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WORDS WORTH

Best known Gujarati encyclopaedia makes it to Library of Congress

Ashish Vashi | TNN

As a community, Gujaratis have become an integral part of the US. Now, even Gujarati language seems to have caught Uncle Sams fancy. Gujarats best-known encyclopaedia has found space on the shelves of the worlds biggest library.

After the online version of Bhagwadgomandal, the biggest lexicon and encyclopaedia in Gujarati, went on to become a big hit in the US, the work was selected by the US Governments Library of Congress Catalog earlier this month. The work is included as one of the richest reference works in Gujarati. It also features as Gujarati-English and English-Gujarati digital dictionary resource in the library.

The Library of Congress is the research library of the United States Congress and is the oldest federal cultural institution in the country. Located in three buildings in Washington, DC, with offices worldwide, it is the largest library in the world by shelf space and holds the largest number of books, said Ashok Karania of Gujaratilexicon.

The Gujaratilexicon team digitised Bhagwadgomandal this year. The aim is to showcase the richness of an indispensable resource to experts and lovers of Gujarati language. It is a treasure of knowledge and a matter of pride for every Gujarati.

Bhagwadgomandal contains 2.81 lakh unique words with their meanings. Archiving and cataloguing of the digital version by none other than US Federal Congress Library is a big achievement for our language, said Karania. In all, the encyclopaedia contains 8.22 lakh

words.

The process to prepare this magnum opus was undertaken in Gondal by the visionary Maharaja Bhagwadsinhji of this tiny erstwhile princely state of Kathiawar. It took 27 years to publish the first volume in 1958.

Mahatma Gandhi, while blessing this adventure had written a letter to its editor Chandulal B Patel saying: I am spellbound with your adventure and it will serve our mother tongue in a big way. The Mahatma's words have come true.



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