IASLIC NEWSLETTER
Indian Association for Special Libraries and Information Centres

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Quote of the Month

"Without libraries we are less human and more profoundly alone."

— **Nicola Davies,**
English Zoologist and
writer for children

Appeal to Readers

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

Email: *chatterjeeamitabha@yahoo.co.in*

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

National

Workshop on Research Methodology

Vidya Prasarak Mandal's Maharshi Parshuram College of Engineering, Velneshwar, Maharashtra, is organizing a National Workshop on 'Research Methodology and Statistical Analysis' during February 10 - 15, 2020. For details visit *www.vpmmpcoe.org*

Seminar on Research Ethics

Barrackpore Rashtrguru Surendranath College, Kolkata, is organizing a UGC funded National Seminar on 'Research Ethics: Purview of Library' on February 15, 2020. For details visit: *https://brsnc.in/site/library*

Workshop on LibSys

A National Workshop on 'Transforming Libraries through LibSys Automation Software' is being organized by Faculty of Library & Information Science, Mandsaur University, Mandasur, Madhya Pradesh, during February 15 - 16, 2020. For details visit: *http://www.mandsaur university.edu.in/national-workshop-on-transforming-libraries-through-libsys-automation-software/*

Conference on Quality Research

Department of Library, Thiruvalluvar College, Papanasam, Tamil Nadu, is organizing an ICSSR sponsored National Conference on 'Creating a Milieu for Quality Research among Academic Community' during February 21 - 22, 2020. For details email to *thicolib@gmail.com*

Seminar on Library in Higher Education

A National Seminar on 'ICT and Library in Higher Education: An Indian Perspective' is being organized by Chandidas Mahavidyalaya, Birbhum, West Bengal, in collaboration with Library and Information Science Professionals Association of Bengal (LISPAB) and Shimurali Sachinandan College of Education, Nadia, West Bengal, on February 28, 2020. For details visit: *http://www.chandidasmahavidyalaya.ac.in/message/one%20day%20national%20seminar.pdf*

Convention on Trends in Medical Information

The National Convention of Medical Library Association of India on the theme 'Emerging Trends in Medical Information and Technologies' will be held during March 2 - 4, 2020 at Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Delhi NCR. For details visit: *https://manavrachna.edu.in/mlai19/*

Seminar on Information Strategy

A National Seminar on 'Information Strategy for Social Science Research in India: Tracing the Future Trajectory' is being organized by the Department of Library and Information Science, Vidyasagar University, Medinipur, West Bengal, during March 12 - 13, 2020. For details visit:

http://ecircular.vidyasagar.ac.in/Event

Seminar on Management Issues in Libraries

A National Seminar on 'Management Issues in Libraries of 21st Century - Challenges and Opportunities' is being organized by the Central Library, Sikkim University, in collaboration with ICSSR-NERC & INFLIBNET Centre, during March 16 - 17, 2020. For details visit: *https://library.cus.ac.in/index.php/2020/01/08/national-seminar-on-management-issues-in-libraries-of-21st-century-challenges-and-opportunities/*

Conference of LIS Academy

The 3rd Conference of LIS Academy will be held at University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, during August 27 -29, 2020. For details visit: *http://www.lisacademy.org*

International

Conference on Reorienting Information Literacy

An International Conference on 'Reorienting Information Literacy in the Library and Information Centres' is being organized by the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, during February 11 - 12, 2020. For details visit: *https://www.caluniv.ac.in/seminar/DLIS-CU-Conference-8-1-20.pdf*

Professional Summit on Academic Libraries

The 9th International Library Information Professional Summit (I-LIPS) on 'Academic Libraries: Latest Trends Challenges and Opportunities' is being organized by School of Studies in Library and Information Science, Jiwaji University, Gwalior, in association with ITM University, Gwalior; Special Libraries Association (USA) - Asian Chapter; and Society for Library Professionals (SLP), during February 14 - 16, 2020. For details visit: *http://i-lips.website2.me/*

Conference of Public Librarians

The 1st ASEAN Regional Conference of Public Librarians will be held during March 10 - 13, 2020 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Pasay City, Philippines. The theme of the conference will be 'ASEAN Libraries, Arts, and Culture: Inspire, Innovate, and Collaborate'. For details visit: *http://web.nlp.gov.ph/1stASEANRCPL/*

Conference on Digital Landscape

Indian Library Association and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Hyderabad, are jointly organizing the 65th Annual Conference of Indian Library Association, 2020 and International Conference on 'Digital Landscape - Reinvention and Re-engineering of Libraries: Trends, Issues and Challenges (ICDLRRL- 2020)' during April 9 - 11, 2020. For details visit: *http://icdlrrl2020.in/uploads/ICDLRRLLibrary2020Brochure.pdf*

Conference on Role of Libraries

To mark the 60th Anniversary of Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), an International Conference on Library and Information Science (ICLIS 2020) is being organized by the SLLA. The theme of the conference is 'Role of Libraries in Transforming Societies'. The conference will be held on June 25, 2020. For details visit: *http://www.slla.org.lk/iclis2020/images/flyer_iclis2020.pdf*

Conference on Innovation, Knowledge

The 2020 9th International Conference on Innovation, Knowledge, and Management will be held in Singapore during June 27 - 29, 2020. For details visit: *http://www.icikm.org/*

Information Literacy Conference

The 7th European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) will be held at Bamberg, Germany, during September 21 - 24, 2020. For details visit: *http://ecil2020.ilconf.org/*

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Plucking Knowledge from Tree

Innovation, if fuelled by a purpose, becomes a treasure for the society. This has been proved amply by this innovative teacher in Amreli district's Nigala Primary School in Gujarat, Prakash Solanki, whose efforts were driven by a noble purpose - of inculcating reading habit in students. According to a story published in *The Times of India*, unhappy at finding very few takers for books in the school's library, Solanki thought of changing things, and how! He took the books out of the cupboards and onto the branches of a neem tree on the school campus. Solanki's hanging library served dual purpose - he made books appear more interesting for the young eyes and also convert curiosity into readership. He hung 25 chosen books from the branches. This sparked interest among the students who soon started plucking knowledge straight from the tree and also began 'savouring' the fruits of their labour. Solanki's idea turned into a trend and the reading ratio among students of Class 6 to 8 increased significantly. Solanki himself chooses the books - from general knowledge, autobiography, literature, to other stories - which he changes every Monday. "We have 3,000 books in our library but nobody was interested in opening even one. Now, even students of Class 3 to 5 have started reading books!" said Solanki while talking about his experimentation with reading. Solanki's efforts also won him the national award given by Sri Aurobindo Society for zero investment initiatives for educational innovation. It was handed over by MHRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyalji in New Delhi in August 2019. For original story visit: *https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/gujarat-hanging-library-gets-primary-students-hooked-to-reading/articleshowprint/73181434.cms*

Open Library Movement

A stroll near Balgandharva Rangmandir on J M Road in Pune will reveal an iron bookshelf housing about 50 books in all languages. The bookshelf is the third installed under the Open Library Movement, a movement that propagates the Right to Read and works on a unique system of book donations and transactions, according to a *The Times of India* report. Prithviraj More (21), a student of Indira College, returns a book diligently to its shelf on J M Road. "I come here every day and spend around an hour reading different books. I think this is a great initiative for readers like me," he said. It all started with a cupboard near Jeet Ground at Kothrud on December 7. Named after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the cupboard housed about 100 books. Started by a group of ten youngsters, the Open Library Movement entails setting up a bookcase with donated books. Books are free access and anyone can donate their books and borrow as well. The second cupboard or 'box' of books was installed near Paranjpe School on Karve Road on December 16 and was named after Swami Vivekananda. The most recent one was the one on J M Road and was installed on Savitribai Phule's birth anniversary on January 3, and so, named after her. Writer Abhishek Awchar, who is part of the group, says the basic concept behind the movement was to bring more books to the readers. "When a man buys a book and reads it, he is reluctant to part with it. He then installs a bookcase and keeps the book at home. In this way, during his lifetime, the man collects hundreds of books which he reads a couple of times throughout his life." The idea behind the Open Library Movement is to bring these books to readers who actually want to read, Awchar said. He explains that instead of selling the books to scrap dealers, these books if donated to the Open Library Movement, help propagate the love of reading. "The start of the movement was with 100 books. The box itself cost around Rs. 7,000, so we all pitched in. The books were contributions from people who wanted to donate to the movement. The first day we thought we'd put up a small box and it may work out for long, but so far it has been a resounding success. People pick up the books, read and often put back around five books in return," Awchar said. About the worry of stolen books, Awchar says, "we felt that the day books start getting stolen, it's a good thing because they are getting read. In this way, it gets forwarded to more people. The basic concept is don't dump these books," he said. Awchar said the group had a lot of enquiries asking for more book boxes to be set up. "We feel making it as open access is better. No money transaction is our basic theme. People have tried donating money. Instead, we ask them to donate their books," he said. Every day around 50 books are taken out, Awchar says. "The response has been really good. Transaction is 50 books per day and donation is about 60 per box." Priyanka Choudhari, one of the leaders of the movement, said they hoped to take the movement to across Maharashtra. For full story visit: *https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ pune/open-book-library-springs-up-for-the-love-of-reading/ articleshowprint/73210796.cms*

UP Schools to Get Functional Libraries

Director General of School Education, Uttar Pradesh, Vijay Kiran Anand, has recently announced that all the 1.58 lakh government primary and upper primary schools in the state will get functional libraries by March 2020, ahead of the start of the new academic session, says a *The Hindustan Times* report. "Every government school library will be equipped with 500-1000 books for which we have tied up with the National Book Trust (NBT) and NCERT. The idea behind setting up school libraries is to inculcate reading habits among children from an early age," he said while moderating a session at CII School Summit in Lucknow. "As part of this initiative, the Basic Education Department has also directed primary and upper primary schools in the state to establish 'reading corners' on their campuses. Every school will allocate a time period during which kids will be allowed to go to the libraries and read books of their choice," Anand said. "The basic education department feels that reading different books will help in increasing the vocabulary of kids. It also feels that it is fun to read books with classmates and share experiences," an official said. Anand said that already several schools had developed libraries of their own. "For almost a year, teachers of government-run primary schools in UP are running a campaign 'Donate Books for Children'," he said. "This campaign is to motivate people to donate books so that community libraries could be set up in schools for the benefit of poor students and also others. For greater reach, the teachers have taken this campaign to social media. A twitter account 'Donate Books for Children' has been created to spread awareness among netizens. In this account, teachers are posting photographs of those who voluntarily came forward to donate books to schools", Anand said. Shivam Singh, a teacher in Jaunpur, had convinced a bookshop, Swaraj Pustak Bhandar, to donate 3,000 books to at least 50 government schools, Anand said. For original report visit: *https://www.hindustantimes.com/education/all-government-schools-in-up-to-have-library-by-march-2020/story-pIpsrN2Unar9sRTK3pUEVN.html*

Rising Usage of E-Books/Audio Books

Due to their creative efforts in curation, managing multiple lending models and engaging patrons, librarians helped drive public library circulation of digital books to record highs in 2019, says a press release by Rakuten OverDrive, a leading digital reading platform for libraries and schools worldwide, available on *librarytechnology.org* website. Libraries and schools around the world enabled their patrons and students to check out 326 million ebooks, audiobooks and digital magazines in the past 12 months, a 20 per cent increase over the previous year. Publishers and authors benefited from the library's role as valued discovery channel which resulted in record library sales of digital titles across all genres for all audiences. This data was reported by Rakuten OverDrive, the leading digital reading platform for over 43,000 libraries and schools worldwide. A record 73 public library systems in five

countries loaned over 1 million digital books to readers in 2019. Eight libraries reached this million book milestone for the first time. Notable digital libraries for 2019 include Toronto Public Library (the number one library in the world with 6.6 million digital book loans, an all-time high for any library), Los Angeles Public Library (the number one US library for the first time with 5.9 million) and the National Library Board of Singapore (the top digital library outside North America with 4.2 million). The fastest growing US digital library in the OverDrive global network was Sonoma County Library (CA), which saw their collection usage increase 214 per cent in part by consolidating ebooks from other platforms. The Berlin Library (Germany) was one of the fastest growing outside the US (+184 per cent) due to increased investment in an expanding catalog of English, German and other world language content. For more details visit: *https://librarytechnology.org/pr/24809*

Library Lending Unorthodox Items

Need a slide projector? How about some folding chairs? Or maybe a punch bowl? The library has all these items. Peru Public Library is now offering patrons the opportunity to borrow from its "Library of Things collection." And the "things" are not the usual books and DVDs people might be accustomed to borrowing from a library, says a story by Brett Herrmann on *https://www.newstrib.com* website. Library Director Charm Ruhnke said, these items are odds and ends the library has collected over the years that staff would like to make available to the public. There is technology - both new and old - for people to try out or use as needed. "We need to make sure other people know about the things we have," she said. For example, the library's slide projector is not exactly cutting-edge technology, breaking onto the scene for home entertainment in the 1950s. But people still come across slides they would like to show at a family gathering from time to time. "Most people don't have them but they might need one once in a while," Ruhnke says. "Sometimes we have to give them a crash course in how to use it." On the modern side of things, there are WiFi hotspots for people who lack Internet or Roku sticks for those who may have cut cable. Ruhnke shows off some Cubelets on display, a line of construction toys*, she says,* is a popular and educational item for children."They teach robotics and coding," Ruhnke says. Tote bags, dolls, a button maker, a drawing tablet and binoculars are just a few more items on the list. For full report visit: *https://www.newstrib.com/2019/10/19/all-the-things-unorthodox-items-on-loan-at-peru-library/agy32r3/*

Jail Proposed for Lending Age-inappropriate Books

A Missouri bill intended to bar libraries in the US state from stocking "age-inappropriate sexual material" for children has been described by critics as "a shockingly transparent attempt to legalize book banning" that could land librarians who refuse to comply with it in jail, says a report in *The Guardian.* Under the Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Bill, which has been proposed by Missouri Republican Ben Baker, panels of parents would be elected to evaluate whether books are appropriate for

children. Public hearings would then be held by the boards to ask for suggestions of potentially inappropriate books, with public libraries that allow minors access to such titles to have their funding stripped. Librarians who refuse to comply could be fined and imprisoned for up to one year. "The main thing is, I want to be able to take my kids to a library and make sure they're in a safe environment, and that they're not gonna be exposed to something that is objectionable material," Baker told a local news station. "Unfortunately, there are some libraries in the state of Missouri that have done this. And that's a problem." PEN America's deputy director of free expression research and policy, James Tager, called Baker's bill a "shockingly transparent attempt to legalize book banning in the state of Missouri". He said it was "clearly aimed at empowering small groups of parents to appoint themselves as censors over their state's public libraries" and said that books containing sexual themes, LGBTQ characters and exploring the impact of sexual assault could be "on the chopping block if this bill is passed". The Missouri Library Association said it was opposing the bill, because it "will always stand against censorship and for the freedom to read". For full report visit: *https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jan/16/missouri-could-jail-librarians-for-lending-age-inappropriate-books-parental-oversight-of-public-libraries-bill*

Most Lent Books of NY Public Library

Childhood is a funny place; it is never quite left behind. That might be the lesson that the New York Public Library was delighted to learn when, to celebrate the 125th year of its opening, it listed 10 books that had been issued most frequently over these years. The list with one honorary mention was overwhelmingly in favour of children's books, especially those with outstanding pictures and collages, rhyming tales and, often, animal characters, says a story in *The Telegraph*. The only incurably adult read in the list was Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends And Influence People*, which does not say a lot about grown-up preferences, however much fun Carnegie is. The sly neediness of the title has a sinister touch that can conjure up images ranging from the rapacious smiles of certain presidents and prime ministers to brain-washing machines, in, say, films such as *Hirak Rajar Deshe*. But it is not really the odd one out, since two of the books that are for both adults and older children are pure dystopia, George Orwell's *1984* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Of course these are fantasies, but in a different direction from the *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the first of J.K. Rowling's incredibly successful series. Harry Potter's world is certainly not free from evil or the machinations of power, but its mythic quality seems more appealing to pre- and early teens than the two dystopic classics. Since those have been issued with such frequency during 125 years, it would not be quite right to say that they bring to life the frightening possibilities of the world as it is at present. Rather, they are always prophetic in the widest sense of the term: uncovering in human progress the possibility of destruction through the annihilating logic of power. The same prophetic, or perhaps universal, quality informs *To Kill A Mockingbird*, as

though racial prejudice and a heroic fight for justice persist everywhere and all the time as it once did in Harper Lee's small-town American south. But most of the top-of-the-list books are children's, telling a tale in words and pictures sometimes of a very hungry caterpillar that, like magic, changes into a butterfly, or of a cat in a hat, or of the adventures of a little African-American boy on a snowy day, or even of a spider who saves a pig from the knife and a bunny who wishes the moon goodnight. The brilliance of nature, its creatures real or imagined   and a seamless communication with them, friendship, compassion, courage, fear, fun and silliness, the awareness of change and death, all inform the most favourite books, creating children's memories of brightness, of the first steps into a wonderful world, of the pleasure of looking at pictures and of reading. For a lucky child who has known even a couple of such books, for not every child in the world does, childhood is that magic place that never really goes away. For original story visit: *https://www.telegraphindia. com/opinion/the-most-issed-books-from-the-new-york-public-library-in-the-last-125-years/cid/1736694*

Children's Libraries Soon in Pune Gardens

To promote the habit of reading among children and to help them get rid of mobile phone addiction, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has decided to start children's library in six of its gardens in the city on a pilot basis, says a report by Ajay Jadhav in *The Indian Express*. BJP corporator Jyotsana Ekbote had tabled a resolution a few months ago in the city women and child welfare committee, urging the PMC to set up children's libraries in civic gardens. "Children today are more into chatting on cellphones and browsing the Internet. Video games and chatting are no longer tools of entertainment, but have become an addiction," she said. Ekbote is the chairperson of management committees of various schools and colleges of Progressive Education Society. She is also a former professor of Zoology in Fergusson College. "Reading books and newspaper for information and knowledge has become outdated for the new generation," she said. "This has an adverse impact on their physical and mental health, which parents often don't realise… The habit of reading is fast disappearing among children. The PMC should work towards inculcating the habit of reading among children by setting up libraries in civic gardens," Ekbote added. The committee on December 19 last gave its nod to set up children's libraries on a pilot basis in six civic gardens Sambhaji Garden on J M Road, Murkute Garden in Baner, Sant Rohidas Garden in Bhavani Peth, Shahu Garden in Somwar Peth, Sinhagad Vikas Garden in Vadgaon Budhruk and Hutatma Smarak in Phule Nagar. For full report visit: *https://indianexpress.com/article/ cities/pune/pune-civic-body-to-set-up-childrens-library-in-six-civic-gardens-on-pilot-basis-6188376/*

Grant for Developing Green Libraries

EBSCO Information Services (EBSCO) is soliciting grant applications to give libraries the opportunity to "go green" by funding solar installations through the 2020 EBSCO Solar Grant Program. As part of the EBSCO Solar initiative, EBSCO will be making three $100,000 grants available to applicants from libraries around the world, says an EBESCO press release. The grants will allow winning libraries to reduce their utilities expenses by installing a solar array at their institutions. After seeing the benefits on its own campus, EBSCO introduced the EBSCO Solar Grant Program so libraries interested in adding their own solar arrays can do so. Since 2016, EBSCO Solar has given libraries nearly a million dollars in grant money. In 2019, EBSCO received submissions from 18 countries. Medicine Hat College in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada; New Port Richey Public Library, New Port Richey, Florida; and Hedgesville Public Library, Hedgesville, West Virginia, were each awarded $100,000 last year. These libraries are expected to install their arrays in 2020. EBSCO Information Services President Tim Collins says institutions benefit from reducing their carbon footprint in ways beyond saving money. "EBSCO prides itself on being an example of how sustainable resources can be developed at a corporate level. We are excited to promote this initiative and offer solar grants to libraries so we can invest in communities looking to offer alternative energy resources. The EBSCO Solar grant empowers institutions to go green and educate their communities on the benefits of adopting solar resources." Interested libraries are encouraged to submit questions until February 28. Submissions are due by May 1, and the winner will be announced on June 26, 2020, both online and at the ALA-Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois. More information is available on the EBSCO Solar webpage at *www.ebsco.com/solar*, including the timeline, where to submit questions, a link to the submission form and FAQs.

Grab-and-Go Library

Yarra Libraries of Australia partnered with library technology provider Communico to develop the app, which was released in last December. It works on both iOS and Android phones. It's the first Australian library to use the technology, according to a story by Amy Cheng available on *www.governmentnews. com.au* website. Yarra City Council Mayor Misha Coleman says, Council wanted to make it more convenient for members to borrow items on a "grab-and-go basis". "When a member scans an item's barcode with the phone camera, our library management system will check the item out for that member," she told *Government News*. "This then disables our security system so they can walk straight out with that item without any alarms going off." Unlike other library apps, members don't need to scan their item again on a separate device to ensure security alarms don't go off. "We were inspired by a handful of international libraries that allowed members to check out items on their phone," Coleman said. "This meant that users could bypass any queue at the counter or even a self-checkout machine - they could just use their phone and out they go," she said. However, Coleman says that it's a first for Australia.

"Yarra Libraries is the first library service in Australia that has rolled out an app that allows members to borrow directly from a smartphone, without the worry of setting the security gates off," she said. "At this stage, only a few other libraries in the United States are using this technology that we are aware of." The council would like this app to become a "one-stop shop" for everything Yarra Libraries have to offer. The app allows members to see everything they've borrowed at a glance through an integrated bookshelf, which includes both physical and digital items. Members can also browse and register for Yarra Library events through the app, and be added to a wait list for sold-out events. Study spaces at certain locations can also be booked through the app, and members are able to check their availability in real time. Since the app launched in December, it has been downloaded more than 1,000 times, Coleman says. "Members have told us they love how convenient it is, especially the self-checkout feature," she said. For original story visit: *https://www. governmentnews.com.au/australia-enters-age-of-grab-and-go-library/*

Project Paper Bridge

With the objective to connect the secluded communities of India with the mainland through libraries, Sarvahitey, an NGO based in Delhi, has come up with a project called 'Project Paper Bridge', says a report by Ruchika Goswami in *The Indian Express*. Under the project, Sarvahitey plans to open total 1,000 libraries, with special focus on rural and remote pockets of India. Sarvahitey means working for the benefit of all, said Prem Prakash, its founder. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Prakash said, "We are opening libraries in the tribal belt and the red corridor of India as well as Nagaland. We tell them that we are bringing books and love from various parts of the country." For original report visit: *https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/pune-library-to-bridge-divides-6145916/*

Google Grant for News Literacy

Google has recently announced a $1 million grant for global non-profit organization Internews that will launch a new initiative to promote news literacy among the Indian public, says an Indo-Asian News Service report available on *gadgets.ndtv.com* website. The funding is part of Google.org's broader, $10 million commitment to media literacy, in collaboration with the Google News Initiative (GNI), the company said in a statement. Internews will select a team of 250 journalists, fact-checkers, academics and NGO workers, who will be trained on a curriculum developed by global and Indian experts, adapted to local needs and available in seven Indian languages. The local leaders will then roll out the training to new Internet users in non-metro cities in India, enabling them to better navigate the Internet and assess the information they find. In partnership with third-party organizations like DataLeads and Internews, the GNI has so far provided in-depth verification training for more than 15,000 journalists and students from more than 875 news organizations, in 10 Indian languages. Google last year trained journalists in online verification and fact-checking, digital safety and security, YouTube for elections coverage and data visualization for the general elections. For full report visit: *https://gadgets.ndtv.com/internet/news/google-announces-1-million-grant-for-promoting-news-literacy-in-india-2171605*

TN School Libraries to be Digitized

The concept of libraries is slowly changing in today's digital age as everything is available at the click of a button. In order to make reading appealing to the younger generation, the Education Department of Tamil Nadu has decided to digitize school libraries across the state, starting next year, says a *The Times of India* report. "This way we can ensure that they devote some time to reading in school and learn in-depth about concepts," said a senior official from the department. The department will digitize libraries of around 100 government schools in five districts, including Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy and Kanchipuram. To begin with, libraries in Chennai will be digitiszd first. The project - at an estimated cost of Rs 50 crore - will revamp existing infrastructure and develop new libraries. These libraries will have NOOK or Kindle tablets, desktops, audiobooks and educational software, using which students can download and read over a thousand ebooks. "The idea is to make it paperless and draw more students to the library," the official said. Students, who have android phones or laptops with Internet connectivity, can also borrow ebooks and gain online access to the library's database through their devices, even at home. The libraries will have a website with a link to these books. "We don't even have a library. Let them first give us a room where children can read, making it digital can be done later," said a teacher from the government primary and high school at Puzhal. The teacher's room has been converted into a library at the school and it has eight books, provided by the government, all placed neatly in the first rack of the shelf. "This is our library for 600 students," she complained. Teachers from government schools in Nazarathpet and Kelambakkam had similar complaints. These schools no longer have a separate period dedicated to reading in the library. "The few books we have are either torn or obsolete or are on Tamil literature. Nobody wants to read those as they find them boring. So, we have substituted that period with a subject's and turned the library room into a classroom," said a teacher from the Nazarathpet school. For full report visit: *https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/govt-to-digitise-libraries-to-appeal-to-school-students/articleshowprint/72481522.cms*

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

New Facebook Tool

Facebook has recently announced that a new tool, allowing users of the social network to view and delete data it collects from third parties, is being rolled out to the estimated two billion members of the leading social network worldwide, says a report by Agence France-Presse available on *gadgets.ndtv.com*

website. The new feature, part of a stepped-up effort to improve privacy practices, allows users to see and clear "off Facebook activity" used for targeted advertising. Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said that "the tool offers a new level of transparency and control" for the social network, which has been roiled by revelations in the past few years on how it collects and uses data. "We've been working on this for a while because we had to rebuild some of our systems to make this possible." Zuckerberg said, Facebook users would be prompted to review their data when they check their feeds, as part of a "privacy checkup" implemented by the social network. "As of today, our Off-Facebook Activity tool is available to people on Facebook around the world," Zuckerberg said in a blog post. The feature will lift a veil on some aspects of Facebook's practices, including the collection of data from third-party apps, Facebook logins, "likes" and other techniques that determine which ads are served up to users. "Other businesses send us information about your activity on their sites and we use that information to show you ads that are relevant to you. Now you can see a summary of that information and clear it from your account if you want to," Zuckerberg said. Facebook gets data from users' activity online and also from apps such as Airbnb, Uber and Fandango. "One of our main goals for the next decade is to build much stronger privacy protections for everyone on Facebook," Zuckerberg said. "Over the next few weeks we'll show nearly two billion people around the world a prompt encouraging them to review their privacy settings," he added. For full report visit: *https://gadgets.ndtv.com/social-networking/news/off-facebook-activity-tool-global-release-third-part-data-clear-privacy-2171322*

Self-Writing App for Visually Impaired

An Android-based application (App) built on the basis of a technology innovation promises to academically empower visually impaired students by freeing them of their dependence on scribes while writing exams, says a report by Shoumojit Banerjee, published in *The Hindu*. The *Swalekhan* (self-writing) app is a tech offering conceptualized by the Pune-based Niwant Andh Mukta Vikasalaya, an NGO that works for the betterment of the visually impaired individuals, and developed by Josh Software, a Pune-based IT services company specializing in providing global tech solutions, in conjunction with Tekvision, a leading accessibility service provider whose workforce comprises a significant number of visually impaired technocrats. The Android text-to-speech app (typing tutor), which is aimed at helping visually impaired students reduce their reliance on scribes and took three years to create, has been embraced by more than 20 schools across Maharashtra since its launch in mid-2019. As many as 600 students from Pune, Shrirampur, Nanded, Nashik, Aurangabad and Buldhana districts have been taking lessons to type with the help of this application. From helping master the keys by using an innovative braille paper overlay, to aiding students in listening and grasping 78 innovative and interactive lessons, *Swalekhan* uses a combination of human voices as well as Text-to-Speech guided assistance. For full report visit:

https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/app-aims-to-academically-empower-visually-impaired-students/article30654036.ece

SPECIAL FEATURE

It's not all Gloomy

If it is asked as to how many rural libraries are there in our country, we have an answer in the report of the census of 2011, according to which there were 70,817 libraries in rural areas serving a population of more than 830 million. Nevertheless, no precise information is available on the functionality and level of service capabilities of these libraries. There are also often reports of closure of public libraries functioning in rural areas in different parts of the country. If it is again asked how much is spent per capita annually for the development of public libraries in the country, the ready answer is 7 paise, which is evidently meagre as compared to around $36 in USA. Moreover, the figure relates to country as a whole which includes both rural and urban areas. The spending per capita is possibly more in urban areas than that in rural areas.

In this depressive scenario, there are some bright and shining spots too. One such spot can be found in Mayyil gram panchayat in Kannur district of Kerala, where almost every road leads to or ends with a library. The panchayat, which has a population of a little over 30,000 people in 33.08 sq km with a literacy rate of 88.93 per cent, boasts 34 functioning libraries, arguably the highest for a local body in the country, according to a report by Jinoy Jose P published in *The Hindu Businessline*. "Libraries are a way of life for us here. Every library competes with each other to organize literary events, social gatherings and political meets in order to make the people more progressive, culturally sensitive and secular," said U Janardhanan, a retired government employee, sitting inside the modest librarian's room at the public library in Mayyil's Velam, a beautiful village also famous for its ancient Sri Maha Ganapati Temple, the report states. Janardhanan represents Velam vayana shala (library) in the Kannur district library council, which oversees the politically vibrant district's 900-plus libraries. Kannur district has the highest number of libraries for a district in Kerala. Narrating how the library goes to people, Prasad M, a member of the library, said, "here, we take books to all the houses as and when we can". Prasad further said, "when there is a wedding in the village, or some other event happens at a residence, we go there with a few books and while helping the family members with their chores, we read books, tell stories and recite poems."

Another such spot is Kumudavalli gram panchayat in Palakoderu mandal of West Godavari district located about one kilometre away from Bhimavaram Town in the central part of coastal Andhra, where late Bhupathiraju Tirupathi Raju, founded the village library in 1897 basically to educate the villagers. This gram panchayat is one of the four ISO 9001:2008 certified village in India having a population of 4,123 and literacy rate of more than 50 per cent. Even Ranganathan

mentioned about this village library in one of his writings. Sandipan Deb, former editor of *Financial Express*, who visited the library recently, was impressed by its performance. According to him, the library, which was initially set up in a hut, is now located in a three-storied pucca building. For villagers, the library is their pride and joy. What is more interesting is that the village has a 'library dowry' system: for every wedding in the village, the family has to donate something to the library, even if it's just ₹10. Every Diwali, each household has to pay up ₹20. All collections go into the corpus fund. The library houses tens of thousands of books, lovingly cared for, from age-old palm-leaf scriptures to recent Ph D theses - every research scholar from the surrounding area has to submit a copy of his/her thesis here.

These examples show that it's not all gloomy. But, as Deb has stressed, we need a hundred thousand Kumudavallis. The rural libraries of the country should emulate the examples of the libraries of Velam and Kumudavalli. Of course the "government has an absolutely vital role to play here, and must do so, if at all it is interested in an enlightened nation", as Deb has stressed.

[Sources:*https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/india-file/did-you-notice-the-return-of-libraries/article26114223.ece*, *https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/adopt-kumudavalli-s-example-for-an-enlightened-country-11579446209716.html*, *https://scroll.in/article/928176/how-much-does-india-spend-on-its-public-libraries*, *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumudavalli*, *http://www.kumudavalli.com/*, *http://community.worldheritage.org/articles/eng/Kumudavalli*, *https://www.jstor.org/stable/24210644?seq=1*]

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]

Foreign

1. KAUSHIK (Anna) et al. Handbook of Research on Emerging Trends and Technologies in Library and Information Science. 2019. IGI Global, Hershey, Pennsylvania. $220. ISBN: 9781522598251

   (Examines advancing technologies and new innovations and their influences on library and information science for improved best practices)

2. LOR (Peter Johan). International and Comparative Librarianship: Concepts and Methods for Global Studies. 2019. De Gruyter, Saur. $80.99. ISBN: 9783110267914

   (Provides comprehensive and systematic overview of international and comparative librarianship)

3. MYNTTI (Jeremy) and ZOOM (Jessalyn), *Eds*. Digital Preservation in Libraries: Preparing for A Sustainable Future. 2019. ALA Editions, Chicago. ISBN: 9780838917138

   (Global in scope, it features case studies and contributions that discuss key issues of digital preservation)

4. STACHOKAS (George). The Role of the Electronic Resources Librarian. 2019. Chandos Publishing, Oxford. ISBN: 9780081029251

   (Focuses on longstanding hurdles to the transition of libraries from print collections, to online information services, all from an electronic resources librarian's perspective)

PERSONALIA

Shri Pradipkumar Baburao Ghant has been awarded Ph D Degree in Library and Information Science by the Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, for his thesis entitled 'Impact of NAAC on Library Management : A Study with Special Reference to Colleges Affiliated to Shivaji University.' He pursued his research work under the supervision of Dr. Anil N Chikate, Director, Knowledge Resource Center, Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon. Dr. Ghant is presently serving as Librarian, Arts & Commerce College, Akkalkuwa Dist. Nandurbar, Maharashtra.

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