

BOOK FESTIVAL 2025 – KITABON KI BASTI

Chitra Kahani Mela

Amidst the winter vacations, a vibrant community-based event titled “**Kitabon ki Basti**” was organized at the **Ganesh Mitra Mandal** on 20th December 2025 with the objective of taking the library beyond its physical space and bringing books closer to the community. The initiative aimed to spark curiosity, nurture a love for reading, and make books accessible and engaging for children in an informal, joyful setting.

The event was designed as a **book activity festival** that showcased a variety of thematic reading and learning spaces. Different corners were created thoughtfully to cater to diverse interests and age groups. These included a **Picture Book Display**, a **Forest-themed Display**, engaging **Storytelling and Poetry Sessions**, a creative **Book Repair Corner** named “*Book Hospital*”, a **Library Card Making Station**, a **Free Reading Corner**, and a **Passive Library Station** that allowed children to browse and explore books at their own pace.

The overall ambience played a crucial role in creating a warm and inviting reading environment. The space was creatively set up using colorful saree, cushions, and floor seating, demonstrating how simple, easily available materials at home can be used by children to create their own cozy reading corners. This thoughtful setup inspired families to reimagining reading spaces within their homes and communities.

The event was formally inaugurated by Dr. Smita Puniyani, representing Asha Mumbai for Education. Approximately **80 to 90 children** visited the fair, with nearly **45 children actively participating** in various activities and sessions throughout the day. The event successfully reached out to community members and highlighted the importance of the **Phule Nagar library space**, strengthening its connection with children and families through interactive and playful engagement.

The theme of the fair, “**Chitra Kahani Mela**”, celebrated the power of visual storytelling and narratives, encouraging children to connect with stories through images, imagination, and expression. Esteemed resource persons including **Ms. Mona Mehta**, **Mr. Mohammad Khan**, and **Ms. Pooja Prajapati** conducted enriching sessions that captivated young audiences and fostered creativity, critical thinking, and a love for literature. On 19th December 2025, children from the Phule Nagar community came together to present a street play titled “**Bhavishya**.” The play was performed at three different locations and featured the enthusiastic participation of 15 children, effectively conveying its message to the community.

The fair concluded on a joyful note with a **cultural program**, where children confidently showcased their talents. Performances included **shayari**, **poetry recitations**, **Adivasi dance**, **short dramas**, and other creative expressions, reflecting the diverse voices and cultural richness of the community.

Overall, *Kitabon ki Basti* emerged as a meaningful and memorable initiative that transformed reading into a collective celebration, reinforced the idea of libraries as inclusive community spaces, and empowered children to engage with books beyond traditional boundaries.

