

The slide and rise of Diwali anks

Sunday, Nov 11, 2012, 15:21 IST | Place: Pune | Agency: DNA

Manasi Saraf Joshi

An avid Diwali ank reader, Manmohan Ambekar observed that the slide in the number of people reading Diwali anks is due to alternate entertainment sources like TV and the Internet.

At a time when distributors of Diwali anks (Diwali special issues of magazines) are cribbing about poor response to printed editions, the online editions by various Marathi websites and groups of bloggers are blazing a trail.

“Renowned littérateurs such as Pu La Deshpande, GA Kulkarni and many others started their career by writing for Diwali anks. The trend to publish these special issues was started by Masik Manoranjan’s editor KR Mitra who published the first Diwali ank in 1909,” said editor of Grahankit Diwali Ank, Chandrakant Shewale.

“Theme-based Diwali anks, though very less, as compared to literature-based, are gaining popularity with readers. Health, astrology, cookery and travel are the most popular themes. There are over 125 Diwali anks in the market this year, very few of which are based on themes,” he said.

An avid Diwali ank reader, Manmohan Ambekar, observed, “There seems to be a slide in the number of people reading Diwali anks because of alternate entertainment sources like TV and the Internet.” Writer Santosh Deshpande said, “With more and more theme-based issues being published, Diwali anks are losing their literature-based identity.”

Pushpa Shewale, who runs a special library of Diwali anks, said, “Time is a major factor with readers these days. Over the years, the quality of writing and reading has deteriorated. Now, the renowned writers prefer to write for audio-visual media rather than these special issues which have limited shelf life.”

On the other side, most administrators of various Marathi websites claim that the online editions of Diwali anks are a hit, especially among the youth.

Chinmay Damle, director of <http://www.maayboli.com>, which was the first to start its online Diwali ank, said, "We cannot claim that online anks are more popular, but there has been a steady growth in their readership. We can monitor how many hits we get for a particular article, literature or poems. But this cannot be the authorised source to claim the fame."

Raj Jain of mimarathi.net said, "Our Diwali issue last year got 15,000 hits and this year the Diwali issue has already got 8,000 hits. Well-known writers like Sureshchandra Nadkarni, Pradip Niphadkar, Ganesh Matkari, Sanjay Sonavani, Nita Gadre and Prajakta Patwardhan have been writing for our Diwali ank."

The online Diwali anks are preferred by the youth because one need not carry them, besides the online portals are also attracting writers as they get instant reactions to their works and can even interact with readers."

Neelkant Ghumare, administrator of <http://misalpav.com>, said, "There has been a rise in the readership of online journals. The only hitch is that the readership is between the age group of 15 and 45. The older generation, which makes loyal readers, still prefers the print media."