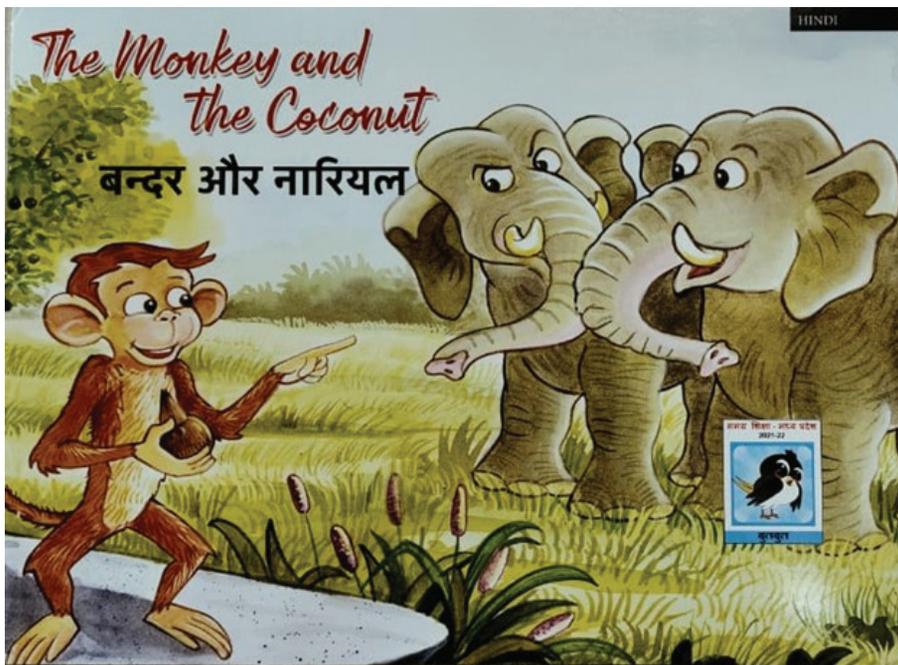


From the States: Madhya Pradesh
Title: *The Bulbul Series*

Varada Mohan Nikalje*

The Samagra Shiksha Madhya Pradesh developed a series of supplementary reading materials for young children

in 2021–2022. Titled '*Bulbul*', this bilingual series (English–Hindi) is aimed at children in Grades 1–5.

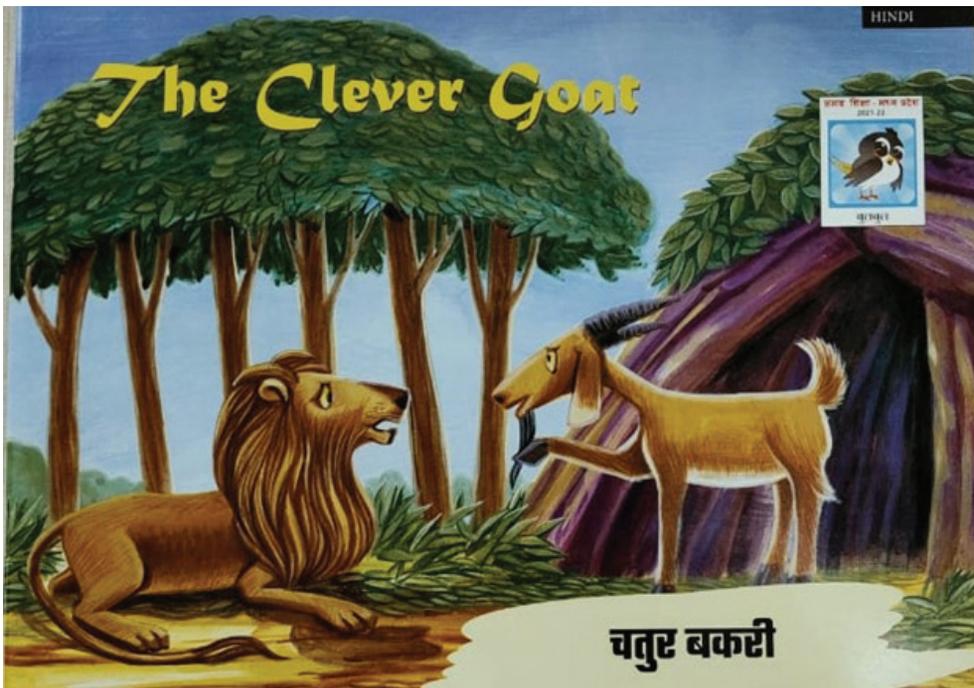


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The third edition of the series, released in April 2022, includes an impressive 80,000 copies across 70 titles. Published under an agreement with the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysuru, Karnataka, this series aligns with the ‘*Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat*’ initiative launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, in 2017. This initiative focuses on encouraging reading, with two-and-a-half hours out of the four-and-a-half-hour instructional day dedicated to language activities, such as oral language development, read-aloud sessions, and guided reading. The ‘*Bulbul*’ series is a valuable resource for these activities.

The target audience is children in Grades 1–5 attending government schools. The series is bilingual, with each paragraph in English followed by its Hindi translation. This format offers an academic advantage, as children may start by reading the text in Hindi and then move on to the English version. Some children might prefer to read the English section first. The ultimate goal is to help children progress towards independent engagement with the English language.

By using these books, children’s innate linguistic abilities are nurtured in both languages. Additionally, young readers learn that the same narrative can be expressed in both



languages, fostering respect for linguistic diversity.

The illustrations in the '*Bulbul*' series are large and colourful, enhancing young readers' comprehension and encouraging critical thinking. Each page features either a centre spread or a single large illustration, with impressive details, such as the variety of flowers in a lion's mane and intricate patterns on leaves. The high-quality, glossy paper used adds to the richness of the illustrations, making the series very appealing to young learners.

The '*Bulbul*' series also aids in enhancing children's aesthetic sense. As children engage with the printed material daily, they begin to notice colours, fonts, book layouts, and cover page details. According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, language is central to cognitive, social, and cultural experiences. It is not only a medium of communication but also essential for developing skills, such as learning, reasoning and critical thinking.

Children's literature in India is relatively young, less than 200 years old, and most available materials are from private publishers, often priced beyond the reach of many families. A few decades ago, many parents viewed reading storybooks as a waste of time. However, as research on child psychology and language learning increased, awareness grew about the positive impact of storytelling, rhyme, rhythm and vocabulary development. Schools began to introduce library

periods to expose children to materials other than textbooks. The government also started allocating funds for storybooks and poetry anthologies, often purchasing from organisations like the National Book Trust (NBT), the Children's Book Trust (CBT), NGOs, or private publishers.

It is pertinent to note that children in government schools come from diverse backgrounds and some may not have storybooks at home. The Samagra Shiksha Madhya Pradesh (MP) has done a commendable job by providing 70 titles to all government schools in the state, ensuring children have access to books beyond textbooks.

The themes of the '*Bulbul*' series appeal to children's imagination while also referencing reality. Titles such as *A Rat with Wings*, *The Milk of a He-Buffalo* and *The Golden Swan* motivate young readers to open the book and read. The content ranges from wise tales of ancient India to animal stories of contemporary interest. Some young readers may already be familiar with tales, such as *The Clever Crow*, which narrates how a thirsty crow drops pebbles into a jar to raise the water level and quench its thirst—a story still relevant today.

A few stories are modified versions of European tales. For instance, *The Piper and the Villagers* seems inspired by *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. In this version, a piper rids a town of rats but is denied payment. Unlike the original, where the piper leads the children away, this story ends

happily with the villagers repenting, paying the piper and getting their children back.

The series also includes a well-known Russian story originally printed in comic-book format. It depicts two goats squabbling over who gets to cross a bridge first, with dire consequences. However, in this

series, the story ends with two other goats learning from their predecessors and resolving the issue amicably.

The material is designed for young readers at an impressionable age. The series subtly introduces values, such as compassion, love, and respect for elders without direct preaching. Children indirectly imbibe

राज्य शिक्षा केंद्र - मध्य प्रदेश, भोपाल समग्र शिक्षा - 2021-22		1 से 5 कक्षा लाइब्रेरी पुस्तकों की सूची	
S. No.	Title	S. No.	Title
1	Juno and the Baby Monkey - बुनो और छोटा बंदर	36	The Lion and the Mosquito - सिंह और मक्खन
2	THE MISCHIEVOUS MONKEY - शरारती बंदर	37	The nameless bird - बिना नाम का पक्षी
3	TIMELY IDEA - सम्योचित उत्तर	38	THE CLEVER RABBIT - होशियार खारोरा
4	CLEVER DEER - चतुर हिरणी	39	The Rabbit and the Crow - खारोरा और कौआ
5	KOEL BIRD FEES - कोयल का गाना	40	HELP TO THE HELPER - एक दूसरे की सहायता
6	FRIENDSHIP - दोस्ती	41	BELLING THE CAT - बिल्ली के गले में घंटी बाँधना
7	PICNIC - पिकनिक	42	GREEDY FOX! - शरारती लोखंडी
8	Monkey and the Crocodile - बंदर और पट्टियाल	43	THE FOX TIED THE LION TO A TREE! - लोखंडी ने गोर को पेड़ से बाँध रखा
9	SMALL CREATURES - छोटे प्राणी	44	The Donkey and the Fox - गधा और लोखंडी
10	The Clever Rabbit - होशियार खारोरा	45	Tit for Tat! - ठेके को ठेका
11	A RAT WITH WINGS! - चूहे के पंख	46	Lion and little Fox - सिंह और लोखंडी
12	The Invisible Mouse - अदृश्य चूहा	47	Fox, Hen and Monkey - लोखंडी, मुनी और बंदर
13	Friends turned into enemies - मित्र बने शत्रु	48	The Crocodile and the Crab - गघर और केकड़ा
14	Clever Rabbit - चतुर खारोरा	49	NEVER TRUST STRANGERS - अजनबियों पर कभी विश्वास न करना
15	Clever Fish - चतुर मछली	50	Truthfulness - सच्चाई
16	IT SERVED CROW RIGHT! - कौए को सही सबका	51	The Frog and the Mouse - मेंढक और चूहा
17	Omnipresent - सर्वव्यापी	52	Value of friendship - मित्रता का मूल्य
18	Soft the Weaver - कोयल नामक जूताहा	53	The Clever Goat - चतुर बकरी
19	The Cave that Talked - बोलेवाली गुफा	54	The Tale of the Three fishes - तीन मछलियों की कहानी
20	The Honeybee in the Lotus - कमल में शैल	55	THE TIGER AND THE DOE - गोर और किल्ली
21	FOUR COWS AND THE TIGER - गोर और चार गधे	56	The Woodcutter and the angel - लकड़हारा और परी
22	THE HELPFUL CRANE - सहायक कबूतर	57	THE CRANE'S NOBILITY - गान्धर्व की बहादुरी
23	Animals' Plan - जानवरों की योजना	58	FRIENDSHIP - मित्रता
24	Small Help - छोटी सी सहायता	59	WHAT A BUSINESS! - बात क्या पधा है
25	Elders' advice - बड़ों की सलाह	60	Birds' anxiety - पक्षी की उलझन
26	Big hearted crow - बड़े हृदयवाला कौआ	61	Festival of colors (Holi) in a forest - वन में रंगों का त्योहार (होली)
27	THE CLEVER SHEEP - चतुर भेड़	62	FIGHTING IS ALWAYS BAD - झगड़ना बुरा है
28	The Golden Swan - सुवर्ण हंस	63	The milk of the he-buffalo - पीने का दूध
29	Thankful - धन्यवाद	64	Unselfish - निस्वार्थ
30	MOTHER'S LOVE - मां का प्यार	65	The Monkey and the Coconut - बंदर और नारियल
31	Jealousy is bad - ईर्ष्यानु गिना	66	The Advice of Elders - बड़ों की सलाह
32	The Elephant and the Dog - हाथी और कुत्ता	67	The Piper and the Villagers - चामुण्डा और गाँववाले
33	The Clever Crow - चतुर कौआ	68	The Wise Goats - बुद्धिमान बकरियाँ
34	The Proud Calf - गर्वित बछड़ा	69	The Best Friends - श्रेष्ठ मित्र
35	Mits and the Bananas - मिट्टू और केले	70	FOX - TORTOISE - लोखंडी और ककूआ

these values as they read the tales. For future editions, some improvements could be considered. For instance, titles should be correctly translated from Hindi to English. *Clever Rabbit* should be *The Clever Rabbit* and *Fox-Tortoise* should be corrected to reflect that it is a story about a fox and a tortoise, without the incorrect use of a hyphen. Each language has its own grammar and this should be respected in translation to maintain the quality and accuracy of the series.

Another point to consider is vocabulary. For instance, one title uses the word 'omnipresent'. While the story explains the concept clearly,

the word itself is too difficult for the target readership. A simpler word or phrase would be more appropriate.

In some stories, the narrative moves abruptly from one event to another. Adding a few phrases or sentences to bridge these gaps would improve the flow. While an adult can easily understand the concept even with missing information, books for children should have full clarity. Addressing this aspect is essential.

Overall, the series is a commendable initiative by the state to facilitate children's engagement with language and guide them towards developing a joyful reading habit.

