

BHILAR- A VILLAGE OF BOOKS- : CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mangesh S. Talmale *

* **Librarian,**
Karve Institute of Social
Service,
Pune, Maharashtra
India.

QR Code



Abstract: - *This paper discusses an overview of Bhilar : a Village of Books model based on Hay-on-Wye. It deals with need, objectives, government participation and role, categorizing of books, Challenges, opportunities, future activity planning, suggestion and recommendation. Project main aims to attract tourism culture and grow the reading habits among youth. The state government take initiatives to promote the culture of reading. It is also promoting a book village. This is the country's first village of books that is opened on May 4, 2017.*

Keywords: Pustakanche Gaav ,Village of Books, Bhilar, etc.

1.0 Introduction: Bhilar, a village is located in Satara district in Maharashtra state. It is near to the Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani. The village has over 600 households. They are involved in strawberry farming. It is known for its strawberries. Most of the produce is either exported or carried to nearby cities for sale. It is about 250 Km from Mumbai. However, now it has become the favorite destination for booklovers. Recently, Maharashtra Government has declared that it has become the first-ever “Pustakanche Gaav” or “Village of Books” in the country. Now it is being converted into a book village. The concept has been inspired by Britain’s Hay-On-Wye, a Welsh town known for its

book stores and literature festivals. India’s ‘Village of Books’ is set to come up in Bhilar in Maharashtra. An initiative of the Marathi Bhasha Department and Rajya Marathi Vikas Sanstha a government body, and residents of Bhilar. Maharashtra’s minister for education and culture Vinod Tawde, who was fascinated by the concept and is driving the project. The Bhilar experiment is firmly located in Maharashtrian culture and Tawde himself had announced the project on 27 February 2015, which is ‘Marathi Bhasha Divas’ (Marathi Language Day) and the project ‘Pustakanche Gaon’, inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on May 4, 2017.

1.1. Need: Bhilar is modeled based on Hay-on-Wye, taken care to contextualize Bhilar as Maharashtra's book village by incorporating elements of the best literary, cultural, and intellectual traditions of Maharashtra. The idea is a visit to Bhilar should prove to be an experience worth treasuring for students, book lovers, writers, tourists, and people at large. Bhilar experiment is "qualitatively different" from that of the Welsh town. In Hay-on-Wye the concept is driven by bookstores and book sellers. But in Bhilar, the project entitled "Village of book" is an initiative being promoted and implemented jointly executed by the natives, Maharashtra government, and State Council for Marathi language. The Bhilar model is community-driven as some locals have offered their homes to put up books. Bhilar, with a population of nearly 3,000 and close to the tourist destinations of Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani, is famous for its strawberry farms. Government wanted to locate this concept in a place, which is already visited by tourists and an important location on the tourist map. Bhilar is situated on the road connecting Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani, and it is also famous for its strawberry plantations. The project, which aims to bring Bhilar on India's tourist map with the twin attractions-library and strawberry.

1.2. Objectives:

1. To encourage reading habit among the youth.
2. To attract tourism and help the village economically.

3. To develop a book village or town of books.

4. To promote Marathi language

1.3. Government Participation and Role:

The government is providing things like shelves, tables, chairs, decorated umbrellas, glass cupboards and bean bags for readers. It has kept around 15,000 books in the village premises. Most of them are donated by people. Books are open to people. All these books are going to be available free of cost to the readers. They are available to those, who want to read. They are free to pick up the books of their choice and the only condition is that they put them back. There will be reading rooms, places to sit and read. Visitors will visit villagers home and enjoy reading books, along with their strawberry who has offered his/her premises to stack books for public reading.

1.4. Categorizing of Books: Nearly 25 premises, which include three temples, two schools, seven houses and several lodges and homestays spread on a stretch of 2 Km in Bhilar village, 7-8 Km from Panchgani, would open their gates for public reading. All 25 hot-spots spread across the village have been decorated and given different themes, such as children's books, novels, science fiction, sports, feminism and Diwali edition of newspapers, history, poetry, and literature to autobiographies, biographies, and festival specials. Categorizing books in their respective disciplines and putting them up for display. The libraries are arranged in such a way that a visitor can choose books as per his or her interest. If somebody is interested in novels, there

is a dedicated spot, where he/she can walk in and browse through fiction.

1.5. Opportunities: Following opportunities are:

- a) Litterateurs and publishers would be a great platform to freely host events for the promotion of literature and literary ideas.
- b) Visitors would be get a collection of books at one place.
- c) It would help for tourism and promotion of Marathi language and culture can go hand in hand.
- d) The government might be used the village as a unique platform and to promote literature.
- e) The atmosphere of the village would be changing and more people are coming forward to host free libraries at their homes.
- f) Villagers would be help to increase sale of strawberries and allied businesses.
- g) Students would be aware about reading habits and book culture.
- h) Government might be benefits visitors to boost tourism and helps the village economically.

Further, it helps Government, visitors and native's administrators to understand and redesign knowledge access environment according to user's preferences and approaches.

1.6. Challenges: Following challenges are:

- a) There is a heavy rainfall/ damp weather.

- b) There is limitation of space and reading facilities.
- c) There is chances of gather a crowd, so that nature would be harmed.
- d) There is limitation of budget to run smooth functioning of Bhilar library model project.
- e) There is limitation of collection of books.

1.7. Future Activity: Following Bhilar Model - future activity planning are:

- a) The government would be planned to build a state-of-the-art library, a litterateurs' corner and place for holding literary workshops.
- b) They would be added collection of books in English and Hindi language also.
- c) They would be promote the reading habit, popular books from Marathi have been kept at these locations.
- d) They would be organized literary discussions, exhibitions, reading and writing workshops, book publication events, and poetry reading sessions, etc.
- e) They would be make a gallery of books in Marathi that have won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi awards and the Jnyanpith award presented by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- f) They would be organized a permanent exhibition of writers and scholars from Maharashtra.

1.8 Suggestion and Recommendation:

Government should have planned regarding Bhilar Library Model is to be improve visitors

reading habits. In view of above perspectives, it is suggested and recommended that:

- a) **Strategic planning:** Efforts should be required to promote and proper strategic planning based on present and future needs to facility the library book services. The need to have a strategic planning to implement Bhilar model based services in long run.
- b) **Networking:** All local libraries must be networked locally and using Infrastructure of library network is to be setup as a part of knowledge network.
- c) **Budget:** Bhilar library model must be required an amount of funding by government initiated and also adequate support from the private sector for smooth functioning to operate a Library system.
- d) **Public Private Participation:** The Government of India and Maharastra state should be provided financial incentives to encourage public-private participation in the development of Bhilar library model and such model will encourage to people.
- e) **Information Communication Technology (ICT):** There should make a massive promotional programme to encourage the use of ICT based Bhilar library model in the development of reading culture.
- f) **Collection and Activities:** There should be taken more initiative to introduce more children literature in the library and proper planning for children related language

based games, stories, poems, writers and poems meet etc.

- g) **Study Tour:** Study tour should be organized for school children.
- h) **Preservation:** There should need a plan to preserve books.
- i) **Web Portal:** There should plan to create a web portal to aware the users and its popularity and made available in open domain to encourage widespread use in the country.
- j) **Database:** There should be developed a Bhillari Library Books database.
- k) **Mobile Apps:** There must need to make mobile apps to find the books and their locations.

Conclusion: Most of the students and youth have lack of reading habits. Reading is a way to enjoy informative, creative, and inspiring works of literature that enrich our life experiences. It is a lifelong source of enjoyment and entertainment. Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading strategies. Students and youth help themselves through reading books, newspapers and other magazines. For personal growth and development, there is need for the good reading habits. This project introduces book library with different programs and services, which are definitely increases reading habits among youth and students. It is beneficially to their academic performance also.

Acknowledgements: The authors are grateful to all the scholars, authors, contributors, Whose ideas have been used for the present paper and cited accordingly.

References:

- Bashir , I.& Mattoo, N. H.(2012) A Study on Study Habits and Academic Performance Among Adolescents (14-19) years. International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow. Vol.1, No. 5, pp. 1-5.
- 15,000 Books, Comfy Beanbags & Some Fresh Air: Welcome to India's First Book Village!
<https://www.thebetterindia.com/99108/book-village-bhilar/>
- Bhilar, a village in Maharashtra have become India's first village of books
<https://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/india/indias-first-ever-book-village-opens-in-maharashtra>
- Book village being built in Bhilar, Maharashtra
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/lifestyle/books/features/book-village-being-built-in-bhilar-maharashtra/articleshow/58455371.cms>
- Book Village of Bhilar to get 25,000 non-Marathi books
<http://www.asianage.com/metros/mumbai/220517/book-village-of-bhilar-to-get-25000-non-marathi-books.html>
- From strawberries to books: Maharashtra's Bhilar to become readers' haven
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/india-s-very-own-hay-on-wye-book-village->

to-come-up-near-pune/story-fv1TxB4mrzURkim7Us7VOK.html

- India's first book village to come up in Maharashtra's Bhilar
<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/lifestyle/books-and-art/290417/indias-first-book-village-to-come-up-in-maharashtras-bhilar.html>
- India has its first village of books in Maharashtra's Bhilar
<https://yourstory.com/2017/05/maharashtra-books-village/>
- India's First Village of Books ('Pustakancha Gaav') at Bhilar: A Bibliophile's Paradise
<https://tourdefarm.in/blog/indias-first-village-of-books-pustakancha-gaav-at-bhilar-a-bibliophiles-paradise/>
- Maharashtra Hamlet Declared 'Book Village' For An Amazing Reason
<http://www.mid-day.com/articles/maharashtra-hamlet-bhilar-book-village-reader-hotspots-free-libraries-marathi-literature/18232152>
- Maharashtra's books village seems like a good idea – but what do its residents think of the project?
<https://scroll.in/magazine/840818/maharashtras-books-village-seems-like-a-good-idea-but-what-do-its-residents-think-of-the-project>
- Welcome to India's first ever book village in Maharashtra
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2017/may/07/welcome-to-indias-first-ever-book-village-in-maharashtra-1602125.html>