

Veer Gatha 5.0: Young India Draws Inspiration from the Nation's Story of Courage

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In an era often marked by changing digital trends, Project Veer Gatha stands out as a one of the most powerful national movements, connecting school students to not just the post-independence tales of valour and gallantry but to our rich and vivid military history and heritage. The project anchors India's children to the timeless values of courage, sacrifice, and service to the nation. Launched under the aegis of the Gallantry Awards Portal (GAP) of the Ministry of Defence which is handled by USI of India.

Veer Gatha has, since 2021, evolved into one of the world's largest student participation programmes dedicated to honouring India's gallant heroes, and legendary historical figures. The knowledge of India's military history and heritage should be known by school children not to glorify war, but to embed the knowledge that will be building blocks in shaping character, citizenship, and confidence in ways no textbook lesson alone can.

The project was conceived by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India and implemented with the collective support of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Defence, Central Board of Secondary Education, and MyGov. It seeks to introduce school children to the lives of Gallantry Awardees and iconic figures of India's freedom struggle. The aim is not merely academic enrichment, but the nurturing of patriotism, civic responsibility, and national pride from a young age.

A Journey of Remarkable Growth

The journey of *Veer Gatha* over five editions mirrors its growing resonance among school students across the geographical and linguistic diversity. The inaugural edition in 2021 witnessed participation from over eight lakh students across 4,788 schools. During the *Veer Gatha* 2.0 in 2022, participation nearly doubled to 19 lakh students from 14,472 schools. The third edition marked an unprecedented leap, witnessing over 136 lakh students from 2.42 lakh schools nationwide. *Veer Gatha* 4.0 further expanded its footprint, with more than 176 lakh students participating.¹

Veer Gatha 5.0, conducted from 08 Sep to 10 Nov 2025, has taken this legacy forward with achieving new heights. In the fifth edition, over 192 lakh students from approximately 1.9 lakh schools participated. The fifth addition confirmed the project's commitment to taking the project to each nook and corner of the country and international CBSE schools by engaging school students in a truly pan-India, and now, global initiative.

The fifth edition introduced several significant innovations. For the first time, CBSE-affiliated schools abroad were included, extending India's narratives of valour beyond national borders. Students from 18 countries participated, with more than 28,000 overseas entries—an important milestone in sharing India's ethos with the global Indian diaspora. Out of the super 100 winners, four students were from the schools abroad including from Malaysia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

While essays, poems, paintings, and drawings remained central, *Veer Gatha* 5.0 broadened its creative canvas by introducing anchoring and storytelling, alongside short video formats. The competition was structured across three age-based categories: Preparatory Stage (Classes 3-5), Middle Stage (Classes 6-8), and Secondary Stage (Classes 9-12), ensuring age-appropriate engagement and expression. Schools were also encouraged to establish a dedicated *Veer Gatha* Corner—a space to showcase student creations, celebrate participation, and serve as a living archive of inspiration for future editions.

Learning Through India's Martial Legacy

A defining feature of *Veer Gatha* 5.0 was its thematic expansion to include Samarik Parampara—India's rich military traditions, strategic thought, and heroic campaigns. Students explored the lives and legacies of legendary warriors such as King Kharavela of Kalinga, Prithviraj Chauhan, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the revolutionaries of 1857, and leaders of tribal uprisings.² By engaging with these narratives, participants developed a deeper understanding of India's civilisational strength, cultural diversity, and historical resilience.

The initiative also benefitted from nationwide interaction programmes, where Gallantry Awardees connected with students through both offline and online sessions. These interactions transformed the tale of bravery of individual soldier into a story to imbibe. The project tends to go beyond textbook abstraction into lived experience, motivating students to participate with sincerity and enthusiasm.

Entries were submitted through the MyGov portal in accordance with detailed guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education. The evaluation followed a rigorous three-tier process—District, State/UT, and National levels—ensuring transparency and merit-based selection.

At the national level, a committee appointed by the Ministry of Education selected the top 100 entries, known as the 'Super 100'. These winners comprise 25 students each from the Preparatory and Middle Stages, and 50 from the Secondary Stage. In addition, eight winners were selected at the state level and four at the district level, excluding those already chosen at higher levels.

Celebrating Excellence and Inclusion

One of the most heartening outcomes of *Veer Gatha* 5.0 has been the remarkable participation and success of girl students. Of the 100 national winners, 64 were girls—an emphatic testament to their leadership, creativity, and engagement with national narratives. Maharashtra emerged as the leading state with 19 national winners, including 14 girls, while entries from across the country reflected rich linguistic and cultural diversity.

Each national-level winner will receive a cash award of ₹10,000, a blazer, a medal, and a certificate, along with Republic Day Parade passes—an unforgettable honour for young achievers.

The national felicitation ceremony for the Super 100 winners was held at the DRDO Auditorium in New Delhi on 24 January 2026. The event will be graced by the *Raksha Rajya Mantri*, Minister of State for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (I/C), Shri Jayant Chaudhary, the Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Chairman DRDO Shri Samir V Kamat and other senior dignitaries. This year, Group Captain Manish Arora the hero of Operation Sindoor addressed the winners, inspiring them with first-hand reflections on courage and service.

Addressing the Super 100 Winners, the *Raksha Rajya Mantri* congratulated them and stated that initiatives such as *Veer Gatha* would ensure that future generations remember and honour the sacrifices of India's great freedom fighters and soldiers. Emphasising Bharat's legacy as a land of brave warriors, he urged the young participants to draw inspiration from iconic national figures such as Sardar Patel, Birsa Munda, the Sahibzade, and Swami Vivekananda, whose courage, dedication, and sacrifices will continue to inspire the nation and remain etched in history.³

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, emphasised that initiatives such as *Veer Gatha* play a vital role in educating school students about the valour and sacrifices of brave hearts, while nurturing the creativity of young minds. He highlighted the record participation of 1.92 crore students from over two lakh schools, including international participants from the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Malaysia. These students took part in activities such as drawing, painting, essay writing and short video creation, offering heartfelt tributes to the nation's heroes in recognition of their exemplary service and sacrifice.

As special guests of the Ministry of Defence, the winners also witnessed the Republic Day Parade 2026—an experience that symbolically connects young minds with the nation's highest traditions of honour and sacrifice.

Conclusion

Beyond numbers and accolades, the true impact of *Veer Gatha* 5.0 lies in its ability to transcend linguistic, cultural, and geographical barriers and bind the country with the common thread of the sacrifices of its soldiers. By engaging nearly two crore students—including thousands from abroad—the project has sown seeds of national pride and historical awareness on an unprecedented scale.

Veer Gatha is not merely a competition; it is a collective national effort to ensure that the stories of India's brave sons and daughters continue to inspire future generations. As *Veer Gatha* 5.0 draws to a close, it leaves behind a powerful message: when young India learns its history with empathy and creativity, the nation's legacy of courage remains not just remembered, but lived.

¹ "Project Veer Gatha 4.0 - Civilsdaily." 2024. Civilsdaily. November 22, 2024. <https://www.civilsdaily.com/news/project-veer-gatha-4-0/>.

² "Republic Day Celebrations 2026: Veer Gatha 5.0 Witnesses Record Participation of 1.92 Crore Students." 2026. Pib.gov.in. 2026. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=2212438>^{®=3&lang=2}.

³ "MoS Education & Defence Felicitate Super 100 Winners of Veer Gatha 5.0 - BW Education." 2026. BW Education. 2026. <https://www.bweducation.com/article/mos-education-defence-felicitate-super-100-winners-of-veer-gatha-5-0-590781>.

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