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Oct-Dec 2025

TEEN DIGEST

Festivals, Reflections & Fresh Starts

Secret Life of Numbers

What Your Number Says About You!

When Handwriting Holds You Back

because Handwriting shouldn't decide your marks

My Visiting Card at 17

Big Power, Tiny Card

Fashion Tales from India's Past
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Year-End
Edition

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Quarterly - Vol. I, Issue 8

FOUNDER'S NOTES

Dear Readers,

Overthinking is an art; and most of us have mastered it. As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on everything I achieved (and perhaps overachieved). In other words, I'm in full introspection mode. And I know I'm not alone. Many of us pause at this time of year to look back and measure our journeys, don't we?

But here's the thing: slowing down matters just as much as racing ahead. With this issue of Teen Digest, we invite you to pause, to celebrate small wins, to reflect on what you've learned, and to embrace the power of fresh starts.

From inspiring teen voices to stories of resilience, from festive cheer to reflections on sustainability, this edition is about pressing reset and finding balance before stepping into the new year.

So take a deep breath, grab your favorite cozy corner, and journey through these pages with us. Who knows? You may just find the reminder you needed to reboot, reset, and restart.

If you are passionate about sharing your journey or raising your concerns on social issues and causes, we'd love to hear from you! Send us your stories, poems, or articles for our upcoming Oct-Dec issue at:



info.justbeingme.in@gmail.com or
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Your voice matters, and this space was made for it.

With Love,

Prachi
SACHDEV

Founder and Editor-In-Chief

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RAHUL KHERA

Founder & CEO Balancing Bits | Climate Entrepreneur



Spotlight



I. We would like to know what inspired you to start working in the field of waste management and sustainability.

A. Since I was a kid, I have always cared about the environment. But like most people, I followed the “usual” path, studied engineering, got a job, and worked in the IT world for 11 years. Life was stable, but something was missing.

Then one day in 2017, I asked myself, “Am I really doing anything that makes the world better?” That question kept bothering me.

So I did something crazy—I followed my own garbage bag. Yep, the same bag I threw out every morning. I wanted to see where it really goes.

What I saw shocked me:

- Mixed waste is dumped together with no segregation.
- Workers handling trash with their bare hands.

- Huge piles of garbage pollute the land and air.

That one garbage bag opened my eyes. It wasn't just "trash." It was a broken system, hurting people and destroying nature.

From that day, I decided: this is my mission. To fix how we handle waste, to make life better for the people working with it, and to stop our environment from drowning in garbage. And you know what? It all started with a simple question: "Where does my waste go?"

2. Many people see waste as "dirty" or "useless." How do you see it differently?

A. Think about it; nothing that nature makes is actually waste. A fallen leaf becomes soil. Fish poop feeds the ocean. Even dead flowers feed new life. In nature, everything is a resource for something else.

But humans? We're the only species that creates "waste." And here's the kicker: it's not really the stuff itself that's useless—it's the way we mix it all up.

When plastics, food scraps, glass, and paper are thrown together, they become dirty junk. But if we keep them separate, suddenly they're valuable:

- Food scraps → compost or biogas
- Plastic & metal → raw materials
- Paper → recycled into notebooks & packaging

Basically, waste isn't the problem—how we handle it is. If we sort it right, most things can find their place in the value chain, get reused, recycled, or repurposed until they reach their real end of life.

3. Reducing household waste is a big challenge, as we often see overloaded garbage bags. And with festivals around the corner, the aftereffects of festivities are often the accumulation of a lot of waste. What mindful practices can children and adults adopt during celebrations?

A. Traditionally, festivals were special occasions when families bought new things - clothes, utensils, furniture, or appliances. People saved all year for these shopping sprees, and brands timed their launches around the festive season.

But today, things have changed. With higher spending power and 24/7 access to e-commerce, shopping is no longer tied to festivals. New products hit the market daily, shopping platforms run "festivals" every month, and same-day delivery plus no-questions-asked returns fuel a false sense of urgency. The result? We keep buying, often without thinking about the financial, environmental, and social costs of these purchases.

In this new age, the need to control our urge to buy is not just during festivals, but all year round.

“

Every piece of waste you throw has a story.

”



That said, festival seasons still generate massive amounts of waste every year, starting around Diwali and peaking till the New Year. Here's how we can celebrate responsibly while still keeping the joy alive:

1. Say No to Instant Deliveries

Skip the delivery apps for once. Visit your local market with family and friends to enjoy the festive vibe. This small "inconvenience" not only helps you buy less and waste less but also supports neighborhood shops struggling against the rise of instant commerce.

2. Declutter with Purpose

Festivals are also a time for clearing out old stuff. Instead of throwing things away, teens can organize garage sales in their communities, a fun way to practice entrepreneurial skills, earn a little pocket money, and reduce waste at the same time.

Share a Meal is a teen-led group that has hands-on experience in organizing these Garage sales, and can help you with their learnings

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/lHq5e5CKPb/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

https://www.instagram.com/share_a_meal?igsh=enA0Y254MWlqbGJz

3. Join Swap Groups

In Delhi-NCR, there are thriving Swap Communities with 800+ members who exchange preloved items instead of discarding them. If something you no longer use can be valuable for someone else, why not pass it on?

SWOP NCR is one such group with more than 800 members; here is the WhatsApp invite link

https://chat.whatsapp.com/K8gYwpUpaGJHX54P8lsopf?mode=ems_wa_t

4. Recycle Clothes & Shoes

Never toss old clothes or footwear into the garbage. Cities now have collection points where these items can be reused, recycled, or responsibly disposed of. Sharing is caring for people and the planet. Below are links to two such drop points in the city

Sustainable Oasis: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/JoaAw8dvvqnSRuVE8>

Samadhaan Hub: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/SdkFG3wBgG4ATPqF8>

Festivals are about joy, togetherness, and gratitude, not about endless shopping bags and waste piles. By making mindful choices, we can bring back the spirit of celebration while protecting our wallets, our environment, and our communities.

4. Sustainability sometimes feels expensive or complicated. How can teens turn eco-friendly habits into simple, fun rituals instead of seeing them as a burden?

A. Sustainability can be fun; let's gamify it. Every time you think you need to buy something, just ask yourself these simple



questions:

The "Do I Really Need This?" Game

- Before buying something, you must answer the questions below.
- Scoring makes it competitive (and funny if played with friends/family).

Round 1: The Basics (5 points each)

1. Usefulness Check – Will I use this item at least 5 times in the next month?
2. Duplication Check – Do I already own something that does the same job?
3. Urgency Check – Do I need it now, or can it wait 30 days?
4. Borrow/Share Check – Can I borrow this from someone instead?
5. Budget Check – Does buying this fit into my spending budget for this month?

Round 2: The Fun Twist (10 points each)

1. Regret Test – If I don't buy this, will I regret it in a week?
2. Joy Test – Does this item spark actual joy, or just momentary excitement?
3. Survivor Test – If I lost my wallet and had only half the money, would I still buy this?
4. Reverse Roleplay – If my best friend wanted to buy it, what advice would I give them?



5. Time Value Test – How many hours of my work does this cost? Worth it?

Bonus Rounds

- Minimalist Mode: If I had to pack my life into a suitcase, would this item make the cut? (+15 points)
- Upgrade Mode: Is this replacing something old instead of just adding more clutter? (+15 points)
- Impulse Mode: Did I think about this purchase for at least 24 hours? (+20 points)

Scoring

- 80+ points → Go ahead, guilt-free buy!
- 50–79 points → Think twice; maybe wait 30 days.
- <50 points → Probably impulse, skip it.

5. Climate anxiety is real among today's youth. How can young people channel that worry into positive action?

A. Climate anxiety is real. It's that mix of fear, worry, anger, sadness, guilt, and even helplessness that many of us feel when we think about the climate crisis. These emotions are valid, but on their own, they don't solve anything. In fact, they can paralyze us.

Regret doesn't come from failure; it comes from inaction. That's why the real antidote to climate anxiety is climate action. And action doesn't have to start big—it just has to start.

Step 1: Begin with yourself

Look at your own daily habits. How much plastic do you use? How much food do you waste? Can you walk, cycle, or carpool instead of taking a vehicle alone? Small shifts at a personal level create ripples.

Step 2: Influence your circle

Talk to your family, friends, and peers. Encourage them to segregate waste, use less single-use plastic, or adopt energy-saving practices. Change spreads fastest through people you connect with directly.

Step 3: Scale to your community

Move beyond your inner circle. Start an initiative in your school, residential society, or workplace. It could be a composting project, a recycling drive, or a campaign to reduce electricity use. Communities amplify individual voices into collective power.

Step 4: Think bigger

Once you've made an impact locally, expand your efforts to your neighborhood, your city, and eventually—your world. Join or form youth groups, collaborate with NGOs, or campaign for policy changes.

The journey from climate anxiety to climate action is not about doing everything at once. It's about starting where you are, with what you have, and growing from there.

Because when you act, you don't just fight climate change, you also fight the helplessness that comes with it.

6. Is waste management really a career option for today's youth? What kind of opportunities lie in this space?

A. India has just started its waste management journey. The problem is HUGE, but so is the opportunity. And guess what? Young people like you are the ones who can turn this challenge into change.

If you're into people & society

Be a changemaker! Run awareness campaigns, design cool projects, and influence habits. With 145 crore citizens, behavior change is the biggest mission of all.

If you're into science & innovation

Think biotech and material science! Create eco-friendly packaging, invent better composting methods, or develop bio-methanation systems that turn waste into energy. Your science could literally clean the planet.

If you're into entrepreneurship

This is your playground! India needs startups, SMEs, and big industries in recycling, upcycling, and waste processing. From cool

recycling ventures to waste-to-energy plants, there's space for every big idea.

Waste is not just "trash." It's a billion-dollar opportunity. Whether you're a social leader, a scientist, or an entrepreneur, there's a place for you in building India's cleaner, greener future.

7. We often hear about fascinating solutions that few Western countries have implemented to convert waste into electricity. Why can't we have such solutions in India?

A. Waste is a problem that is very unique to every county and region, because the waste is an outcome of the lifestyle. Since Western and Indian lifestyles are very different, therefore, our waste is very different, and also its solutions.

Waste to Energy, AKA W2E/WTE, in simple terms, is to burn waste with high calorific values and use the thermal energy produced to generate electricity; it's basically replacing coal in a coal-powered thermal power plant with waste.

If burning the waste generates precious electricity, then what can be better than that, right? Well, not really. There are some elementary problems with waste-to-energy.

1. The waste has to be very well segregated so that only waste that is likely to burn easily and produce enough energy should go to these plants. So the waste has to be thoroughly segregated. Imagine trying to burn a tissue paper dripping and soaked in your favorite Dal Makhani. Doesn't sound flammable, does it?

2. Even if we segregate and give waste that is likely to burn easily, is it ok to burn paper, cardboard, or plastic bottles when they can be recycled? If we keep on burning all the Dry waste after single use without focusing on sending it to recycling channels, then we will end up extracting more natural resources like Trees for paper, petroleum for plastic etc, and

produce more virgin material.

3. The pollution from waste-to-energy is a problem even in Western countries. When material like plastic is burned, it releases chemicals that are toxic to the air. Also, the residue ash is poisonous and pollutes land and water sources when not disposed of properly, which is the case mostly.

4. India is a country with millions of people working in the organized waste management sector. This is not a problem or opportunity in Western countries. Waste-to-energy plants are highly mechanized plants that focus on automation and therefore do not integrate many waste workers from the unorganized sector.

In conclusion, India should be handling its waste in more ecofriendly way by getting the basics right, the compostable waste should be processed through bio methanation or composting, recyclable waste should be sorted into different categories at material recovery facility and sent for recycling, these two approaches will take care of 75-85% of the total waste, and 15% remaining reject waste can be then worked upon to be phased out slowly.



Waste is a problem that looks very different in every country and region. Why? Because waste is simply a reflection of lifestyle. A Western lifestyle produces a certain kind of waste, while an Indian lifestyle produces another. Naturally, the solutions cannot be identical either.

One such solution often discussed is Waste to Energy (WTE), also known as W2E. In simple terms, this means burning waste with high calorific value (i.e., waste that can catch fire and sustain heat) and using the thermal energy to generate electricity. Think of it as replacing coal in a thermal power plant with waste. At first glance, this sounds like a win-win: we get rid of waste and generate precious electricity. But the picture is not so simple.

Key Challenges with WTE

1. Segregation is Critical

WTE plants can only function if waste is thoroughly segregated. Only materials that burn easily and release sufficient energy should reach these plants. Otherwise, efficiency drops drastically. To imagine the problem, think about trying to burn a tissue paper dripping in dal makhani—it is soggy and not flammable. Without proper segregation, WTE plants are destined to fail.

2. Burning vs Recycling

Even if segregation happens, another issue arises: should we burn recyclables like paper, cardboard, or plastic bottles? If dry waste is diverted directly to incineration, we undermine recycling systems. This, in turn, increases demand for virgin raw materials—more trees cut for paper, more petroleum refined for plastic. WTE without recycling creates a cycle of resource depletion rather than conservation.

3. Pollution and Hazardous By-products

Burning materials such as plastics releases toxic chemicals into the air, even in advanced Western facilities. In addition, the residue ash

is hazardous. Improper disposal contaminates soil and water, which is unfortunately the norm in many cases. Thus, WTE often shifts pollution from visible waste piles to less visible but more dangerous forms.

Impact on the Informal Sector

India has millions of people working in the informal and semi-formal waste management sector. WTE plants, on the other hand, are highly mechanized and designed for automation. This excludes waste workers instead of integrating them, reducing livelihood opportunities and weakening an already functioning system of manual waste recovery.

A Better Way Forward for India

For India, the solution lies in strengthening the basics:

- Compostable waste should go into bio-methanation or composting systems, producing either biogas or organic compost.
- Recyclable waste should be carefully sorted at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and sent to the appropriate recycling industries.
- Together, these two streams can handle 75–85% of total waste in a sustainable manner.

The remaining 10–15% residual waste—the non-recyclables and rejects—can then be targeted for gradual phase-out or innovative processing.

8. What can teens do to improve waste management practices in their school premises or housing society?

A. Follow the Journey of Your Waste

Every piece of waste you throw has a story.

Teens can play a big role by simply tracking where their waste goes:

1. At the Source— Is waste properly segregated at your school or home? Wet/kitchen waste in one bin, dry waste in another, and reject waste separate?
2. Organic Waste— Is your food waste going to a composting plant in your school's or society's premises, or to a composting or biomethanation plant elsewhere, or just dumped in a corner?
3. Dry Waste— Is it the paper, plastic, and cardboard sent to agencies that sort and recycle, or is it being burned or mixed with rejects?
4. Reject Waste— Is the small leftover fraction (like multi-layered plastic packets) being disposed of safely?
5. Employment & Dignity— Are the waste practices in your school or society creating formal, dignified jobs for waste workers, or just ignoring their contribution?

What Can You Do?

- Ask Questions: Talk to your facility or maintenance office.
- Demand Action: If they are not following proper systems, remind them that it is their responsibility.
- Know Your Rights: By law, every waste generator—including schools and societies—must manage their waste in the right way.
- Be Informed: Point them to your Municipal Corporation's waste management portal to learn about rules and compliance.

Bulk Waste Generator Portal-
[https://onemapdepts.gmda.gov.in/bwg/\(S\(1r1vn0c52l5jxejzy23iue5v\)\)/](https://onemapdepts.gmda.gov.in/bwg/(S(1r1vn0c52l5jxejzy23iue5v))/)

9. If individuals or schools want to get their students involved in waste management, how can they connect with you?

A. You can reach out to us through our SM pages or Whats app to 9811715808.

About Balancing Bits

BALANCING BITS - WASTE CLIMATE ECONOMY

Earth is Worth!

Balancing Bits is an emerging social enterprise dedicated to creating balance in sustainability sector. We believe that balance is not merely discovered, but rather, it is consciously built.

Our unique approach combines the best of corporate's service quality with an environmentalist's value system. This fusion is evident in the exceptional products and services we offer in the waste management sector.

Through our innovative decentralized composting solutions, cutting-edge BioGas systems and an state of art MRF (Material Recovery Facility) we are revolutionizing waste management. Our solutions cater to a wide range of settings, including residential and commercial complexes, offices, hotels, malls, and restaurants.

With over four years of industry experience and an impressive portfolio of 35+ successful projects, we have gained the trust of communities in Gurgaon, Noida, Greater Noida, Delhi, Varanasi, Chandigarh, and beyond. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our collaboration with the esteemed Municipal Corporations of major metro cities.

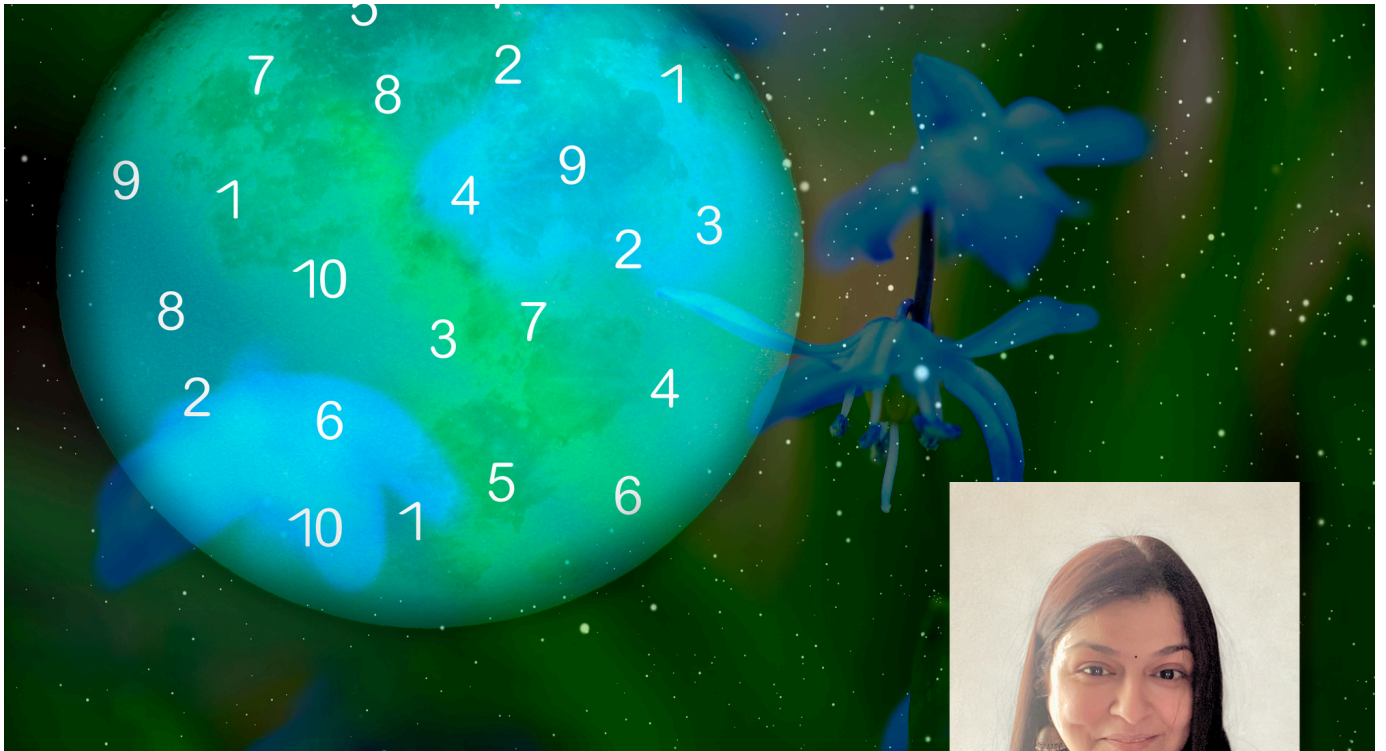
Our mission is to create a sustainable future through efficient and aesthetic waste management solutions and services. Together, we can make a positive impact on our environment and contribute to a harmonious balance for generations to come.

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VINI KAKKAR

Holistic Healer & Spiritual Mentor



Vini Kakkar

Vini Kakkar is a renowned holistic healer and spiritual mentor, celebrated for her transformative work across multiple healing modalities, including Reiki Master Healing, numerology, Lal Kitab remedies, crystal therapy, and tarot card reading. With an unwavering dedication to the well-being of others, Vini has spent years guiding individuals through their deepest emotional and spiritual challenges—

Feature

helping them heal, grow, and rediscover their true selves.

Driven by compassion and purpose, she blends ancient wisdom with intuitive insight to offer powerful, personalized solutions that unlock inner peace and lasting transformation. Her vast expertise and empathetic approach have earned her the trust of countless seekers on their journey toward balance, clarity, and enlightenment.

Vini's mission is clear: to uplift, empower, and heal—one soul at a time.

Understanding Numerology: The Ancient Art of Numbers

In a world where we constantly seek meaning and patterns, numerology offers a fascinating lens through which to

understand ourselves and the universe around us. Often described as "the astrology of numbers," numerology is the belief system that numbers carry inherent vibrations, energies, and meanings that can influence our lives in profound ways.

What is Numerology?

At its core, numerology is the study of numbers and their mystical relationship with living things and life events. Unlike mathematics, which treats numbers as purely quantitative tools, numerology views them as carriers of energy and vibration. Practitioners believe that numbers possess unique characteristics and can reveal insights about personality traits, life purposes, relationships, and future possibilities.

The fundamental premise of numerology is surprisingly simple: when you're born, you essentially "pick" a vibrational frequency that will influence your entire life journey. This frequency is determined by your birth date and can be reduced to a single digit between 1 and 9, each carrying its own distinct energy signature.

The Historical Roots

Numerology isn't a modern invention. Its roots stretch back thousands of years across multiple civilizations. Ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Chinese all recognized the mystical properties of numbers. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras, famous for his mathematical theorem, is often credited with formalizing Western numerology around 500 BCE. He believed that numbers were the fundamental building blocks of reality and that everything in the universe could be understood through numerical relationships.

How Numerology Works

The process of numerological analysis typically begins with your birth date. By adding together all the digits in your birth date and reducing them to a single digit (unless you get 11, 22, or 33, which are considered master numbers), you arrive at your Life Path Number. This number is believed to represent your core personality traits, natural talents, and life's primary purpose.

For example, someone born on March 15, 1990, would calculate $3 + 1 + 5 + 1 + 9 + 9 + 0 = 28$, then $2 + 8 = 10$, and finally $1 + 0 = 1$.

This person would be a Life Path Number 1.

“

You are born with a vibrational frequency that influences your entire life journey.

”



The Nine Core Numbers and Their Vibrations

Each number from 1 to 9 carries distinct characteristics and energetic qualities:

Number 1 - The Boss: People with this number are natural-born leaders. They possess an independent spirit, strong willpower, and an innate ability to initiate and command. These individuals are go-getters who prefer to lead rather than follow, often pioneering new paths and breaking ground in their chosen fields.

Number 2 - The Peacemaker: Twos are the diplomats of numerology. They value harmony above all else and possess exceptional emotional intelligence. These individuals excel at bringing people together, mediating conflicts, and creating balanced environments wherever they go.

Number 3 - The Entertainer: Creative and expressive, threes are the artists and communicators. They possess a natural spark for creativity and are typically excellent speakers, writers, or performers. Their enthusiasm and optimism make them magnetic personalities who can inspire others.

Number 4 - The Builder: Fours are the foundation stones of society. They're practical, methodical, and incredibly hardworking. These individuals excel at creating systems, building things that last, and bringing order to chaos. They value security and stability above flashy success.

Number 5 - The Adventurer: Freedom-loving and curious, fives crave variety and change. They're natural explorers who love to travel, experience new cultures, and push boundaries. Their adaptability and



enthusiasm for new experiences makes them excellent at careers requiring flexibility.

Number 6 - The Lover: Sixes are the nurturers and caregivers. Family-oriented and compassionate, they have an innate desire to help others and create loving, supportive environments. They often find fulfillment in roles that allow them to care for others or improve their communities.

Number 7 - The Thinker: Mysterious and introspective, sevens are the philosophers and researchers. They possess deep analytical minds and are drawn to uncovering hidden truths. These individuals often feel most comfortable in solitude, where they can contemplate life's deeper meanings.

Number 8 - The Boss 2.0: Eights are success-driven and ambitious. They possess natural business acumen and are drawn to positions of power and authority. Material success often comes naturally to them, as they understand how to navigate complex systems and achieve their goals.

Number 9 - The Humanitarian: Nines possess big hearts and a desire to make the world a better place. They're compassionate, generous, and often drawn to causes greater than themselves. These individuals find fulfillment in helping others and contributing to humanitarian efforts.

Modern Applications and Skepticism

In today's world, numerology finds applications in various areas, from personal development and career guidance to relationship compatibility and business decisions. Many people use numerological insights as tools for self-reflection and understanding, even if they don't fully subscribe to its mystical

aspects.

However, it's important to note that numerology, like other metaphysical practices, lacks scientific validation. Skeptics argue that any perceived accuracy comes from general statements that could apply to many people (similar to horoscopes) and confirmation bias, where people remember hits and forget misses.

Whether you view numerology as a legitimate spiritual practice or simply an interesting framework for self-reflection, it undeniably offers a unique perspective on personality and human nature. The system's enduring popularity across cultures and centuries suggests that many people find value in its insights, even in our increasingly scientific world.

Like any belief system, numerology is best approached with an open but discerning mind.



It can serve as a useful tool for introspection and understanding different personality types, but it shouldn't replace critical thinking or professional advice when making important life decisions. Ultimately, the numbers may offer guidance, but the power to shape your destiny remains firmly in your hands.



DEEPALI AHUJA

Graphotherapist

The author, Deepali Ahuja Chadha, is a certified handwriting analyst and graphotherapist. She is trained to work with children to help develop their handwriting scientifically. She offers free handwriting analysis for both children and adults.

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HANDWRITING IS NEITHER "GOOD" NOR "BAD". IT IS LEGIBLE OR ILLEGIBLE.

THE 'VERY REAL' IMPACT OF POOR HANDWRITING:

Rajat, a 14-year-old, is a bright kid!

He's the kind who always has the answer, sometimes even before the teacher finishes the question. At school, he is an eager volunteer—whether it's designing a poster or representing his school in debate competitions. But he cannot ace his exams. Rajat finds himself at the lower end of his class. Not because he doesn't know the answers—he most definitely does—but because his handwriting slows him down. His well-thought-out ideas and clear concepts cannot be recreated on his answer sheet within the limited exam time.

And then there's Soma, who is 16 years old. Her dad's transfer brought her to a new city, and she embraced change with a smile. At the new school, she is quick to make friends, and her teachers encourage her talent in storytelling. One day, in English class, she is invited to write a few lines on the whiteboard. A moment of pride turns into embarrassment when her handwriting earns her disapproving glances. The written letters – uneven, poorly shaped – draw more attention than her creative words. Soma suddenly feels judged, losing confidence in her abilities.

11-year-old Malik wins the oral spelling bee competition every year, yet loses marks in the written diction because teachers

fail to interpret his "a" from "o" or "y" from "g." He feels dejected, demotivated, and sad.

These stories aren't uncommon. Many children, with such sharp minds, stumble not for lack of knowledge, but because poor handwriting becomes a barrier. Some of us have had these experiences: feeling a sense of panic as notes remained incomplete because the teacher wiped the board clean too quickly, the envy when a classmate's flawless writing is praised, and the little dagger of shame when our notebook was returned more red than blue. Some of us remember the exact words, too: "Looks like ants splattered on the page!" That sting lingers and causes long-term emotional scars.



THE HIDDEN COST OF POOR HANDWRITING:

Children facing handwriting struggles often develop low self-esteem and fear ridicule for their writing. Small instances as well as constant feedback from teachers compound over time, leading children to feel self-conscious and view themselves as less capable, even when their other abilities far exceed what their writing reflects.

Poor handwriting takes a toll, not just emotionally, but also physically. Handwriting is an act of motor coordination, involving fine muscles of the fingers, proper posture, correct paper angles, and even the right writing tools. Without the right foundation, children experience hand cramps, finger stiffness, or fatigue just after a few minutes of writing. Post-pandemic, this prob-

-lem has become even more apparent. During COVID, children got used to devices, and returning to lengthy handwritten exams exposed their lack of writing stamina. Complaints of trembling fingers, sore wrists, or simply the inability to keep pace have become common.

WHY CHILDREN AVOID WRITING:

When parents worry about their child's illegible or slow handwriting, it often isn't laziness—it's deeper than that. Some of the very real reasons children avoid writing are:

- a. **Hand pain:** Underdeveloped or stiff finger muscles lead to pain and cramping.
- b. **Poor posture:** Slouching and exerting too much weight forward causes discomfort.
- c. **Incorrect pen grip:** Holding the pen improperly leads to strain on the hand, wrist, and arm.
- d. **Wrong tools:** A slippery ball pen or an overly sharp pencil makes writing harder.
- e. **Delayed formal writing practice:** Schools often postpone cursive or structured handwriting.
- f. **Low self-esteem:** Children shy away from writing as they become sensitive to criticism.
- g. **Learning differences:** Dysgraphia or dyslexia, when forming letters, spacing, and spelling words, becomes a neurological challenge rather than carelessness.

For children like 12-year-old Anshika, handwriting feels like a rocky road. She has to stretch her fingers after every two lines before she can continue. Her thoughts are way faster than the speed of her pen, which is why her answers look scattered—neither reflecting her knowledge nor her imagination. It is just so overwhelming and frustrating for her!

RESTORING HANDWRITING AS A SKILL:

In today's time, when devices are rampant, many believe that handwriting is redundant. But cognitive science and psychology disagree. Research indicates that handwriting activates regions of the brain associated with memory, focus, and creativity. Writing by hand forces children to slow down, concentrate, and process what they're learning. That makes it not just a tool for exams but a tool for thinking.

So how do we overcome this? By teaching children that writing—like playing a musical instrument or a sport—is a skill that can be mastered.

Here's the scientific approach:

1. Choose the right tools: A pen or pencil that suits the child's hand. Sometimes a broader grip or cushioned barrel makes all the difference.
2. Proper grip and ergonomics: Fingers should hold the pen lightly, without unnecessary stress or tension. Posture too—straight back, feet flat—affects handwriting flow.
3. Finger and muscle exercises: Simple activities like squeezing a stress ball, picking beads, or clay modelling develop fine motor skills and finger strength.
4. Consistent practice: Like any skill, handwriting develops better through brief, regular practice rather than longer sessions.
5. Encouragement, not shame: Teachers and parents must shift the narrative from "bad handwriting" to "let's work on this together." Encouragement builds confidence, and confidence builds practice.
6. Seeking professional help: Enlist the help of a trained therapist for personalized support and handwriting development.

Every child - be it Rajat, Soma, Malik, or Anshika—deserves to be recognized for their ideas and knowledge, not their handwriting. While technology has reshaped our world, the pen still holds the power to shape a child's confidence and expression.



Poor handwriting should not be the obstacle between a child and their true potential. With guidance, patience, and some science-backed strategies, children can write with flow—and more importantly, with pride. So, take a pause and reflect on how you can best support your little and not-so-little ones. 😊



KAVITA DHAMANI

Certified Money Coach I
Founder Money Coach

Kavita Dhamani is India's first Certified Money Coach (CMC)® and Founder of The Money Coach®. A Chartered Accountant with two decades in institutional investments with leading global financial institutions—including Fidelity, Moody's, Macquarie, and Guardian Life—she blends psychology with practical money tools to make money simple, doable and stress-free. Kavita works primarily with women and young adults and has guided 1,000+ people across India and globally to become Financially Fit®—confident and in control of their money, choices, and future.

TURN MONEY INTO YOUR BESTIE ONE SMALL STEP AT A TIME

THE 3-MONTH MONEY CHALLENGE FOR TEENS

Money touches almost every part of your life — snacks at school, games you want, gifts for friends, or saving up for a trip. But most of the time, money just comes and goes. We rarely stop to notice what we do with it or how we feel about it.

But money isn't just about math. It's about choices, emotions, freedom, and the life you want to create. The way you handle money now will shape how you deal with it for life.

That's why I created this challenge. It's not about boring lessons or complicated financial words. It's about you taking charge of your pocket money in a simple, fun, and practical way. By the end of 3 months, you'll achieve a money goal and also build a system you can use forever.

Imagine This...

It's December 31st. While your friends are talking about New Year's resolutions, you check your money tracker. You smile because you've:

Saved enough for your one big goal.

Grown your Freedom Seed Money.

Shared with someone who needed help.

Still had fun spending on yourself.

You didn't just "manage" money — you built a friendship with it. One that feels balanced, smart, and fun.

Your 3 Starter Tasks

To get started, do these 3 things:

- Talk to your parents about the challenge.
- Set up your 4 money pots.
- Fix a weekly "money date" with yourself.

Once you do these, you're in the challenge.

Task 1: Talk to Your Parents

Tell your parents you want to take this challenge. Discuss openly:

How much pocket money you'll get (weekly or monthly).

Your 3-month goal and why it matters.

How you'll split money into the 4 pots.

If they can match some of your Grow or Give pots.

If you don't get pocket money yet, ask if they'll start giving you some so you can learn by practicing.

This talk shows your parents you're growing up and ready to handle money.

Task 2: Set up the 4 Money Pots & decide allocation to each pot

Every rupee you get — whether it's pocket money, a cash gift, or money you earn through any activity — should be split into below 4 pots. Use jars, envelopes, or an app to track. Use physical money pots and keep track in your Money Buddy Tracker ([click here to download](#)).

I. Grow Pot (Freedom Seed Money) — at least 10%

- This is like planting a seed. You don't spend it now — you let it grow. Later, it helps you buy bigger things or gives you freedom to choose what you want.
- For now, keep it in the pot, or with your parents' help, start a small Recurring Deposit (RD) — many banks



allow from ₹100–₹500 per month with a minimum tenure of 6 months. Later, we will explore investment through SIPs.

- **Bonus:** Ask if your parents will add extra if you're consistent. That's your first taste of returns!

2. Give Pot (Kindness Money) — around 5%-10%

- This is your kindness pot. Use it for charity, donating, or surprising someone in real need.
- It reminds you money isn't just for yourself — it's also about making an impact. Even small amounts can make a big difference.
- **Bonus:** Parents often love this idea and may match your Give pot.

3. Goal Pot (Save) — flexible %

- Choose ONE clear goal for the next 3 months — a game, a book, shoes, a trip, or a gift.
- Write it down:

Why do I want this?

How will it make me feel? (happy, proud, excited)

How much will it cost, and how much should I save each week?

- Label your pot with your goal and your "why."

Example: Goal: Save ₹2,000 by Dec 31 for a football so I can play with my friends every day and feel super happy.

YOUR 4 MONEY POTS AT A GLANCE

Pot Name	Allocation	Allocation Notes	Where to keep the Money	Bonus
 Grow (Freedom Seed Money)	At least 10% — you could do more	Plant seeds for financial freedom	Keep in pot OR create bank RD. Invest when you learn more.	Parents may top-up (e.g., 50% top-up)
 Give (Kindness Money)	Around 5%-10%	For charity and impact	Keep in pot. Give from the pot every week or every month.	Parents may match
 Goal (Save)	Flexible — you decide	Decide based on your 3-month goal	Keep in pot. Label it with your goal and why it matters, so you stay motivated.	More than just a goal, you are building the superpower of patience — say no now, for bigger rewards later (a skill most successful people use)
 Fun (Spend)	Flexible — you decide	For fun treats and activities you enjoy — snacks, games, outings, shopping	Keep in pot OR minor or student account linked Debit Card OR UPI Wallet like Fampay or Paytm	Freedom to enjoy now

Her message to Teens:

Start now, build smart habits, and make money your bestie.

4. Fun Pot (Spend) — flexible %

- This is your guilt-free money for snacks, outings, shopping, and gaming.
- After putting money in Grow, Give, and Save, the rest goes here.
- Keep it in
 - > cash in the pot, or
 - > a minor/student account linked debit card with limits, or
 - > a UPI wallet like Fampay or Paytm.
- Rule: enjoy it — you've earned it by being responsible with the other 3 pots first.

Task 3: Weekly Money Date

Every Sunday, take 15 minutes for your "money date."

1. Write 3 things money helped you do.
2. Update your Money Buddy Tracker & make sure it matches money in your pots.
3. Check how close you are to your goal.
4. Reflect on how you felt while spending, saving, and giving.
5. Decide if you want to do anything differently next week.

This small weekly ritual keeps you aware, grateful, and in control.

The Real Win

By the end of 3 months, you'll:

- Hit a clear money goal (or get very close).
- Notice your spending habits and how money makes you feel.
- Enjoy the balance of growing, giving, saving, and spending.

Most importantly, you'll have taken your first real step toward money freedom — before you even turn 20. Be proud of that!

And this is just the beginning of your money journey. Next time, you can aim for a bigger goal, add more to your Grow pot, or even start learning about investments. I'll be here to make it fun, simple, and exciting for you.

So grab your pots and start today. Even better? Challenge your friends to join you. Imagine starting the new year not just with resolutions, but with real results.





RIDHIMA KAPOOR

Student | Grade I2 | DAV
Public School, Sector I4,
Gurugram

Ridhima is a curious soul, who loves exploring and questioning everything she possibly can. She is fierce, who lives on her own unconventional terms (like a business card at 17). She is into creative writing, AI and sustainability. She has created several impact based projects and has won many prestigious competitions like NYF'25, Harvard GHLC etc. She also had the honor to have lunch with the PM of India.



THE POWER OF A TINY CARD

People often ask me, "What does a 17-year-old even need business cards for?"

Honestly, I used to wonder the same until I held one with my name on it.

It's been six months since I printed mine, and I still remember the exact moment the idea first sparked. I was attending an exhibition at the National Science Centre, New Delhi. After an insightful session on Intellectual Property, I watched a group of professionals finish their conversations and smoothly exchange business cards with one another almost like an unspoken ritual.

It felt wild to me. Because for as long as I could remember networking had meant sharing phone numbers or Instagram handles. That day, I saw something else, a quiet gesture that said, I take what I do seriously.

I went home with that image stuck in my mind.

At first, it was just for fun. I opened Canva and designed a simple card with my name, my field of interest and my contact details. I didn't think about actually printing it like it was just a creative exercise. But over time, I kept coming back to it, tweaking the design, playing with fonts and colours until it started to feel it represents me.

That's when the idea stopped feeling like a joke.

I remember telling my parents I wanted to print them, and they looked at me with curiosity and suspicion "Why?" And at that point, I didn't really have an answer. All I knew was that it felt important. Like something that could quietly shift the way people

saw me and maybe even the way I saw myself.

Six months later, I have my answer.

A simple card is not just paper. It carries my presence.

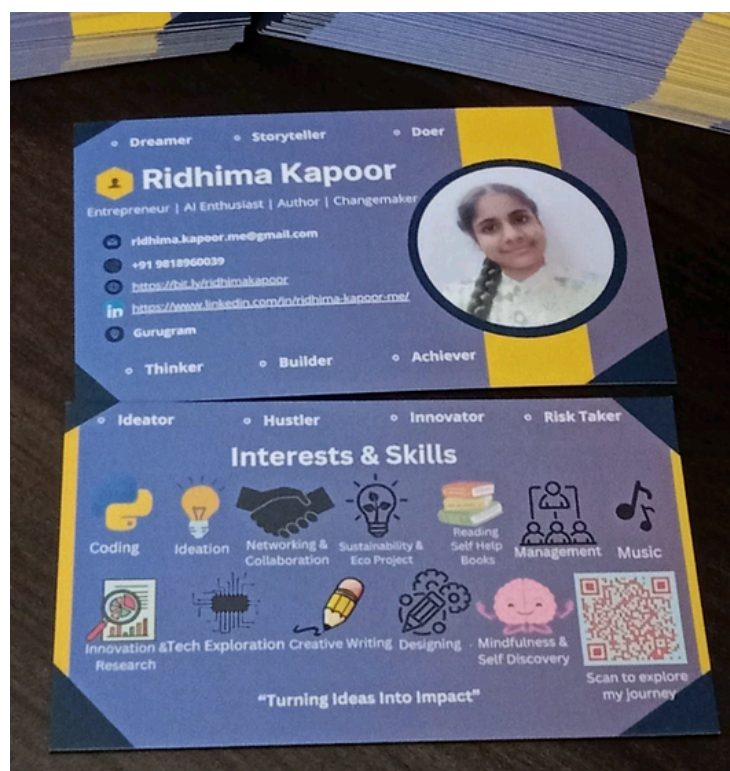
I experienced this firsthand at StartUp Mahakumbh, one of the first events where I carried my cards with me. I was nervous at first but I mean, who expects a 17-year-old to hand over a visiting card? But the moment I started offering them, people were genuinely surprised. Their reactions shifted from polite smiles to real conversations. Suddenly, they were asking about my work, my ideas, my journey. That little card had opened doors that a phone number never could.

It's strange how something so small can hold so much meaning. For me, it wasn't about looking professional, it was about believing in my own potential enough to put it down on paper. It made me feel seen, even to own myself.

And no, having a business card at 17 doesn't mean I have everything figured out. It just means I'm showing up, ready to learn, ready to build, ready to grow.

If there's one thing these last six months have taught me, it's this: don't underestimate the power of thoughtful presentation. Sometimes, it's the smallest things that leave the biggest impression.

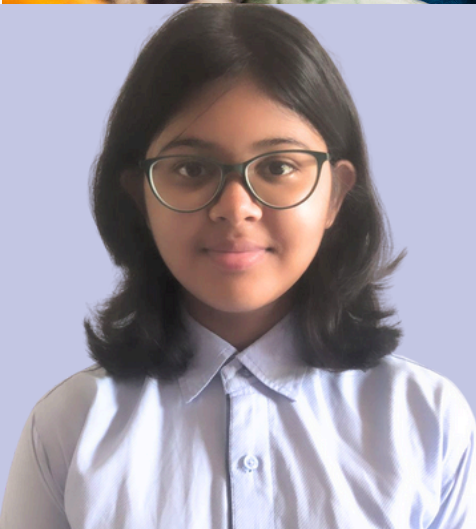
So to every teen reading this, don't wait for the world to tell you when you're "old enough" to start showing up for your dreams. Start now. Show up for yourself. Even if it's just through a tiny card that carries your name because you never know how far it might take you.



“

Sometimes, it's the smallest things that leave the biggest impression.

”



AANYA SINGH

Student I Grade 8 I
Gurugram Global Heights
School, Gurugram

Aanya Singh is an enthusiastic reader and a passionate writer with a deep love for words and the worlds they create. She finds inspiration in everyday moments and believes that true beauty often hides in life's little imperfections. She is also an avid reader. Reading feeds her curiosity and shapes her voice, guiding her toward her dream of becoming a creative content writer who shares meaningful stories with others.

STUDENT'S EDITION: MY SPACE, MY VOICE

TRADITIONAL COSTUMES AND HISTORY OF CLOTHING IN INDIA

A Travelogue

As I begin talking about the country of India, diversity is one of the most important aspects of its culture and identity, which not only expands to its language and religion but also to its clothing and sense of fashion. A root cause of this multicultural medley lies in the massive history of evolution and heritage experienced by our country.

Commencing my journey from the South of India, a common sight to see in terms of attire included sarees on women and dhoti with kurtas on the men. Although the terms used by the natives of the various South Indian states for their traditional dresses differ, an overlapping in the style and pattern was clearly visible to the naked eye. People of Andhra Pradesh call their sarees Chira and Ravikai, and the residents of Karnataka termed their sarees as Seree and blouse as Kuppasa, with a distinct difference evident in the narrow-coloured border on each side—also noticeable on the dhotis donned by men. As I travelled further downward, the glossy and lustrous gold ornaments on Keralites were hard to miss. While they shared a common love for saree and lungis with their fellow neighbours, the teenagers sprinting across the streets were seen enjoying their playtime in skirts, blouses, or frocks.

Soon, I started tracing my way back to the northern boundaries of my country and landed in the beachiest state of India, the infamous Goa! The Portuguese civilization that once invaded the state still leaves a heavy impact on its culture and traditions, visible through the unique blending of traditional dresses of

known as the Kunbi Sari, which are basically cotton sarees with distinctive borders.

My next stop included Maharashtra, wherein the metropolitan capital of Mumbai had its corporate and working population donning the classic suits, pants and skirts, but the more traditional occasions and festivities had its women emerging in vibrant coloured Pathani sarees with intricate motifs. The famed Nauvari saree draping that movies and media very often capture when it comes to representing the Maharashtrian culture was also a beautiful sight to see in terms of functionality and elegance. As far as it comes to the men, they often fall into the uneventful category of dhoti and kurta, with an endearing addition of the Pheta, a traditional turban!

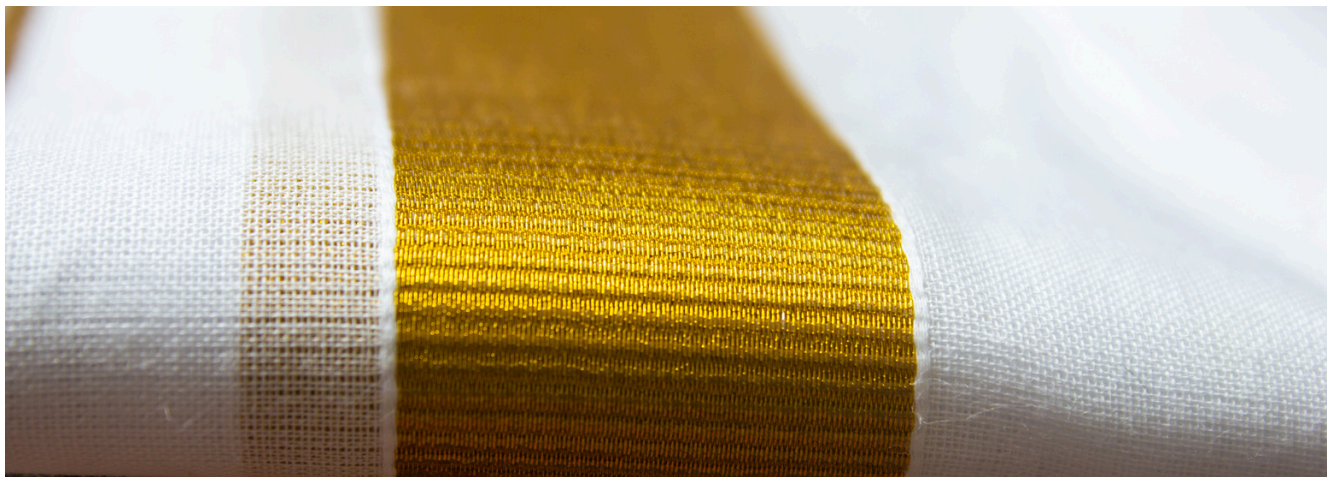
As I stepped into Gujarat next, the colourful and vibrant Chaniya Cholis quickly caught my eyes as they twirled during their Navratri Garbas. A similarly fascinating sight existed in the state of Rajasthan as I travelled further, wherein the natives of the state were seen dressed in none other than Cholis and Ghagharas, which are nothing but skirts extending from waist till above the ankles with high vertical gathers. Men elegantly dressed in the classic Kurtas, with a variety in their turban or Pagdi, hemmed from long cotton fabric and often seen in men and boys of all ages alike.



Soon, I quickly hopped on a flight to the Paradise of India —none other than our beloved tourist destination of Jammu and Kashmir. The wide stretches of greenery often had beautiful women in their traditionally embroidered Pherans, combined with a salwar kameez, strolling through the flora, wherein their attires have sp-

-ecifically evolved to protect the inhabitants from the chilly climate of the state. After my quick backpacking through Kashmir, a series of flights took me to some of the Seven Sisters of the Northeast, which was a magnificent experience. Beginning my journey in Assam, I quickly came to appreciate their women in the two-piece garments consisting of a long skirt and a shawl-like wrap known as the Mekhela Chador, while the men donned the Dhoti Kurta with a northeastern spin to it, along with a long tunic worn over the dhoti. As I moved forward into Nagaland, the Naga Shawl was a common sight to see, often with elaborate patterns and bright colours. The women usually paired their outfits with bangles, necklaces, and tattoos to represent their stoic endurance in the history of war and sacrifice. Moving further into Manipur, the women draped the handwoven Phanek skirt, tailored with horizontal lines. Some more significant cultural costumes of the state included the Lai-Phi and Chin-Phi. With my last, although no less captivating, destination being Mizoram, the traditional outfit known as the Puan, commonly seen here, embraced a blouse, leggings, and a dupatta for headgear. Special occasions like weddings had the Mizo women wearing the twopiece clothing called Puanchei, which has a signature pattern of vibrant colours and checkered designs.

When I concluded my journey across India, focusing on its cultural diversity with regards to the traditional attires spanning across the country, I realized how vast and deep has been the evolution of clothing in our country. While the ancient times of around 2700 BCE, dating back to



merely cover and protect our bodies, the subsequent Vedic period, extending from 1500 to 500 BCE, incorporated Dhotis and Antariya, which were pieces of cloth wrapped around the waist and legs. The advancing times of the Maurya and Gupta Empires, lasting from 321 to 550 BCE, witnessed the emergence of antiquated versions of the modern sarees and dhotis in an increased variety of materials like silk and cotton. Another classic attire of our country, the Anarkali suit, was introduced during the Mughal Empire, tracing back to 1526–1857 CE.

Soon came the British colonisation of India and, with that, arrived the British influence of industrial cloth in the country, which inadvertently led to the invention of hand-woven material known as Khadi, to reduce the reliance of Indians on British industrial goods. Next arrived the Roaring Twenties with the year 1920, and women adopted skirts and trousers into their closet, slowly and steadily transitioning into a fusion of modernity and traditions in their outfits, as is evident in modern times. The 21st century has begun, and now we see a plethora in the variety of attires and clothing people across our country wear, as was clearly visible to me during my trip across the North, South, East and West of our beloved country.

This journey through India's traditional clothing is a testament to how deeply our attire reflects who we are—our roots, our resilience, and our rhythm of life. It reminds us that fashion in India is not just worn, but lived and passed on through generations.





AAYUSHI PANWAR

Student | Grade 12 | Sancta Maria International School, Faridabad

Aayushi, a 17-year-old student of Grade 12, is passionate about creativity, leadership, and environmental initiatives. She loves learning, exploring new ideas, and finding ways to make a positive impact in her community.



STUDENT'S EDITION: MY SPACE, MY VOICE

UNDER THE EXAM SPOTLIGHT

Board exams. Just hearing the words is enough to make any teenager panic. For me, it was honestly one of the hardest phases of my school life. Balancing studies, friendships, and my own mental health felt almost impossible.

Board exams. Just hearing the words is enough to make any teenager panic. For me, it was honestly one of the hardest phases of my school life. Balancing studies, friendships, and my own mental health felt almost impossible. More than this being a single child puts you in a situation where you have immense competition with other children specially during the 10th grade exams otherwise we have a fear of becoming the biggest failure for our parents .

In the beginning, I thought I had it under control. I convinced myself I was managing my syllabus well along with going to school, catching up with friends, scrolling Instagram endlessly, and binge-watching Netflix. But somewhere deep down, I knew I wasn't giving enough time to actual preparation. The late realization hit me like a truck. I had wasted so much time, and now guilt was my new best friend.

My exams were not a few weeks long as normal. My board exams extended from April 2024 until mid-June 2024 since I did IGCSEs. That's two and a half months under constant pressure and endless revision. The mind refused to relax throughout that time. My life from March turned into this cycle: waking, studying, worrying, eating, studying, increased worry, sleeping.

The worst part? My procrastination habits. I would sit reading books, promising total focus, but watch four Netflix shows or

get lost using Instagram. Wanting for an escape, it was like I was indeed stuck and wanting for study.

As if exam stress wasn't enough still, some drama in my friendships was something I was dealing with then. Misunderstandings added a whole extra layer of worry. Fights and overthinking also caused this worry. I spent some hours replaying conversations in my head instead of focusing on some formulas or essays. Everything seemed to crash. It did feel like it was all of it at the one time.

The one most important thing that I have learned is about self-care. Your productivity improves as you properly prioritize yourself, give care, and allot time. Now in Grade 12, I look back and think about just how much easier those exams would have felt with more early preparation. Back then, each day felt extremely long. It did feel as if it dragged on for quite a while.

Yes, back-to-back exams were stressful. But later, I realised the papers weren't as tough as I imagined. They pushed me to think critically, to go beyond memorising theory, and to open my mind to different areas of knowledge. It wasn't just about marks it was about learning how to handle pressure and grow from it.





VAANYA THAKUR

Student | Grade 7 |
Gurugram Global Heights
School, Gurugram

Vaanya is a curious learner and spirited dreamer who loves exploring new ideas and experiences. Her excitement is sparked by science experiments, sketching, and discovering how things work, which constantly keeps her asking questions. She enjoys turning everyday observations into creative projects, whether through drawing, crafting, or building something new. For Vaanya, learning is an adventure, and she believes that creativity and curiosity can open endless doors. Her goal is to grow into a person who combines imagination with knowledge to make a positive difference in the world.



STUDENT'S EDITION: MY SPACE, MY VOICE

A STITCH OF PERSONALITY

In every thread, a little me—
I brighten the day, glow at night.
Wearing those jeans with a kurti,
Beautifully woven in white.
In every thread, a little me—
I brighten the day, glow at night.
In that lehenga screaming pretty,
I feel on cloud nine, like a kite.
In every thread, a little me—
I light the day and glow carefree.
Fitted in that picturesque saree,
I feel and finally see me.
Either in that crop top or oversized hoodie,
I feel the reality softly flee.
Be it the jhumke or the heel—
They carry me, wrapped in glee.
What I wear is what I am,
Not for show, but to show me.
I wear my voice in every outfit,
My soul dressed in what I long to be.
In every fold, a memory free—
My threads echo the loudest me.
My soul dressed in the "me"
They will never unsee.
I wear the truths in threads so loud,
Even silence hears me speak—unbowed.



INSIGHT & INSPIRATION



SANDEEP KUMAR

Government-certified
Motivational Speaker |
UPSC Coach | Writer |
Teacher Trainer

Sandeep Kumar, recognized by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Rajiv Gandhi University, is a seasoned UPSC coach with 12+ years of experience. He has authored books for UPSC aspirants and motivation. Founder of Sandeep's IAS Academy, he mentors aspirants, provides career counseling, and coaches on leadership, mindfulness, and relationship management.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS DURING FESTIVALS CAN REVIVE OLD RELATIONSHIPS AND STRENGTHEN EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Last Diwali, in a small Delhi neighborhood, a retired schoolteacher organized a community "diya-lighting" evening. Dozens of families gathered, children painted lamps, and elders exchanged sweets. A neighbor later shared, "I had not spoken to my childhood friend in 10 years, but we reconnected that night." This small event reflects a larger truth—festivals, when celebrated together, heal distances and restore human connections.

Festivals and Social Bonds

India celebrates over 30 major festivals annually, and surveys show that nearly 72% of Indians prefer celebrating them in groups rather than alone (LocalCircles, 2023). Community gatherings—whether during Eid, Christmas, or Pongal—act as social glue. They reduce urban loneliness, which the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified as a growing public health challenge, comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day in its impact.

Emotional Health and Well-being

A 2022 Harvard Study of Adult Development found that strong relationships are the single biggest predictor of happiness and health. Festivals nurture exactly that: laughter during Holi, group prayers in Gurpurab, or Onam feasts all release dopamine and serotonin, improving mental health. According to the University of Oxford, group singing, dancing, or eating can increase happiness levels by 21%.

UPSC Ethics Perspective

As a UPSC coach, I often tell my students that festivals are not only cultural markers but also living examples of Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude.

Moral Values: Festivals embody forgiveness, compassion, and gratitude.

Emotional Intelligence: Celebrations teach us to understand emotions, empathize with others, and manage harmony.

Relationship Management: Old conflicts are resolved, friendships are revived, and community bonds strengthen.

When aspirants study topics like emotional intelligence or values in public administration, they can easily use examples from festivals to enrich their answers in the UPSC mains.

Reviving Bonds & Reducing Stress

The NSSO reports that urban families meet

extended relatives 40% less frequently than rural families. Festivals naturally repair these gaps. Similarly, with 60% of Indian employees facing burnout (Deloitte, 2023), celebrations serve as stress-busters—what psychologists call collective mindfulness.

Community festivals are not just traditions; they are therapy for the mind and lessons in human values. They revive relationships, strengthen social harmony, and improve emotional health. As a UPSC coach, I see them as practical classrooms of ethics and emotional intelligence—reminding us that true progress lies not only in economic growth but also in emotional well-being and human connection.





Rohini Mehra

Home Chef & Writer

Rohini is a writer at heart and a mom by profession. Though her world may be small, her dreams are big. She draws inspiration from her daughters, finds strength in her husband's support, and stays on her toes thanks to her energetic dog. Rohini is still waiting for that big break in life when she can boldly say, "Yes, I have arrived!"

Festive Flavours Made Easy Quick Recipes for Teens

Loading our hearts with hopes and desires, flooding our homes with family and friends, and stuffing our mouths with delicious delicacies, the most awaited festival of the year

Diwali is once again approaching and almost round the corner!

So check out these tempting and delightful recipes to enjoy the festival to your fullest!!

Diwali Recipes ✨

Diwali Chivda (Spiced Snack Mix) 🍲

A light and crunchy mixture with poha, peanuts, and curry leaves.

This is a traditional treat enjoyed during the Diwali festival and in



some households, the whole year through. Having various ways to put together this addictively flavorful snack, I will be sharing the easiest, most affordable, and non-fried version to prepare it. As all of you might have become quite health-conscious lately, this will be the best option. Hope you enjoy making it and savoring it too!

To ensure smooth cooking of this lip-smacking mixture, first gather

all the ingredients together.

Ingredients:

- Poha (the thin variety) - 2 cups
- Peanuts - 1/4 cup
- Roasted chana daal - 1/4 cup
- Cashew nuts (split from between) - 1/4 cup
- Curry leaves - 15 - 20 (rinse and pat dry)
- Turmeric powder- 1/4 tsp
- Red chilli powder - 1/4 tsp
- Chaat masala - 1/4 tsp
- Cooking oil - 4 tbs
- Powdered sugar- 1 tsp (optional)
- Salt - as per taste

Now simply follow the procedure as below :

1. Dry roast the poha in a heavy, thick-bottomed pan on a low flame.
2. Gently keep stirring the poha in between so that it gets roasted evenly and doesn't get burnt in the process.
3. After 5-6 minutes, once the poha starts changing its texture and becomes crisp, remove it on a plate and keep it aside.
4. In the same pan, add 1-2 tbsp oil. Once the oil gets hot, add the peanuts and shallow fry them for 4-5 minutes on a low flame.
5. Once they turn golden brown, remove them from the pan and keep them aside.
6. Now add 1-2 tbs oil again and follow the same procedure for chana gram and cashew nuts. Once they change their color to a little darkish tint, set them aside.
7. Add 1 tbsp oil to the pan again. Put the curry leaves and all the remaining spices in the oil. Switching off the gas, now add all the ingredients that we had roasted earlier to the pan. At this stage, you can use 2 big spoons to mix everything well together.
8. Once the mixture cools down, enjoy the flavours and the festival.



Diwali Mocktail (a saffron- and cardamom-infused festive drink - non-alcoholic)

Now, after this spicy, sweet, and salty snack mix, how about a shimmering and sparkling mocktail made with saffron and cardamom to quench your thirst and get into the spirit of the festive season!

Method:

1. Mix the sugar and water and simmer it for a minute or two on low heat. Stir occasionally till the sugar is dissolved.
2. Turn off the heat. Add the green cardamom powder and strands of saffron, and let the mixture cool down completely
3. Strain the mixture into a sterilised bottle to store in the refrigerator.
4. Take a tall glass now. Pour 3 tbsp of the concentrate into it. Gently, middle 3-4 mint leaves in the glass. Squeeze 1/2 a lemon into it. Drop 4-5 ice cubes and fill the glass with club soda and Ta - Da, your Mocktail is ready!!

Chocolate Ladoo (made with biscuits, cocoa, and condensed milk; a fun twist for kids)

Let's now wrap up our Diwali festivities with some chocolate ladoos, which are absolutely enjoyable and totally Fundoo!!



Ingredients:

- Water - 2 cup
- Sugar - 1 1/2 cup
- Saffron - 8-10 strands
- Green Cardamom powder - 1 1/2 tsp



Ingredients:

- Marie biscuits or any plain biscuits , easily available (20 pieces)
- Powdered sugar - 4 Tbsp
- Cocoa powder (Unsweetened) - 4 Tbsp
- Butter (melted) - 4 Tbsp
- Vanilla Extract - 2 Tsp
- Condensed milk - 1/2 cup

Method:

1. In a food processor, grind the biscuits to a fine powder.
2. Transfer this powder to a large bowl and add the sugar and cocoa powder. Mix them well.
3. Now add the butter and vanilla essence to the mixture.
4. Now add the condensed milk in small quantities and knead the mixture to a soft-textured dough.
5. Once the dough is ready, put some butter on your palms and start making small chocolate balls from the dough.



Decorate these balls on a fancy plate and offer them to your family and friends, and don't miss seeing that grin on their face.

Christmas Recipes

Hot Chocolate (a festive drink to keep you cozy this winter)

The most ideal way to spend almost every December evening is to snuggle up in your warm quilt with a warm mug of hot chocolate to keep you cheerful and cozy.

Here are two amazing variations to make it.

Variation I

Ingredients:

- Milk (preferably full cream) - 2 1/2 cups
- Unsweetened cocoa powder - 2 tbsp
- Sugar - 2 tbsp
- Chocolate chips (optional) - 1/4 cup
- Vanilla extract - 1/4 tsp

Method:

1. Place the milk (any of your choice) in a saucepan over low-medium heat. We can also use water, but milk makes this drink flavorful and extra creamy.
2. Now, put in the cocoa powder and sugar, and keep whisking the mixture on the heat to avoid lumps.
3. Once the milk is warm, add the chocolate chips and continue to whisk until the chips start to disappear.
4. Add in the vanilla extract.
5. Serve the hot chocolate immediately before it is no longer hot.

Variation 2

Ingredients:

- Whole milk - 2 1/2 cups
- Bitter-sweet chocolate, finely chopped - 4 Tbsp
- Brown sugar - 2 Tbsp
- Grounded cinnamon - 1 Tsp
- Vanilla Extract - 1 Tsp
- Cloves - 4 pieces
- Marshmallows (Optional)



Method:

1. In a saucepan, whisk all ingredients together (except marshmallows) over medium heat until it comes to a boil.
2. Simmer for 2-3 minutes while stirring often.
3. Whisk vigorously to create a foamy top layer.
4. Pour into 2 mugs, while carefully straining the pieces of cloves.
5. Place 2 marshmallows on the top and serve immediately.

Plum Cake in a Mug - a quick festive delight

Now just grab a mug for that craving of a cake by baking a quick mug cake. Let's gather the ingredients.



Ingredients:

- Plain flour - 2 Tbsp
- Cocoa powder - 1 Tsp
- Baking Powder - 1/8 Tsp
- Baking Soda - 1 Pinch
- Cloves Powder - 1 Pinch
- Cinnamon Powder - 1 Pinch
- Grated Nutmeg - 1 Pinch
- Mixed Dry fruits - Cashew, Raisins, Almonds (cut into pieces) - 2 Tbsp
- Chopped Cherries - 2 Tsp
- Orange juice or any fruit juice available - 3 Tbsp

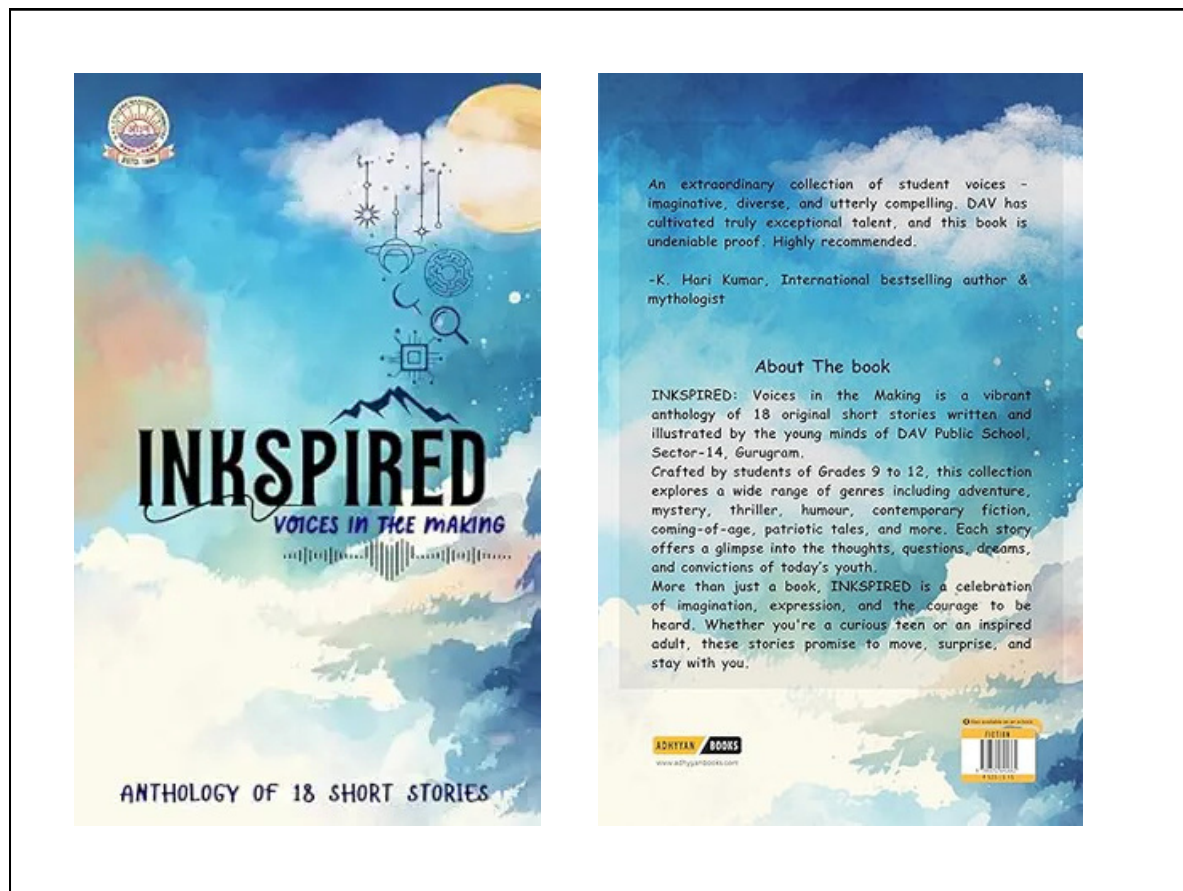


Method:

1. Put all the dry ingredients in a cup one by one in the order mentioned above.
2. Using a spoon, give it a good stir.
3. Once mixed well, add the fruit juice at intervals. Once all ingredients are mixed well, wipe the edges of the cup with a napkin.
4. Garnish with some cherries and dry fruits and microwave the mug for 1 minute.
5. Your plum cake in a mug is prepared!!

These recipes will really resonate with our teen readers and add a warm, festive touch.

Nurturing Young Voices Through Storytelling



Under the mentorship of author Prachi Sachdev, students of DAV, Sector-14 (Grades 9-12) embarked on a creative journey into the world of fiction writing. Their passion, imagination, and dedication culminated in the publication of a remarkable anthology of short stories, released in August this year. This collective work stands as a celebration of youthful creativity and the power of guided storytelling, giving students the confidence to see their ideas take shape in print.

If you are a school looking to nurture the writing talent of your students, or an individual aspiring to explore your storytelling voice, you too can benefit from guided mentorship and see your words come alive in published form.

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Thank You For Reading!

Dear Readers,

As this year winds down and we inch closer to the promise of new beginnings, I find myself – like many of you – pausing to reflect. Some moments from the year make me smile, others make me sigh, and a few remind me of how growth often comes disguised as chaos.

This edition of Teen Digest is a gentle reminder to slow down, breathe, and start again – no matter where you are in your journey. To reboot your energy. To reset your priorities. To restart your dreams.

To our young readers: remember, life isn't about having it all figured out. It's about giving yourself the grace to begin again – every single time.

To our contributors and writers: your words continue to spark conversations, inspire change, and bring heart to every page. Thank you for lending your voice and passion to this space.

And to my wonderful team – your creativity, consistency, and spirit make every deadline worth it. You are the reason Teen Digest feels like home.

As we wrap up this issue, I hope these pages help you reflect, reconnect, and rediscover your own rhythm before stepping into a brand-new year.

If this edition resonates with you, I'd love to hear your thoughts. Write to me at teendigestindia@gmail.com – your stories and reflections are what keep this magazine alive.

Until next time, pause often, laugh freely, and never hesitate to press restart when your heart whispers, "try again."

With love & gratitude


Prachi
SACHDEV

Founder and Editor-In-Chief