

Literature in Marathi now available online

Here's good news for readers looking for Marathi literature and unable to find it easily. Major publishers in Maharashtra have come together to launch a website for online distribution of books in Marathi. Eight publishers including Majestic Prakashan, Popular Prakashan, Mauj Prakashan, and Continental Prakashan based in Mumbai and Pune will launch www.marathireader.com early next year.

“We will offer at least 5,000 titles in Marathi and keep increasing it. As far as e-books go, we'll offer 2,000 titles to start with,” said Harsha Bhatkal of Popular Prakashan. He said old Marathi classics by Vijay Tendulkar and PL Deshpande continue to be bestsellers and it would take time to digitise them.

“Many people want to buy and read books in Marathi but we are busy seven days a week. We'll definitely read more if books can be acquired easily,” said Saanaee Naik, 19, a student and Thane resident.

The idea for the website came after seeing the success of Amazon and Kindle, said Milind Paranjpe of Jyotsna Prakashan, who initiated the project six months ago. “The site will reach out to readers outside Maharashtra or India and those in remote areas,

where supply chains are weak,” he said.

Publishers said in the past five years nearly 3,000 books in Marathi were released every year. Earlier the number did not exceed 1,800. “Although the number of books in Marathi is increasing, the store space and marketing links have not kept up. Even if a book is good it is not displayed at stores,” Rohan Champanerkar of Rohan Prakashan.

“Moreover, we need to keep up with the times and new technology,” said Champanerkar. At present sites such as Bookganga.com, Flipkart and Rediff sell works of major Marathi authors. “We have a good market for online orders of hard copies in India and for e-books in countries such as the US, UK, Singapore and Gulf. The market is huge,” said Mandar Joglekar, now based in the US, who started www.bookganga.com last year.

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