that are off limits or barren. "We want people to do something which would be beneficial to the community in the long run," he adds.

Another group is organising a marathon to spread awareness about the importance of food and raise the issue of food wastage which is rampant in restaurants and during festivals and weddings. Furthermore, many housing societies have been spreading awareness about garbage segregation. "For the past three years, women from our area have been getting together and raising awareness about not throwing garbage on the streets. This year we are planning to raise the issue of women's safety as there have been increasing crimes against them in the area," states Nishi Adhikari, a local resident.

Bike rallies are quite popular when it comes to celebrating Republic Day. Bikers ride around the city spreading a social messages to the citizens. This year a group of bikers is organising rides to spread the spirit of patriotism among masses and make them realise the importance of the day. Shammie Sethi, an avid bicycle enthusiast, says, "I have not missed a single ride till date. This day reminds me of the struggle of the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for our country. It inspires me a lot to some-

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Inculcating patriotism among children

It is the duty of parents to inculcate patriotism among their children at an early age and make them responsible citizens

Purnima Goswami
Sharma

Parents play an important role in inculcating patriotism in children and nurturing them to be responsible future citizens. Besides acquainting them to Indian festivals and explaining culture and traditions, it is also important to inculcate patriotic values and tell them about our national days such as Republic Day and Independence Day.

"Engaging a group of children in a skit where they enact freedom struggle events can enhance the child's understanding of historical events. Parents should encourage children to stand for the National Anthem whenever it is played, and should talk about the Indian value system. Speaking about the Indian national symbols like the national animal, national flower, and national flag adds to the child's knowledge and makes him or her to be proud of his country," says Anita Agarwal, parent and a pre-school teacher.

There are many creative activities that parents can indulge in with the children at home. Most basic of all is drawing the national flag and proudly displaying it in their homes, or wearing it

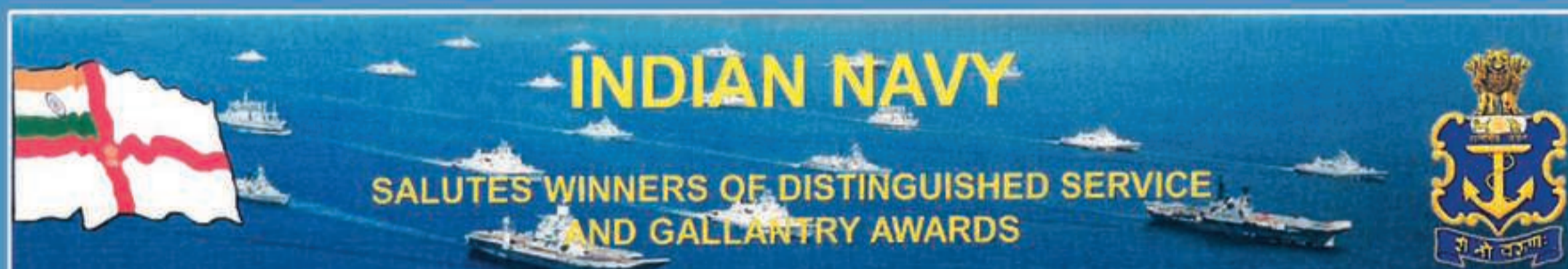


like a badge. "Listening and dancing to patriotic songs at home or watching a patriotic movie together is a fun way to connect your child to the country. Meals reflecting the tricolour can also be a part of the day's celebrations. Dressing in a tricolour for the celebration is another way to reinforce love for the motherland. In school, children can be encouraged to dress like freedom fighters and be part of celebration," suggests Agarwal.

Moreover, parents can plan a trip with their child to historical places to give them the knowledge about Indian history. Pratiksha Bansal, mother of two teenaged kids, says, "We try to take our kids to various historical places in the country. Last winter break, we went to Amritsar and showed them the Wagah border and it was a wonderful experience to watch the parade and the Retreat ceremony with loud and clear slogans of Bharat mata ki jai; all these make one feel so proud of our nation."

Most importantly, parents should practice what they preach and set an example for their children in order to make them responsible citizens. For instance, when one tells a child to always throw garbage in a dust bin and not to litter the roads, they should follow the same as well.

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