

First-ever Gujarati Spelling Bee competition in US

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In an attempt to promote cultural values and encourage children to learn Gujarati language, the first-ever Gujarati Spelling Bee competition in the US.

While many of the children participating have taken part in spelling bees, this one was particularly special as it tested their knowledge of their mother language, Gujarati, which was a second language for most participants.

It was BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha held its at BAPS Shri

Swaminarayan Mandir, Houston.

Children, from age four to 14, were eligible to participate. Based on their eligibility criteria, they were divided in five groups. In each round, the participating children had to spell five words and pronounce them as well. Based on their answers they moved to next rounds. The competition reached its climax when an extra round had to be organised to decide the winner.

All the 28 participating children and their parents and the audience enjoyed this competition with all children walking away with a better understanding of their mother tongue.

Rakesh Patel's eight-year-old son participated in the spelling bee and he was happy to see his son's interest in learning Gujarati. He said, "Rather than just seeing it as a class that he has to attend, he understands the importance of why he is going to these classes and learning the language. Through fun and competition, he is gaining not only knowledge of the language, but also an appreciation of the culture."

Nalini Patel, whose son also participated in the competition, noted how he enjoys going to Gujarati classes. She says, "I think he does like going to his Gujarati classes being held at the BAPS temple and he is taking part in this spelling bee with a lot of enthusiasm. It was nice to see him excited about learning Gujarati."

Haridarshan Swami who leads the children activities in North America, said, "The Gujarati Spelling Bee competition has motivated both children and parents. We intend to do similar competitions nationwide."



Participants along with their teachers at the Gujarati Spelling Bee Competition held at Houston by BAPS



A young participant spelling out Gujarati words at the Gujarati Spelling Bee Competition