

## **BHOJSHALA SOCIAL MEDIA POST**

### **BRIEF**

#### **Bhojshala Case – Why Vidhii Setu Foundation Has Moved the Court**

The Madhya Pradesh High Court is currently hearing a case about the Bhojshala complex in Dhar, a historic structure that is officially recognised as a protected monument of national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. The complex is believed by many Hindus to have been originally built as a temple dedicated to Goddess Sarasvati (Vagdevi), the Hindu goddess of knowledge and learning. The site derives its name from King Bhoja of the Paramāra dynasty (c. 1000–1055 CE), a renowned ruler of central India famous for promoting education, arts, and Sanskrit scholarship. Historical accounts suggest that Bhojshala was established around the 11th century and functioned as a major centre of learning, where subjects like Sanskrit, music, philosophy, astronomy, yoga, and Ayurveda were taught. Many historians and traditions link the complex to a Sarasvati temple and educational institution created during the reign of Raja Bhoja, reflecting the intellectual culture of medieval Malwa. Some historical records also state that the structure underwent major changes in the 14th century, when parts of the earlier temple architecture were reused during the construction of a mosque structure at the site. Because of these layered histories, the Bhojshala complex today stands at the centre of an important legal and historical debate about its original character and heritage. We as Vidhii Setu Foundation (VSF) seek to assist the court by supporting efforts to study archaeological evidence and uncover the original temple heritage of the site.

#### **What is the issue?**

The court is currently examining the historical and archaeological character of the Bhojshala complex. To assist the court, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) conducted a 98-day scientific survey using modern methods such as Ground-Penetrating Radar and other archaeological techniques to study the structure and remains at the site.

#### **Why does this matter?**

The findings of this survey reportedly include inscriptions, carved pillars, and structural remains, which are historically significant but also fragile and vulnerable to damage. The way this evidence is preserved and examined will directly influence how the court determines the

monument's historical character. Will determine the origins of the temple behind the ruins and the covered structure.

Beyond this specific dispute, the case raises larger constitutional questions about how India protects monuments of national importance and balances heritage conservation with religious and public interests.

### **Vidhii Setu Foundation's stand**

Vidhii Setu Foundation has filed an intervention application before the High Court. The foundation is not seeking to expand the dispute, but to assist the court on three key aspects:

- Protection and preservation of the heritage monument and the Ancient temple inside the complex
- Constitutional obligations of the State under Article 49 to safeguard historical monuments.
- Proper consideration of the ASI's scientific survey and archaeological evidence.

### **The VSF objective is simple:**

- To ensure that India's cultural and civilizational heritage is preserved and that the court's decision is informed by constitutional principles, scientific evidence, and the public interest in protecting national monuments.
- Heritage monuments are held in public trust for present and future generations, and their preservation must remain a central priority in any adjudication.

## POST CONTENT

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- The Madhya Pradesh High Court is hearing a case about the Bhojshala complex in Dhar, a historic site recognised as a monument of national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- The name “**Bhojshala**” comes from **King Bhoja of the Paramāra dynasty (c. 1000–1055 CE)**, a famous ruler known for promoting **education, arts, and Sanskrit scholarship**.
- Historical accounts suggest that **Bhojshala functioned as a major centre of learning in the 11th century**, where subjects such as **Sanskrit, philosophy, music, astronomy, yoga, and Ayurveda** were taught.
- Many historians and traditions connect the site to a **Sarasvati temple and educational institution established during the reign of Raja Bhoja**, reflecting the rich intellectual culture of medieval Malwa.
- Some historical records indicate that **major structural changes occurred in the 14th century**, when parts of the earlier temple architecture were reused during the construction of a mosque structure.
- Because of these **multiple historical layers**, the Bhojshala complex today lies at the centre of an **important legal and historical debate about its original character and heritage**.
- **Vidhii Setu Foundation (VSF)** has stepped in to assist the court by supporting efforts to **examine archaeological evidence and uncover the original temple heritage of the site**.

### **Why does this matter?**

- The **court is looking into the real history of the Bhojshala complex** and trying to understand what the structure originally was.
- To help the court find the truth, the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** was asked to study the site.

- The ASI carried out a **98-day scientific survey** of the monument.
- They used **modern technology like Ground-Penetrating Radar and other archaeological tools**.
- These methods help experts **look beneath the surface and study hidden structures and remains without damaging the monument**.
- The goal of this study is to **understand the historical and architectural nature of the Bhojshala complex** so the court can make an informed decision.

### **Our Efforts**

- Vidhii Setu Foundation (VSF) has filed an intervention application before the Madhya Pradesh High Court in the Bhojshala matter.
- The Foundation is not trying to widen the dispute, but aims to assist the court on important legal and heritage-related issues.
- **Protection and preservation of the monument:** Ensuring the heritage structure and the ancient temple remains within the complex are properly protected and conserved.
- **Constitutional duty of the State:** Highlighting the obligation under Article 49 of the Constitution, which requires the State to safeguard monuments and places of historical importance.
- **Scientific and archaeological evidence:** Ensuring the court gives proper consideration to the ASI's scientific survey and archaeological findings while determining the true historical character of the site.

### **The VSF Objective:**

- **Preserving civilizational heritage:** Ensuring that India's cultural and civilizational heritage is protected, and that the court's decision is guided by constitutional principles, scientific evidence, and the broader public interest.
- **Public trust doctrine:** Emphasising that heritage monuments are held in public trust for both present and future generations, and their preservation must remain a central priority in any legal adjudication.