



IASLIC NEWSLETTER

Indian Association for Special
Libraries and Information Centres



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Quote of the Month

“Books are a uniquely portable magic.”

— **Stephen King**,
American fiction writer

Appeal to Readers

News from different regions / states are solicited from IASLIC members for inclusion in the newsletter. Send such news to the Editor.

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IASLIC ACTIVITIES

IASLIC Quality Improvement Programme: Image Building and Reputation Management of Library and Information Systems and Services (IBRM-LISaS) May 15 - 24, 2021

IASLIC is going to organize this intensive programme, the first such programme in LIS field, in online mode with a view to develop expertise among LIS professionals to go in for the task of building legitimate image and reputation of the library and its services by way of skillfully managing its activities. Experts in the field will serve as resource persons, who will make presentations on different facets of the topic, which will be followed by discussion and interaction. For more details and registration visit IASLIC website <http://www.iaslic1955.org.in/Default.aspx?PageID=62> or contact Honorary General Secretary, IASLIC (email ID: iaslic.india@gmail.com)

IASLIC 29th National Seminar

The 29th National Seminar of IASLIC could not be held as scheduled during October 27 - 29, 2020 due to pandemic. The new dates and venue of the seminar will be announced in due course on IASLIC website and in the newsletter. Papers for the seminar are still being accepted. The last date of acceptance will also be announced in due course. For 'Call for Papers' detailing facets and sub-facets of the seminar theme and those of the themes of SIG meetings, please see *IASLIC Newsletter* April 2020 issue or visit IASLIC website.

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

International

Webinet on Library Design

IFLA Library Building and Equipment Section is organizing a webinet on 'Library Design Matters! Outdoor Spaces as Key Library Assets' on May 6, 2021. For details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/node/93801>

Conference on Impact of Open Access

IFLA Acquisition and Collection Development Group is organizing a Virtual Conference Open Programme on 'The Open Access Transformation and its Impact on Library Collections' during August 17 - 19, 2021. For details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/node/93641>

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Army turns Bus Stand into Library

In a novel initiative, the Army has converted a dilapidated bus stand in a village in South Kashmir into a 'street library' to help students of neighbouring areas to prepare for competitive exams and higher studies, according to a PTI story carried by *The Times of India*. The library, which was set up in the last week of February this year by the 18 Rashtriya Rifles of the Army, has become an instant hit among the students of Ranipura, Chittisingpura, Kejrival and Devipora villages, officials said. Seeing students of higher classes getting engrossed in books, the younger lot from primary classes surrounded Lt. Col. Rohit Jha, Commanding Officer of the 18 RR, which comes under the Victor Force that looks after south and central Kashmir, and demanded that some story books be kept for them too. A pleasantly surprised Lt. Col. Jha immediately ordered some comics having a social message and books which can increase their knowledge, officials said. The 'street library' opens early in the morning and within no time, children are seen flocking to the bus stand and looking for the story books which have been donated by 2-Sector Headquarters of the Rashtriya Rifles, a force carved out of the army for fighting terrorism in the hinterland. The bus stand located at Devipora-Chittisingpura junction in Anantnag district has now virtually become a hub of knowledge which is often flocked by youngsters appearing for competitive exams and higher studies. The army unit has also tied up with 'Books of India' society which has agreed to supply some books for the cause. The Army said that it was not only about reading, books could also be used to relax minds of students. In order to help the students, they have also kept a 'book jar', from where children pick up a slip of paper and take out a book ranging from realistic fiction to science and historical fiction or romance to fantasy or mystery books. The 'street library' showcases India-2020 of late President A P J Abdul Kalam and compilation of Khalil Gibran or the world's greatest short stories. The bus stand was burnt down by miscreants in 2016 and a quote of famous American writer Sidney Sheldon was an inspiration for setting up the 'street library'. He said, "libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life." The Army plans to open more such street libraries in the near future to help the youth achieve the power of knowledge and look out for their better future. The 'street library' has a notice board to announce new arrivals of books besides pasting Quick Response or QR code of national level entrance exams and a guide on how to be a part of the Army. The officials said that some students had also started demanding some books which the Army tried to procure from the market or through some NGO. For original story visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/books/features/army-converts-bus-stand-to-street-library-for-jk-children/arcleshows/81388713.cms>

Bid to Save Europe's Largest Tamil Library

Pursuing a BA in Indology and Tamil Studies at Cologne University in Germany had always been Balakumaran Ilangovan's dream. But his plans have been indefinitely postponed as the university had decided to discontinue the Tamil Studies Department's courses in 2018 due to lack of funds, according to a story in *The Times of India*. The language has been taught at the institution since 1963 and the Tamil Library is one of the largest outside India with more than 40,000 books. "The Tamil Library and research materials in this department stand apart from other universities in Europe," says Ilangovan, an engineer who now lives in Stuttgart. In an attempt to keep the department going, this February, several Tamil organisations across Europe joined hands and formed Europe Tamilargal to raise ₹ 1.25 crore. The Department of Indology and Tamil Studies, now headed by Professor Dr. Ulrike Niklas, is considered one of the most prestigious places to study the classical language. The department is, however, nearing its end with the retirement of Dr. Niklas in March 2022, says Manoj M, spokesman of Europe Tamilargal. To continue the lectureship position of the department, the members have written to North-Rhein Westphalia Government where Cologne University is located. "We have also reached out to the Tamil Nadu Government, Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Central Government," he says. Recently, DMK chief M K Stalin tweeted urging the TN Government to fund the university to retain the Tamil chair. "We have also organized virtual cultural shows with folk artists. We hope to raise funds through them," says Manoj. Assistant professor Sven Wortmann says that retaining the lectureship is essential for saving the library as well. "The books, most of which are rare, might be destroyed by the university due to lack of space. For full story visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/rescuing-europes-largest-tamil-library/articleshowprint/81374858.cms>

Netaji Reading Promotion Awards

On the occasion of 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, observed as Parakram Diwas, National Book Trust, India, has announced the institution of 'Annual Netaji National Reading Promotion Recognition Awards'. These annual awards, to be presented on 23rd January, will seek to recognize the outstanding contribution of Institutions, Trusts/ Foundations, Organizations, NGOs as well as state governments, CSR supported schemes, etc., working with sustained commitment, innovation and inclusive vision to promote a culture of reading and empowerment among the children and youth, in particular, and the other reading communities, in general. Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director NBT, said that NBT would always be a frontrunner in supporting NGOs/organizations that work tirelessly towards creating a reading movement in the country. The National Book Trust, India, is in the process of constituting a Jury for the Awards which will formulate and release the parameters and guidelines for the Awards. This initiative is part of the larger programme of the Trust under its India@75 umbrella initiative. For original announcement visit: <https://www.nbtindia.gov.in/writereaddata/attachment/wednesday-march-3-20214-54-52-pmmarch-2021.pdf>

Lifetime Achievement Award for NBT

National Book Trust, India, has been honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award for promoting culture of reading in the country at the India Reading Olympiad on January 23, 2021, says a report in *NBT Newsletter*. The award was given by Food4Thought Foundation. Prof. Govind Prasad Sharma, Chairman, NBT, and Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT, received the award during the virtual award ceremony. Recognizing the efforts made by various individuals and other institutions which were nominated for the awards in promoting books and reading habits at the community level, Shri Yuvraj Malik announced a donation of NBT books worth ₹5,000 as reward to each nominee. Based in Hyderabad, Food4Thought Foundation works extensively towards encouraging the habit of reading. The Foundation has opened several libraries and conducts various programmes including the annual India Reading Olympiad. For original report visit: <https://www.nbtindia.gov.in/writereaddata/attachment/wednesday-march-3-20214-54-52-pmmarch-2021.pdf>

Labourer built Library gutted

Day labourer Syed Issaq, 62, of Mysuru had built a library of 11,000 books and stacks of newspapers to introduce the poor to a world of knowledge that had been shut to him as a child. After the library of his sweat and toil that contained thousands of copies of the Bhagvad Gita, the Quran and the Bible burnt down recently, he was shocked but determined not to let the suspected land sharks behind it destroy his life's work, according to a story by K M Rakesh in *The Telegraph*. "I still have it in me to rebuild it all over again," the father of three grown-up children told reporters. "I never had the privilege of a proper education; so I want to provide access to books and newspapers to the underprivileged." Well-wishers have pitched in, with an online fundraiser having already collected ₹ 15.65 lakh to help Issaq rebuild the library. A Facebook campaign for book donations that emphasises the "interfaith" character of Issaq's library has received support from across the country. Issaq had used a portion of his income from cleaning drains and doing odd jobs to set up the library in a small tin-and-bamboo shed in Mysuru city in 2011. It stood on a patch of government land in the Rajiv Nagar Corporation Park slum near Ammar Masjid, and was known simply as "Public Library". Although he was occupying government land, the authorities did not disturb him since he was doing it for the public good. Opened with a small number of books and newspapers, the library grew quickly with books donated by the public. Among the charred books were "about 3,000 copies of the Bhagvad Gita, and another 1,000 copies of the Quran and the Bible, almost all donated by people", Issaq said. More than 80 per cent of the destroyed books were in Kannada while the rest were in English, Urdu and Tamil. Issaq said the library attracted about 150 regular visitors each day, and most of them read the newspapers. He said he spent about ₹ 6,000 each month on the library's upkeep and on the eight daily newspapers in Kannada, Urdu, English and Tamil that it offered its readers. The library operated on trust: Issaq opened it every morning and went to

work while visitors walked out with any book or newspaper they wanted and later returned them. There were no fees, deposits, records or library employees. Issaq returned to close it in the evening. "I was asleep at home (near the library) when a neighbour told me about the (pre-dawn) fire. But there wasn't much I could do to save the books," Issaq said. An FIR of "mischief by fire or explosive" has been registered on a complaint from Issaq. Police sources said that they suspected local toughs who had at least twice tried to shut the library down. Issaq says the goons had asked him to move out since he was occupying government land. He believes they worked for the land mafia. "There were about 11,000 books, most of them donated by well-wishers. It will take a lot of time and effort to collect all the titles again," Issaq said. Muzaffar Assadi, Head of Political Science Department at the University of Mysore, has urged people to donate books to help rebuild the library. "This act of destroying a privately run library established by a poor man in a slum area for the purpose of interfaith dialogue and disseminate the value of knowledge is most condemnable," Assadi wrote on his Facebook page. According to a subsequent report in *The Times of India*, Issaq has appealed to the state government to allot land where he could construct the library which he wants to name 'Kannada Sarvajanika Granthalaya'. Meanwhile, B Manjunath, Deputy Director, Department of Public Libraries, Mysuru, visited the spot recently. He said: "Many publishers have offered to donate books and money. The site ownership is being reviewed. Library can be constructed in parks too. A report about the incident has been sent to the government. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation has also sought information about it. For full story/report visit: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/fire-engulfs-library-of-love-in-mysore/cid/1812257> and <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mysuru/mysuru-crowdfunding-brings-rs-14l-to-rebuild-library-destroyed-in-fire/articleshowprint/82023917.cms>

Tale of Bookmobiles

Advertisement is like Botox - well almost. It helps smoothen wrinkles - real and metaphorical - with or *without* consent. So it has been with a commercial on Facebook featuring Dhara, an imaginative - but unreal - young woman who drives around her bookmobile - a library on wheels - spreading the joy and light of books to nooks and corners of the city, according to a story by Uddalak Mukherjee in *The Telegraph*. Unfortunately for Facebook, Satabdi, a flesh-and-blood, feisty lady and Dhara's alter ego in real life, has seen through the social network's sleight-of-hand. In a scathing Facebook post, Satabdi - she is the co-founder of Walking Book Fairs - wrote that in the course of her journey with her bookmobile for 35,000 kilometres in the last seven years, she has encountered threats of rape and murder, killer highways, goons, surly politicians and unhelpful policemen but - unlike what the Facebook ad shows - "no people offering me tempos, no people who turn it magically into a bookmobile, no romantic pond side locations, absolutely nowhere you can park a bookmobile as you please, and no people who just turn up in hundreds to read books." April - the

National Bookmobile Day fell this month (in USA) - was the perfect occasion to look into some of the other existential crises faced by the *chalaman* library that Satabdi chose not to mention in her message. Technological advancement - the rise of the digital library - has made books, at least their electronic avatars, far cheaper and more accessible, threatening to derail the libraries on wheels. The high costs of operating these enterprises have raised concerns with their patrons, and there has also been some talk of their carbon footprint. Interestingly, most resources on Google - Facebook's pal - offer a rather rosy history of the library on the move. There is the reference to *The British Workman's* report on George Moore in the nineteenth century whose "perambulating library" sought to "diffuse good literature among the rural population". Across the Atlantic, there was the librarian, Mary Lemist Titcomb - "prim", "proper" and "frosty in manner" - who went on to popularize a mobile library wagon, a horse-drawn carriage shepherded by the library janitor, that took books to the forgotten corners of that land. South Asia's first mobile library started in India in 1931: we have S.R. Ranganathan to thank for that. There is a case for widening the ambit of public information on these fascinating pioneers of books on wheels. How, for instance, did conservative America take to a woman nursing a passion to spread the printed word? Is it the pious zeal to portray these women as heroines that has led to the excision of their trials and tribulations? What bind Satabdi to Mary Titcomb are their willingness and ability to break new ground. But the path to new ground - no matter what Facebook says - is inevitably paved not with gold but stones. For original story - visit: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/books/crises-faced-by-the-mobile-library/cid/1812037>

Library as extension of Classroom

An NGO that works with girls from underprivileged homes is integrating a library in Kolkata with the curriculum to encourage an interest in reading and books, according to a story by Jhinuk Mazumdar in *The Telegraph*. Most of the girls are first-generation learners and the idea is to use the library as an interactive space rather than for them to "sit quietly and read by themselves". The NGO Ek Tara has come up with a new learning centre and space has been dedicated for the library where lessons in several languages are being held to make "coming back to school" an engaging and vibrant experience. "We are using the library as an extension of the classroom and not as one reading space where children would have to browse unconnected reading material. Not all books will be academically loaded but there will be a co-relation between their text and the books in the library," said Manjusmita Bagchi, associate director, Ek Tara. The NGO has partnered with Delhi-based NGO Katha, which is providing the books as well as online training to teachers on how to use the books as part of everyday classroom teaching. "It is important that we make the reading material relatable and contextual so that our children take to it more. Also, it has to be simple reading for them to be able to grasp," said Bagchi. Ten Ek Tara teachers have been trained and are using different ways to stoke the children's interest amid a "learning loss" created by the pandemic. "For many of them, whatever reading they are doing

is in the centre and we have to encourage them. We use simple games like they clap when they identify a noun or draw out the characters of the book," said Mitali Bose, the head of the learning centre. The Ek Tara Learning Centre, a new space that was inaugurated at the end of last month, will enable these children to access modern learning resources. The centre has over 20 classrooms, provisions for STEM and social studies labs and play zones. "Due to the pandemic, families under our care and others in the communities suffered financial and social setbacks that will take years to reverse. There have been rising incidents of early marriage, domestic violence and child labour, underscoring for us the need to work more deeply with all stakeholders," said Bagchi. The NGO is using its space, activities and curriculum to help them come back to school, express themselves and build their confidence that has suffered a setback in the past one year. "They have been cooped up within the confines of their homes and they need to come out, look forward and be willing to learn," said a teacher. The library and reading space will also be used for playing games, for debates and discussions and public speaking that will encourage them to think and question, a member of the NGO said. For original story visit: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/calcutta/library-to-tackle-learning-loss-in-kids/cid/1811583>

Library goes to People's Doorstep

One of the negative fallouts from the all-pervasive social media is that it has almost killed the reading habit. To revive this habit, a group of IT professionals and engineers has come together to start the 'Let's Read India' movement in Maharashtra by taking their library to the people's doorstep, says a story by Sudhir Suryawanshi in *The Indian Express*. The campaign started a few months back in Maharashtra and in a short period, the group has more than 10 lakh books on a variety of subjects. Prafulla Wankhede, one of the founders of the campaign, says that it is getting an overwhelming response. "Our primary objective is to bring this WhatsApp and social media generation back to books. We want to rekindle the reading habit and culture among them. It will make them better educated and more civilised citizens," he said. Wankhede said, "our library van goes to remote places lacking major facilities. We want to reach out to every person who wants to read a book. We have three mobile libraries now. People can borrow books for a week for free with only one condition: the borrower should submit a 300-word review about the book to be able to take a second book," he said. "Otherwise, people take the book and use it to adorn a corner of their home. Our objective is to ensure people read." "Those who want to get books can connect through our social media site/website and app. This will enable them to know the locations of the mobile library that has GPS attached. Besides, there is a QR code for each book. The mobile library makes the weekly visit to the identified locations," Wankhede said. Initially, 'Let's Read India' Foundation had planned to start the initiative in Maharashtra, Goa and Madhya Pradesh, but the plan was shelved because of the pandemic situation. "We are now focusing on Maharashtra. In the next two years, we will be able to connect each and every village of the state," said

Wankhede. “Once we grow in Maharashtra, we'll then shift our focus to the rest of the country.” The foundation also plans to start a YouTube channel where well-known authors' speeches, interviews and reviews will be played. “We not only offer books, we also suggest what should be read,” said Wankhede. For full story visit: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/good-news/2021/apr/05/this-library-on-wheels-in-maharashtra-inspires-people-togo-back-to-books-2285907.html>

Street Library in Nagaland

“Pick a Book”, a community-based free street library project was officially inaugurated by SDO (C) Phek, Zhoi Lohe, in Nagaland in the presence of district administrator, civil society leaders, heads of educational institutions, students and well wishers at Mission Compound Colony, Phek HQ, says a *Nagaland Post* report. The event was sponsored and managed by Mission Compound Colony Youth Association (MCCYA). According to a press release, giving an insight on the project, founder and initiator of Pick a Book and ex-assembly speaker, Chakhesang Students' Union (CSU), Vezito Tetseo said that he had always dreamt of starting the project and had been collecting books from friends and well wishers. According to him, the project would be “a catalyst of creating an impact towards community building” and stated that certain books and novels written by prominent authors would be featured on their official Instagram handle at *pickabookastreetlibrary* for avid readers which can be borrowed within Phek town at minimal rental charge for maintenance of street library. Tetseo expressed gratitude towards District Administration and DLCW MSK-BBBP, Phek for acknowledging his effort. He also acknowledged the colony youth for tirelessly working round the clock, in assisting him financially and materially and thanked every individual who donated in books and in kind. He informed that those willing to donate books were welcome as he would come up with more street libraries in the future. Guest speaker, SDO (C) Phek, Zhoi Lohe maintained that reading would improve and enhance the thought process, vocabulary and writing skills among the people. He expressed happiness on the new project which would empower people from all walks of life, as many were not equally privileged to access and afford books. While lamenting that people in the society wasted time instead of making their lives more meaningful, Lohe held that the project should sustain and be a seed for a public library in the district headquarter. It may be noted that the project was started to encourage both young and old to read books as well as to enhance the literacy rate in the state by beginning at the grassroots level. The street library contains a slew of books of different topics of interests and encourages students' community to read books by providing them easy access and affordable book materials round the clock. The street library project is first of its kind in Nagaland and will be managed by MCCYA. For full report visit: <https://www.nagalandpost.com/-free-street-library-inaugurated-in-pek/228296.html>

'Green Box' Initiative in Nagaland

The Kohima Forest Division in Nagaland, under the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, launched the 'Green Box' initiative on March 27 last, and distributed over 50 books in three villages, says a story by Devyani Madaik available on *thelocalindian.com* website. The packed green boxes contain unused and used books on the environment, conservation, wildlife, and climate change. The initiative aims to reach out to more villages. The department launched the initiative with the hope of creating 'green libraries' across all the districts, and sensitizing the public about nature and wildlife, reported East Mojo. The villages were selected from three ranges in the district, including Zhadima village under Chiephobozou range, Jakhama village under Kohima range, and Sendenyu village under Tseminyu range. Speaking to the media, Divisional Forest Officers (DFO) Rajkumar M, IFS, said that the initiative was part of the pilot project 'Project Future,' inaugurated in April last year. The project also includes video lessons, awareness campaigns, online competition, putting up signages across districts. With this initiative, Rajkumar said, the department aimed to provide access to libraries, especially to villages with zero access to books, and raise awareness about wildlife, the environment and climate protection. He urged the public to donate books and provide recommendations as well. The initiative was launched at the office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCI) in Kohima. For original story visit: <https://thelocalindian.com/northeastindia/nagaland-forest-dept-green-box-initiative-books-on-environment-wildlife-conservation-27630>

Students set up Library in Manipur Village

The pandemic affected people from all walks of life and many are yet to recover from it. India witnessed millions of people who returned home from various metro cities with hopes to safeguard life and stay close with their loved ones. Not only did working people lose jobs, students were also affected badly due to the disruption of the academic year. But every adversity can be an opportunity to prosper too. A group of seven student returnees, hailing from Thingba Khullen (Chaonamai) village under Purul sub-division of Senapati district in Manipur, established a public library in their village, says a story by Vangamla Salle K S available on *www.eastmojo.com* website. The students realised that a library was essential for productive engagement of returned students. The limited study materials available with individuals, along with contributions from well-wishers, were collected and archived centrally for optimal and shared utilisation among students. “Under continued uncertainties, we felt an urgent need to adapt to the prevailing environment and facilitate students to further their progression. That's how we decided to establish the library,” said P Rolunii Reikhe, one of the students who returned home. The district magistrate of Senapati district Thokchom Kirankumar officially launched the PIIDIKHIIIH library on December 19. PIIDIKHIIIH is the other name of Chaonamai village, the locals said. Locals hope that the library would be a lifeline for students

in the village and students from other parts of the state would also equally benefit from the initiative. "Whoever we approached responded positively and came forward to support in various ways. The village authority happily allowed us to make use of the current house or room, without which we would have no place to keep our books or any material," added Reikhe, who is a law student in New Delhi. For full story visit: <https://www.eastmojo.com/news/2020/12/22/manipur-students-who-returned-home-amid-pandemic-set-up-public-library-in-senapati/>

Ahmedabad Girl's Book in UNESCO DL

She is just 11-year-old, but Aarya Chavda has already published four books on various facets of Ahmedabad's heritage. Recently, her book 'Intangible Ahmedabad,' on oral narratives collected by her from the Walled City, with her illustrations, has become part of Unesco's digital library, says a *The Times of India* report. The book was brought out by Unesco along with AMC and AWHCT earlier this year. "The city's heritage also lies in the narratives preserved by generations," she said. The book depicts the tale of city's founding, the way of life in Pals over the years and traditions such as Maholla Mata. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/11-year-olds-book-now-part-of-unesco-digital-library/article-showprint/81218028.cms>

More Mohalla Libraries in Maharashtra

Noted poet-lyricist Gulzar echoed many book lovers when he portrayed the pain of books in his famous poem Kitabein. "Kitabein jhankti hain bund almari ke sheshonn se/Badi Hasrat se taakti hain (Books peep out from closed glass doors of almirahs/They look with great sense of longing)," says the poem's opening line. Thanks to the efforts of sixth grader Mariyam Mirza (12), some of the books have stopped complaining against readers' indifference, says a *The Times of India* story. After Mirza began a mohalla or neighbourhood library for children (up to 10th standard) in Aurangabad late last year, several such libraries have come up in towns like her own Aurangabad, Jalna, Indore, Beed, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar. One such library will open soon in Central Mumbai area. "Ever since Rajya Sabha member and NGO Federation of All Maharashtra Minority Education Organisation (Fame) president Fauzia Khan opened the library on Children's Day (November 14) in 2020, it has caused a stir. Now children and parents in many towns are approaching Mariyam to get ideas and start their own libraries," said Mariyam's father Mirza Abdul Qayyum Nadvi who runs a bookshop in Aurangabad. Since children are increasingly attending classes online and spending hours before screen watching cartoons, comedy shows and horror movies, reading books has received a jolt. The neighbourhood library is aimed at rekindling interest in printed words and pictorial descriptions in books. The Coronavirus-induced boredom is what triggered the 6th grader Mariyam's interest in founding a library at home. "I had spent a couple of months at home and read many books which I got from my father's shop," said Maryam. Then one day she asked her father if she could do something for her friends

too. And the library came up with 300 books. Just before the lockdown began, Mariyam had accompanied her father to visit Aurangabad's famous Maulana Azad Library and Research Centre. She was disheartened to find that there was no children's section in it and the library didn't stock books for children. That day she began borrowing books from her father's shop. For full story visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mohalla-libraries-bring-kids-back-to-the-world-of-books/articleshowprint/81130347.cms>

Court wants well-stocked School Libraries

Madras High Court has said that the state government should take more systematic and concrete efforts to restore the lost glory of reading by providing a well-stocked library in every school in the state, says a *The Times of India* report. Justice M Dhandapani observed that time should be provided for students to access the library under the guidance of efficient librarians so that they enrich their knowledge and also develop reading habit while at school. The court passed the order while dismissing a batch of petitions challenging the amendments made to Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Act and Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Rules. The judge noted that there used to be a period earmarked for library every week in schools at least a decade ago, and its purpose was to promote reading habit among students. Students in those days would throng the library during this period for reading novels and books from other genres. However, the judge rued that during the course of time the library period was deemed a waste of time and most schools instead provided only curricular periods. Hence, "reading habits among the students stand totally wiped out," he said. Students these days tend to lean more towards digital devices for all their needs unmindful of the repercussions. "If the budding children are not inculcated with the habits of reading books today, not only the glory of reading good books would stand wiped out, but the next generation would be totally alien to the idea of reading books," observed the judge. Observing that a good library could develop a good citizen and a good environment, the judge said that the court hoped that the suggestions given would be taken in letter and spirit by the respondents. This would not only give an impetus to the library movement, but will also restore the concept of library. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/set-up-well-stocked-libraries-in-schools-says-madras-hc/article-showprint/81500652.cms>

SPECIAL FEATURE

Where there is a will, there is a way

There is an old English saying, 'where there is a will, there is a way'. That means if someone is determined to do something, he or she somehow finds the way to do so. This has been proved many a time by library enthusiasts round the globe. Libraries have been set up by such enthusiasts by crossing all hurdles. In our country we have heard of street libraries set up at different locations by library enthusiasts without waiting for any funding and a cosy and permanent place to house the library (*See May*

2018 issue of this newsletter). We have also heard of a day labourer in Mysuru setting up a library by saving money from his meagre earnings (See under miscellaneous news in this issue of newsletter). Similarly, we have heard how two young girls Muskan Ahirwar and Mariyam Mirza have set up libraries for slum children in Bhopal and Aurangabad respectively; how a high school student Yashoda has opened a library in her house with a collection of more than 6000 books mostly received from his father's facebook friends (See December 2020 issue of this newsletter); and how a 9-year old has opened a Sunday library in Kollam, Kerala, in the spare room of his parent's clinic (See January 2021 issue of this newsletter). Not only that, we have also heard of libraries set up in coffee houses in different places and even in a barber's shop (saloon) in Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu (See April 2020 issue of this newsletter).

There are also library enthusiasts who have set up moving libraries at their own effort and cost and that too using two wheelers or three-wheelers. Among the two-wheeler libraries, there is a bicycle library started by a youth named Ravi Ranjan Patil in Ahmedabad. Patil has posted pictures of all the books in his possession on WhatsApp and has sent those pictures to the members of his WhatsApp group. He has done the same thing among different facebook groups too. He delivers the requested books at the doorsteps of the readers free of cost travelling by his bicycle. Being impressed by his gesture, a reader, who happens to be a software developer, has created a website for him <http://bicyclelibrary.in> through which demand can be placed besides through his facebook page and mobile. His candid views are that "everyone can and should start his or her own library" and that "we are all a part of this world to do some good deeds and serve the right purpose of life."

Another such library is that of Reddi Ramana, a private college teacher of Andhra Pradesh, who carries books on his bike and stays in a village for nearly three hours. He has modified his bike in such a way that books are visible so that the kids can be attracted easily. The students who gather at panchayat buildings and temples are issued books of their choice, which they can read and get clarifications from him if they have any doubts. Ramana has travelled over 900 kilometres during six months and visited 36 villages. As many as 2,600 students have read books during his visit to these villages. He has even given gifts to kids who remembered the stories and continued reading for 21 days. He has also set up Ashya Youth Association to create awareness about the importance of books and libraries. It has not been very easy for Ramana to spend money to purchase books for his library due to closure of his college in pandemic and delay in payment of salary. Another hurdle has been the rising price of petrol. But all these have failed to dampen his spirit.

Among the three-wheeler libraries, there is a rickshaw library being run by a government school teacher of Dabwali in Haryana Krishna Kayat. Seeing children sticking to mobile phones and losing reading habit, Kayat thought of starting a library that can reach them easily and they are attracted to books. One day he found an old rickshaw lying in the trash. He

purchased it refurbished it and filled it with children's books purchased from Jalandhar and Delhi spending around ₹ 50,000 from his own pocket. On holidays he would take the library to slum areas and distribute the books among the children.

According to a recent report, two library enthusiasts Priyanka Chaudhari and Abhishek Awchar of Pune have embarked upon a new mobile library initiative which will allow passengers travelling in auto-rickshaws to avail the reading facility during their auto rides. They have got in touch with auto-rickshaw associations from the city and in other parts of Maharashtra for this purpose. They plan to ply 100 such auto-rickshaw libraries in Pune alone. They flagged off the campaign recently on Marathi Bhasha Divas i.e. 27th February last. The idea behind this initiative is to make books available for everyone while he or she is on the go. The drive, according to the duo behind the move, aims to encourage passengers to keep aside their mobile phones and other gadgets, cut down on screen time and invest that time in reading and learning something new. The books range from Marathi literature, history and even include entertainment and leisure reading. There are more than 20 books to choose from. Speaking about the initiative to *Pune Mirror*, Abhishek said, "Most of us are addicted to our mobile phones. We can invest the time spent in surfing our gadgets on learning about new things." "The response in the short span since the programme went live has been overwhelming. If a reader likes a book and wants to continue reading it, she/he can take it home free of cost and we will replace it with a new one," added Priyanka. "The autos will just be a medium for the movement and there won't be any financial burden on the auto drivers. We will be funding the project," she further said. Some of the books are received as donation and others are bought by the group. The duo has clarified that they will not be seeking any kind of monetary donation and will only accept books as donation.

Nevertheless, an auto-rickshaw driver in Chennai has gone one step further. He has not only installed a mini library in the vehicle, but also provided wi-fi facility, a TV set and even a tablet computer for use by his passengers, as he feels that "customer is the real God. We can do any work but giving what satisfies them gives a huge job satisfaction to me". He spends one-third of his earnings for maintaining the existing facilities and adding new ones.

There may be many more such efforts throughout the country which are not reported in the press or media. These commendable efforts show that still people feel for others. Such people should be encouraged and patronized by NGOs, local governments and the general public. Possibly then the reading habit of the people, specially the children, can be sustained and improved. This is necessary because nothing but reading expands a man's horizon.

[Sources: <https://www.thetribalbox.com/ravi-ranjan-patil-is-spreading-knowledge-on-wheels-with-bicycle-library#:~:text=inspire-,Ravi%20Ranjan%20Patil%20is%20Spreading%20Knowledge%20On%20Wheels%20with%20Bicycle,Ahmedabad%2C%20started%20the%20bicycle%20library.&text=%E2%80%9CI%20have%20been%20a%20str ee>

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NEW LIS LITERATURE

[Note: Publishers of books enlisted here and/or any new books in LIS may send copies of such books to the Editor, *IASLIC Bulletin*, for review]

Indian

1. BHAGAT (Pankaj). Conception of Public, Hybrid and Digital Libraries: A Detailed Illustration. 2020. Prachi Digital Publication, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. ISBN: 9789387856189

(Provides comprehensive illustrations on the working, constituents and features of public, hybrid and digital libraries. Illustrations have also been given on types of software and library management software like Koha and LIBSYS)

2. VIMAL KUMAR (V) and GOPINATHAN (Subeesh). Unleashing Koha: the complete library solution. 2020. Unity Services, Changanassery, Kottayam. ₹400 ISBN: 9788194646006

(It is a guide for Koha users)

Foreign

1. DIAMOND (Tom), Ed. The Academic Librarian in the Digital Age: Essays on Changing Roles and Responsibilities. 2020. McFarland, Jefferson, USA. \$55. ISBN: 9781476680163
(Shares the unique perspectives and experiences of librarians on the front lines of technological transformation of libraries)
2. KULKARNI (Shirish) and SHEWLE (Nanji). Enhancing Library Services using Open Source Software Koha: Prototype Model of Centralized Library System of Sinhgad Institute's Higher Education Libraries. Lambert Academic Publishing, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. € 79.90. ISBN: 9783659949333
(Presents a prototype model of centralized library system for the Pune based Sinhgad Institute's higher education libraries)
3. MANDAL (Sukumar). Power of Koha for Library Automation. 2020. Lambert Academic Publishing, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. € 98.90. ISBN: 9786202922807
(Provides step by step instructions for creating innovative library services using Koha)
4. OSUIGWE (Nkem Ekene). Managing and Adapting Library Information Services for Future Users. 2020. IGI Global, Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA. \$ 185. ISBN: 9781799811169
(Examines managing and adapting library and information services and the changing role of librarians in the digital era)

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