



IASLIC NEWSLETTER

Indian Association for Special
Libraries and Information Centres



July 2021

A Monthly Newsletter Published by IASLIC

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Quote of the Month

“To build up a library is to create a life. It's never just a random collection of books”

— *Carlos María Domínguez,*
Argentine writer and journalist

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

Seminar on Trends in Academics

ADINET, in collaboration with National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, is organizing a seminar in online mode on 'Current Trends in Academics: The Way Forward to Create Agile and Resilient Libraries' on August 14, 2021 to observe Librarians' Day. For details visit: <https://alibnet.org/public/event/66.pdf>

Programme on Research Support Service

An AICTE-ATAL sponsored Faculty Development Programme on 'Research Support Services in Academic Institutions' will be held in online mode during August 24 - 28, 2021. For details visit: <https://atalacademy.aicte-india.org/>

International

Conference on Role of Varsity Library in Research

UK based Jisc and CNI leaders' online conference on 'At the Frontier of Research Practice: the University Library as a Catalyst' organized by Jisc and Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) will be held during July 7 - 9, 2021. For details visit: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/eni-conference>

IFLA World Congress

The 86th IFLA 2021 World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) will be held in online mode during August 17 - 19, 2021. The theme of the conference is 'Let's work together for the future!'. For details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/wlic2021>

Conference on Challenges of LI Profession

Sri Lanka Technological Campus, Padukka, Sri Lanka, is organizing a Virtual International Conference on 'Challenges of Library & Information Science Profession in New Normal Context' on August 23, 2021. For details visit: <https://viclis2021.sltc.ac.lk/#contact>

IFLA General Assembly

IFLA 2021 General Assembly will be held in The Hague, Netherlands, on August 25, 2021. For details, visit: <https://www.ifla.org/node/93875>

IFLA- ACD Open Programme

The Open Programme 2021 of IFLA Acquisition & Collection Development Section (ACD) on 'Managing Library Collections in an Open Access World' will be held in online mode during August 16 - 31, 2021. For details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/node/93641>

Conference on Knowledge Management

The 3rd International Conference on 'Knowledge and Information Management (ICKIM 2021)' will be held at Xiamen, China, during September 24 - 26, 2021. For details visit:

<http://ickim.org/>

Conference on Data Management

A Virtual Conference of National Information Standards Organization (NISO) on 'Effective Data Management (NISO)' will be held in online mode on September 29, 2021. For details visit; <https://www.niso.org/events/2021/09/effective-data-management>

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

MALA Foundation Day

Manipur Library Association (MALA) observed 34th Foundation Day in online mode through google meet on May 24, 2021. The function was presided over by Shri K Chaoba Singh, President, MALA. In his presidential address, he highlighted the activities of MALA, during the last 33 years for the development of library services in the state of Manipur. Shri Lakshman Singh, Vice President-II, also spoke on the role of library association in developing library services. Smt. L Sabita Devi, former President of MALA, in her speech, urged the Manipur Government to create a Library Directorate as per Manipur Public Libraries Act, 1988. The meeting was attended by a good number of MALA members. The programme was conducted by Smt. R K Urmila Devi, General Secretary, MALA.

Bihar to avoid Library Room Demolition

Under pressure from intellectuals over the possible demolition of a reading room inside the historic Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Bihar Government has decided to reduce the width of a particular stretch of a proposed flyover on Patna's Ashoka Road, according to a report by Santosh Singh in *Indian Express*. Bihar Road Construction Department additional chief secretary Amrit Lal Meena said, "The BRPNL (Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited) has decided to reduce the width of the proposed overbridge for a certain distance to ensure that the Lord Curzon reading hall... is not demolished." The proposed 2.1-km double-decker flyover will link Kargil Chowk to the National Institute of Engineering chowk and to Ganga Path, another mega project. The library was opened in 1891 by Khan Bahadur Maulvi Khuda Baksh, a Siwan landlord, with over 4,000 manuscripts. In 1905, then Viceroy of India Lord Curzon was so impressed by the library's rich collection that he constructed the reading room. In 1969, the Centre acknowledged it as an institution of national importance. At present, the library has over 21,000 manuscripts, mostly in Arabic and Persian, as well as important writings in Sanskrit, along with over 2.5 lakh books. In a letter to Patna DM Chandrashekhar in April, the library's director Shayesta Bedar wrote, "The (library) board was of the view that the possibility of saving the portions of the library be explored, keeping in view the significance of the library as the biggest cultural heritage of the state." Amid a row over the proposed demolition

of the reading room a few months ago, Road Construction Department Minister Nitin Nabin had also hinted at a review of the plan. For original report visit: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/facing-flak-bihar-rethinks-plan-to-demolish-khuda-baksh-library-room-for-patna-flyover-7350315/>

Library Book returned after 63 Years

A vintage children's hardback turned up in the mailroom of the Queens Public Library in Auburndale, USA, recently, says a story by Sasha von Oldershausen in *The New York times*. The book was "Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger," by Glen Rounds, a collection of Paul Bunyan tall tales. According to the date stamped on the borrowing card inside, it was about 23,000 days late. Betty Diamond, of Madison, Wisconsin, had sent it back after more than 63 years, along with a \$500 donation to the Queens Public Library, which more than covered the late fees. As a girl, Betty had been "too ashamed to go to the library with an overdue book," she recalled. So, "Ol' Paul" ended up staying with her as she grew up, establishing a career in academia and settling in the Midwest. In 1957, Betty was a 10-year-old growing up in Whitestone, Queens. She read just about anything she could get her hands on. Books offered her a secret life apart from her parents, immigrants from a small town in what was then called Czechoslovakia who were less familiar with American culture. "That was actually great for me because that meant I could read whatever I wanted," Ms. Diamond said, adding that her parents had their own secrets. They spoke to each other in Hungarian, their mother tongue, while addressing Betty and her older brother only in English or Yiddish. For Betty, going to the library as a child was like "being in a candy store." This was the backdrop of her grade-school interest in "Ol' Paul," which she checked out from the library that spring, with a due date of July 10, 1957. As the years went by, and Betty became a teenager at Bayside High School, and then an undergraduate at Queens College, the book simply got lost in the shuffle of her young life. On the odd occasion that she came across it, she said, she couldn't bring herself to deal with the issue. Throwing it out was out of the question. "I have a great fondness for books and I really regard them with honor," said Ms. Diamond, who, in case readers need further proof, ultimately received her Ph D in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and would later go on to teach literature at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. "Ol' Paul" travelled with her wherever she went, she said, except for a graduate school stint in England, when it stayed in her childhood bedroom. As an adult, she kept the book tucked among the many others she's collected in her home, occasionally coming across its red spine while searching for something else. But recently, she decided to "make amends." Ms. Diamond, now 74, called her old library to let officials know of her plan and to ask that the book be preserved. Then she put "Ol' Paul" along with a note and check in the mail. Nick Buron, the chief librarian of the Queens Public Library, said it was not uncommon for patrons, in the middle of an attic purge or a big move, to return books they had held onto for a few decades.

“People have a really hard time throwing books in the garbage,” Mr. Buron said. “I think that says a great deal about how much we as a society value the written word.” For full story visit: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/17/nyregion/nyc-overdue-library-book.html>

300-bed Health Facility at Hospital Library

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy recently said that many ventilators were lying unused at government health facilities in Telengana due to scarcity of technicians. Kishan Reddy added that Gandhi Hospital's library block would be converted into a 300-bed facility with oxygen support very soon, says a report in *The Times of India*. Interacting with the media after visiting state-run Gandhi Hospital recently, the Union Minister of State said that 50 ventilators had been lying unused at Warangal's Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) Hospital as the hospital did not have technicians. “I appeal to the government to appoint staff in all hospitals on war footing,” he said. Claiming that the Centre was supplying medicines to treat black fungus, he said all oxygen plants granted by the Centre should be made operational immediately. Kishan Reddy inspected two newly-installed pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants, which produce 1,000 litres of oxygen per minute each at Gandhi Hospital. The Union Minister of State also inspected the ICU wards and inquired about the treatment being administered to patients admitted there. After examining the library block at the hospital, he said it would be converted into a 300-bed facility with oxygen support. “The facility will be operational from next week,” he added. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/gandhi-library-block-to-become-300-bed-facility/articleshowprint/82751732.cms>

Libraries for Elders in Haryana Schools

Public libraries will be set up for the elderly in schools by Haryana Higher Education Department on the orders of the government, says a report by Anurag Shukla in *Dainik Jagran*. The department has decided to set up public libraries in 14 districts of the state in the first phase. For this, the department has also appointed district nodal officers for these libraries on behalf of the director. It may be mentioned that in villages, elderly people often spend time sitting on the chaupals. It has been decided to set up libraries in the schools so that they can spend time in the library instead of the chaupal. In cities and towns, libraries will be set up in old age homes. Libraries will also be set up in Open Shelter Homes and Bal Upvan Ashrams for destitute children. These libraries will be maintained by the Higher Education Department. The government has approved necessary grant for these libraries. Work on this scheme will be started soon. Under this scheme, libraries will be built in 30 villages in Kaithal district. For implementing this scheme in 24 of these villages, a grant of ₹ 95 lakh has been approved by the government. For original report visit: <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=hi&u=https://www.jagran.co>

[m/haryana/panipat-public-library-will-open-in-schools-for-the-elderly-in-haryana-21284020.html&prev=search&pto=aue](https://www.jagran.co/m/haryana/panipat-public-library-will-open-in-schools-for-the-elderly-in-haryana-21284020.html&prev=search&pto=aue)

Woman sets up 8 Libraries in 9 Months

For Ngurang Meena of Arunachal Pradesh, change came in the form of books, and she yearns to do the same for others through an open and accessible street library. Thirty-year-old Meena runs an NGO called Ngurang Learning Institute (NLI) since 2014 along with her younger sister. In August 2020, she set up her first free roadside library in Rayo village in Nirjuli during the first wave of the pandemic. And on April 26 this year, she has set up the eighth such library in Koloriang in Kurung Kumey district, says a story by Simran Bajaj available on eastmojo.com website. Meena was inspired by a street library in Mizoram, something that pushed her to start her initiative. Her libraries house a range of books from novels, storybooks to textbooks, and some even have a telescope to ignite curiosity in young minds. The open-access libraries are aimed at creating a reading culture in tribal children. Meena, having the privilege of being educated, knows that access to public libraries can be a task for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The state has very few public libraries and literacy is picking up at a snail's pace. In a piece for *TheWire*, she wrote: As the former US President Barack Obama in his 2005 speech, Literary and Education in a 21st Century Economy, had said, “Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible,” books teach us and they open a world to us and help form our opinion; they influence our social and political actions. She spent around ₹ 10,000 to purchase the books and spent another ₹ 10,000 to make the wooden shelves and tin-roof for the 'self-help library'. Though Meena could not be contacted, Diwang James Hosai, Secretary of Ngurang Learning Institute told *EastMojo* that another such library was under construction. On the response received so far, Hosai said, “We have received immense support from people. In fact, people are requesting us to come to their area and open such libraries.” Recently, they have also started a fundraiser on Ketto to raise ₹25 lakh. The main motive is to outnumber the wine shops in Arunachal with free bookstalls and libraries to give the required push to young ones towards reading. For full story visit: <https://www.eastmojo.com/arunachal-pradesh/2021/04/27/arunachal-woman-bringing-change-one-library-at-a-time/>

Library set up by Monk

Every day at 3pm, a building in Ramgaon village in West Bengal's Jaigaon in Alipurduar district rings with the sound of laughter. For, this is when children in the age group of 3-14 start arriving there, heading to the shelves stacked with around 300 books in English and Hindi. The younger ones opt for board books or the universal favourite, *Peppa Pig*. The slightly older children choose from an array of fiction and non-fiction. One picks up *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child*, most head for encyclopaedias and books on science such as National

Geographic's *Answer Book: 10,001 Fast Facts About Our World*, says a story by Avantika Bhuyan available on lifestyle.livemint.com website. This library, on the border of West Bengal and the Bhutanese town Phuentsholing, has been raising readers for a year. It's the passion project of a Buddhist monk, Lopen Sange Kalden Lama, who runs the Mahabodhi Dharma Centre in the village, which has a population of around 70,000. He grew up there, yearning to read. "However, our family's financial situation wasn't such that we could afford books. Somewhere at the back of my mind, I had resolved that if I ever had enough funds, I would start some sort of reading centre for children," says the 36-year-old. At an early age, he left to study at the Namdroling monastery in Mysuru, moving on to the Shechen monastery in Nepal to study philosophy. There he received the title of Lopen, or acharya. Lopen Sange then shuttled between Bodh Gaya, Bihar, where he helped out at the monastery, and his home in Jaigaon. In 2016, with support from friends and extended family, he established a Buddhist centre in the village. Once that got going, he decided to revisit his dream of a space for children. The journey has not been without its set of challenges. Initially, his family couldn't grasp the need for a library. But they came around. Lopen Sange's friends offered ideas and even donated the initial set of books. Last year, when he started the library within the Mahabodhi centre, with support from the Assam-based collective Maati Community, Lopen Sange was clear that he wanted to steer clear of religious books or those on theology and encourage the children to focus on good thoughts and positive thinking. The aim, then, was to expose them to as many genres as possible, supplementing the knowledge they were receiving in schools. The children, who learn English, Hindi and Bengali in school, are encouraged to write in whatever language they are comfortable in, even Nepali and Tibetan. "Today, the library gets children from all backgrounds. Some are orphans, who stay at the centre, while a few others come from economically weak backgrounds. Some children come from far beyond the village as well," says Lopen Sange. With schools shut through the pandemic, it has been the only learning space for children. For full story visit: <https://lifestyle.livemint.com/news/talking-point/the-monk-who-started-a-library-111608387398963.html>

Arunachal Teacher Opening Street Libraries

In today's time opening a public library on the street and creating a system for the people where the reader can gain knowledge comfortably is nothing less than a virtue and it has been done by a teacher from Arunachal Pradesh. Since then people can get knowledge by reading any favorite book from this street library for free, says a story by Tejeshwari Mehta in *Amar Ujala*. Meena Gurung, a government school teacher who lives in a small town in Arunachal Pradesh, has started the 'Street Library' near her house. She kept many types of books in this library and also arranged for the people to sit nearby. People appreciated this idea of her and also shared it on social media. It is not Meena's personal library. She kept it open to public from

the very beginning. People come here, take a book by themselves, sit here and read and then leave. No one ever comes with the intention of stealing a book. The library is open all the time and there are many people who do not know Meena but they also leave after reading the book honestly. This street library of Meena is in such a place, where there is an open and quiet environment and such arrangement is very good for reading books, for concentration. This street library is very much liked by women and youth and in the evening their number becomes large. Meena has decided that she will open similar libraries in other parts of Arunachal Pradesh. For original story visit: <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=hi&u=https://www.amarujala.com/shakti/street-library-of-meena-in-arunachal-pradesh-in-hindi&prev=search&pto=aue>

Teacher sets up Home Libraries for Students

Deprived of outdoor games, friends, and facilities such as libraries, children are the most affected during the pandemic-induced lockdown. A teacher in Thrissur has taken an innovative step to positively engage her students during this worrying times, says a *The Hindu* report. P U Daya of Sree Ramakrishna Gurukula Vidyamandir L P School, Puranattukara, has arranged a small library in houses of all students in her class. "We have a library in the school and a small collection of books in each class. But due to the lockdown, students are not able to access these books. My aim is to inculcate the habit of reading in children from a tender age, so as to engage them creatively," she says. There are 42 students in her class, III B. Students of the school are mostly from families in Adattu grama panchayat. Ms. Daya organized books for her students with the support of various publishers. There are 100 copies of Pularithuval, poet P K Gopi's latest book for children, in the library. She added books from her own library too to the collection. "It was difficult to reach books to every house during the lockdown," she says. She asked parents to buy books for children instead of toys, chocolates, and other gifts. The children were asked to collect books from their neighbours too. "Everyone cooperated generously," she says. There are 10 - 100 books in the personal library of each student. At the school reopening on June 1, her student P V Diya gave a surprise gift to her teacher by reciting one of the poems from Pularithuval. Ms. Daya plans to extend her effort to other classes too this academic year. "Children should grow up reading. Their home should become a library. Classes and homes should be filled with books," she says. For original report visit: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/home-is-where-library-is/article34790620.ece>

Roadside People's Library

"To understand what this library is about, I think it's important to first understand that reading is a privilege," insisted Ushimi Linggi, "Not everyone has access to it and that needs to change. That is the idea behind this library." My conversation with her was via Zoom, but the network was patchy, to say the least. But

this was not surprising, says a story by Narayani Basu written in first person and available on *scroll.in* website. After all, Roing, where Linggi is based, is the last major township on the north-eastern frontier of India. Nestled in the Lower Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, Roing is home to picturesque rivers, mountains, forest - and a silent reading revolution. The establishment of the Roing People's Library, something I first discovered on Twitter (courtesy Kaustubh Deka's timeline) was an idea that took two years and a pandemic to reach fruition. In 2018, Ushimi Linggi returned from Guwahati, Assam, to her hometown in Roing to join the school where she now works. In 2019, Linggi and a couple of like-minded volunteers founded the Eya Collective. "In the native language of the Idu Mishmi tribe, Eya means mountain," said Linggi, "We didn't have a concrete plan beyond our mutual desire to create a space where people could come to read. We wanted to create a place where kids could come to talk about their ideas and their knowledge of art and literature." The time was right, she felt, since she could see Roing changing, and aspiring to move forward. "We began by having small poetry readings and art exhibitions. It was a way to reach out and make the Eya Collective known to the residents of the town." That initiative was a first step, though it didn't immediately crystallize into anything larger. "We all had our own personal and professional projects to take care of, we almost forgot about our plans." And then, in 2020, fate - and the pandemic - stepped in. The first reminder for Linggi was when a roadside library sprang up in Mizoram's capital city, Aizawl. Started in February 2020 by C Lawmzuala, a professional assistant at Mizoram University's central library and Lallaisangzuali, a deputy librarian there, the library was an almost instant success, with citizens pulling together to donate books. Then, in March 2020, India went into lockdown, forcing a plan that had nearly been relegated to oblivion to the forefront. "The pandemic was our catalyst and our inspiration, at a time when the lockdown forced us to stand still," Linggi said. "Here were people of all ages - some older, some younger and some my age - who wanted to continue reading, especially during the lockdown." She drew inspiration from what she had seen and heard of the roadside libraries in Aizawl, where readers could take a book, and leave another one in exchange. "We thought that was such a great model, because a library should be that kind of a safe place, where you can come to talk to one another about what interests you and your community creatively." The People's Library in Roing opened in late 2020. The lockdown had eased by then. "We didn't know what or how many people to expect, but we made it a point to sit at the library ourselves," Linggi said. "People could see the installations, but many of them needed a push. So even if a couple of people stopped by, just to have a look, we would chat to them to find out what they liked about the library, what they wanted to read or what they were reading currently. That was how we started." That is also how Linggi means to go on. There is no time limit - unlike public libraries - on how long readers can keep books. "In order to keep track of

missing books, or books that are being kept too long by readers, we've put in place a register system, which we call the Borrow Book, which has the reader's name and contact number," said Linggi. "So after three weeks, I usually give the reader a call to find out what's up." The register itself soon became a way to track milestones in the growth of the People's Library. "It soon became a barometer of how many people were taking books from our shelves," said Linggi. "From a handful of people stopping by the library, we began seeing entire pages of the register filling up in less than a day!" For full story visit: <https://scroll.in/article/984852/how-a-peoples-library-sprang-up-during-the-pandemic-in-the-town-of-roing-in-arunachal-pradesh>

First Sports Library in Assam

The Assam Sports Journalists Association is all set to start the first-ever sports library in the state to archive sports literature, data and records, says a story by Abhilash Singh available on *eastmojo.com* website. The Assam Sports Journalists Association is the sole affiliate of the Sports Journalists Federation of India in Assam and has been serving the journalists fraternity of Assam for all these years. After serving for the physical well being of the journalists of the state, the Association has now undertaken the initiative to boost the intellectual development of the people. The library will also serve the purpose of a sports information centre. The Assam Sports Journalists Association has built up the necessary infrastructure at its office premises in Nehru Stadium, Guwahati for the said library and is going to inaugurate the same soon. The Assam Sports Journalists Association has also acquired a good number of books and records, said Association President Shri Subodh Malla Barua. For full story visit: <https://www.eastmojo.com/assam/2021/03/04/assam-first-ever-sports-library-to-come-up-in-guwahati/>

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

WhatsApp restores Notification Colour

WhatsApp has reportedly restored green colour notifications for its Android beta app. WhatsApp started testing a dark blue colour for its notifications with the 2.21.12.12 beta update but it looks like that didn't sit well with the beta users. The colour can be seen in the WhatsApp notifications for app name, reply, and mark as read buttons. Now that the Facebook-owned instant messaging service has decided to revert to its original colour scheme, the blue colour will likely not come to the stable release, says a story by Vineet Washington on *gadgets.ndtv.com* website. As per the latest report by WhatsApp feature tracker WABetaInfo, the messaging service was testing blue colour for its notifications on Android. With this implementation, the WhatsApp app name, 'reply', and 'mark as read' options in the notification shade for Android users who are using the beta version of the app was changed to dark blue instead of green.

Now, according to the report, the colour has been reverted to green due to feedback from the users. WABetaInfo says users of the beta version complained that the new colour wasn't properly visible in notifications because of its contrast. Now that WhatsApp has decided to go back to the original green colour, it doesn't look like the blue colour for notifications will be making its way to the stable release. Typically, WhatsApp tests new features in the beta version of the app and then depending on response and functionality, brings them to the stable version. Recently, WhatsApp added voice call feature for Jio Phone and other KaiOS-based feature phones. It works on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology and requires an active mobile data or Wi-Fi connection. Recently, it was reported that WhatsApp was testing Flash Call feature that lets users log into their accounts quickly. Instead of the six-digit code, WhatsApp will reportedly make a flash call to the user for the purpose of verification. For original story visit: <https://gadgets.ndtv.com/apps/news/whatsapp-brings-back-green-colour-notifications-beta-users-complaints-blue-report-2463366>

Facebook Messenger is Getting Updated

Facebook Messenger is getting three new features in an update for its mobile app. The new features include three new chat themes, a quick reply bar, along with QR code scanning and payment links. The update will be rolled out for its Android and iOS apps. The social media giant mentioned that the QR code and payment links option were rolling out for users of the app in the US as of now. The new themes will be available on both Messenger and Instagram, says a story by Satvik Khare on gadgets.ndtv.com website. The update for Messenger was announced on Facebook's blog on June 10. The update for the messaging app brings three new themes in celebration - Olivia Rodrigo, Fast & Furious 9 (F9), and World Oceans Day. The theme for Olivia Rodrigo marks her debut album, Sour, that was released on May 21. The F9 theme has been released to celebrate 20 years of the Fast and Furious franchise. The theme for World Oceans Day - celebrated on June 8 - apparently lets you virtually explore the oceans around the world while also promoting sustainability. A quick reply bar has been added to the bottom of the media viewer in Messenger. Users can simply reply to the image or video while viewing it in full-screen mode and without having to return to the main chat to reply to the media. Users can subsequently swipe up on the media to return to main chat box. Additionally, users in the US, as of now, can also send and receive payments via Facebook Pay. Users can make these transactions with anyone even if they aren't connected with each other on Facebook. Users can access their payment links or QR code by going to Settings > Facebook Pay. They can then share the payment links or show the QR code to send and receive money from friends. Gadgets 360 was able to view the themes on Instagram and Messenger but the quick reply bar along with QR code and payment links weren't visible when tested. It is possible that the update is being rolled out in phases and the quick reply bar feature could be available for all users soon. For

original story visit: <https://gadgets.ndtv.com/apps/news/facebook-messenger-new-themes-quick-reply-bar-qr-code-payment-links-instagram-olivia-rodrigo-f9-world-oceans-day-2461762>

SPECIAL FEATURE

Protest Libraries!

Libraries have always been associated with education, enlightenment, democracy and culture. But lately they are often being associated with people's protests too. Today possibly there is no major protest site, where one or more libraries have not sprung up almost instantly. Such 'people's libraries' or 'protest libraries' or 'protest site libraries', as they are often termed, have appeared in almost every part of the world.

The first known such library, named BiblioSol after Puerta del Sol, a popular city square in Madrid, Spain, where Spanish activists, known as Indignados, had assembled to protest against government austerity measures in May 2011, came up soon after this 'Occupy Puerta del Sol' movement began. There were repeated attempts to evict the library, but around 10,000 books, mainly donated, of the library were saved by the enthusiasts and the library began to function again at new locations. This was not the only instance of 'protest library' in Spain; makeshift libraries sprang up in different parts of the country during the anti-austerity 15-M movement during 2011 - 2015.

However, the most widely publicized 'protest library', came up in September 2011 at Occupy Wall Street protest site in lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park located in the financial district of New York City. It emerged out of a cardboard box full of books which was brought to Zuccotti Park by a library and information science student of New York University. But soon bad weather condition caused loss of collection. Fortunately, with the help of some volunteers and donations from readers, private citizens, authors and business houses, a fresh collection could be built up very soon. It was temporarily evicted on November 15, 2011 by the police who also threw out 5,554 books, for which Government of New York City had to later pay a penalty of \$336,700 at the order of the court which found the police action violation of protesters' rights. Brookfield Properties, the owner of the park, also tried to evict the library under the pretext of cleaning, but had to abandon the effort due to public pressure. There were two more attempts to evict the library. But every time new collection was built in no time. According to *American Libraries* journal, the library's collection had "thousands of circulating volumes," which included "holy books of every faith, books reflecting the entire political spectrum, and works for all ages on a huge range of topics." After the emergence of 'occupy library' or 'protest library' at Wall Street, such library spread very soon in USA and several other places around the world. In USA alone, more than 100 such libraries cropped up at protest sites across the country, such as the protest sites of

Occupy Boston, Occupy Seattle, Occupy Los Angeles. Occupy Dallas, Occupy San Francisco, and so on.

In 2013 Gezi Park area of Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey, saw emergence of a 'protest library' at the site of citizens' protest against felling of trees to house shopping centre and apartments in the area. The library, which was started at the initiative of a high school teacher under a tarpaulin, had around 5000 books, collected through contributions from individuals and bookstores, neatly arranged on shelves and attracted many protesters, mainly students. According to Dr. Zeynep Tufekci, a Turkish sociologist and Associate Professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, USA, the library was "staffed by a man in a clown suit and a rainbow-colored wig. He waved merrily at passersby and handed out books" (as stated in her book 'Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest', published by Yale University Press in 2017). In 2014, during Ukraine's political protest 'Revolution of Dignity' at Maidan Nezalezhnosti [i.e. Independence Square] in the capital city of Kiev, a protest library called Maidan Library emerged. In 2016, during Nuit Debout [i.e. Night Standing] movement in France, such a library called BiblioDebout [i.e. Standing Library] appeared in Paris, Lyon and Toulouse.

The idea of 'protest libraries' has spread in India too and such libraries have come up in many cities, such as Delhi, Aligarh, Kolkata, Nagpur, Sikar, Bhopal, Araria and Kanpur. The first protest library of the country sprang up after Delhi Police stormed Dr. Zakir Husain Library in Jamia Millia Islamia on December 15, 2019. The 'Read for Revolution' library came up on a pavement near the university, started by a few students. The library received over 2000 books as donation, of which around 700 were kept in the library, while the rests were distributed among other similar libraries. This library reportedly inspired protesting people at around 18 protest sites to open such libraries.

At Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, which saw peaceful sit-in protest against Citizenship (Amendment) Act during December 2019 - March 2020, a group of students converted a bus-stand into a makeshift library, which they named as Fatima Sheikh Sabitribai Phule Library after two famous 19th century women educators and social reformers, which attracted a lot of donors who helped in building a collection of more than 1000 books on history, literature, law, philosophy, science and other subjects in a short span. Another protest library was started at Gandhi Park in New Delhi's Huz Rani area on January 25, 2020, which attracted children and adult readers alike. A similar makeshift library also came up on the pavement near Jawaharlal Nehru University and another at Azad Market in New Delhi, while in nearby city of Aligarh, the protesting students of Aligarh University set up 'Inquilabi Library' [i.e. revolutionary library]. In January itself over 250 Muslim women staged protest for several days against Citizenship (Amendment) Act at Park Circus Maidan in Kolkata and subsequently more than 100

women did so at Nawab Ali Park in Ekbalpore area of the city. A makeshift library-cum-reading room was opened at each of these locations.

The latest in this series of 'protest libraries' are the libraries that have come up on Delhi's border with adjacent states, where the farmers are on protest. The first among these libraries, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Library, was set up by a group of students at Tikri Border, Pillar No. 783 on December 22, 2020, which, started with around 200 books arranged in a single book stand, but the collection gradually rose to over 3,500 books, mostly received as donations. The idea of this library was liked by the protesting farmers elsewhere and consequently such libraries came up at Singhu border as well as at Ghazipur border and Shahjahanpur border.

The interesting features of the 'protest libraries' are that each of them is managed by volunteers and has a good flow of readers. Another important feature of many such libraries is that they do not only provide books to read but also a space where the readers can discuss, draw, write or even sing. Most of them also continue to serve the people even after the protests come to an end and the protesters disperse, as hinted by Dr. Sherrin Frances, Associate Professor of English at Saginaw Valley State University of Michigan, USA, in her book 'Libraries amid Protest: Books, Organizing, and Global Activism' published by University of Massachusetts Press in 2020. She found that after protests in New York, Madrid and other cities ended, "the librarians [who were the activists] kept the books and hauled them around and tried to find permanent places." "And so the libraries persisted for months and years after the occupations themselves were over," she said.

Nevertheless, one might wonder why at all libraries are sprouting up at the protest sites, which have to face vagaries of weather, and threat of violence and eviction. The answer, as given by Dr. Tufekci, is that "Libraries express a set of values that are aligned with the deeply held values of the protesters", while, according to writer and author Nilanjana Roy, "the heart of protest is the well-being of the community, and the heart of a library is the empowerment books offer". According to *National Herald* columnist Harshvardhan, "protest site libraries have an important role in bringing books close to people. It helps in broader dissemination of ideas and information in a more conducive environment, where people can actually relate with the thoughts and struggles of Bhagat Singh, Che Guevara, Ambedkar and other revolutionary activists and thinkers." Obviously, if this question is posed to a participant at any protest site, the answer is likely to be that such libraries provide books that give him or her inspiration to fight for a cause.

[Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_People%27s_Library, <https://www.ozy.com/the-new-and-the-next/indias-protests-have-a-new-language-slogans-marches-and-libraries/278442/>, <https://www.webcitation.org/63J3Pw49t?url=http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/1>

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OBITUARY

Prof. Pulin Behari Barua, former Professor & Head, Department of Library & Information Science, the University of Burdwan, Burdwan, West Bengal, passed away on April 27, 2021 at Hyderabad. He was suffering from Covid-19. Born in 1935, Prof. Barua passed Diploma in Library Science examination and Master of Library Science examination from University of Calcutta in 1964 and 1978 respectively - both in first class and standing first in order of merit. He also passed MA examination in Pali in 1969 and obtained Ph D degree in Pali in 1983 on the topic 'Monastic Libraries in Ancient India (as depicted in Buddhist and Jaina texts)' from the University of Calcutta. He joined the proposed University of Burdwan in 1959 and worked in the library of the said university for several years

before joining the Department of Library & Information Science, University of Burdwan, as a lecturer in 1973. He rose to the position of professor and headed the department for a long time. He contributed many papers in journals and seminars/conferences and also served as a UGC Visiting Fellow in five universities. He was a life member of IASLIC, BLA, IATLIS, Asiatic Society and Mahabodhi Society, Kolkata, and served as a vice-president of IATLIS for two years. He made a donation to the University of Burdwan for instituting a gold medal for the student who stands first among the candidates passing Master of Library & Information Science examination every year. IASLIC deeply mourns the death of Prof. Barua.

Dr. Thiruvengada Mani TK, former Deputy Librarian & Head, Taramani Campus Library, University of Madras, Chennai, and Governing Body Member of IASLIC from Zone 1, passed away on May 9, 2021 due to illness. Born in 1953, Dr. Mani obtained his Ph D degree in LIS from University of Madras. He joined the library of the same university in the year 1976 and rose to the position of Deputy Librarian. He retired from service in July 2015. Besides being a life member of IASLIC, he was associated with Tamil Nadu Library Association (T LA), Madras Library Association (MALA), Madras University Teachers Association (MUTA), and Tamil Heritage Foundation (THF). He was also a life member of the Society for Advancement of Library & Information Science (SALIS). Dr. Mani contributed more than 50 research articles which were published in national and international journals. He received 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from MALA in 2019. He was also awarded 'Best Librarian Award' by BAPSAI in 2013. IASLIC organized a condolence meeting on May 12, 2021 in online mode to mourn his death, where rich tributes were paid to the departed soul.

Published by Dr. J. N. Satpathi on behalf of IASLIC, P-291, CIT Scheme No. 6M, Kankurgachi, Kolkata - 700054.
Printed at Microprint Graphics, 1A, Raja Lane, Kolkata 700 009.
Editor: Prof. Amitabha Chatterjee

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