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PICK OF THE MONTH

Environmental Ethics
and India's Perspective on Environment
Niranjan Dev Bharadwaj
ISBN 978-81-237-8142-6 | ₹ 230.00

Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya: Promoting Lifelong Reading Habit Among Students

The Department of School Education and Literacy, under the Ministry of Education, and the National Book Trust-India have taken a momentous step towards fostering a reading culture in the country with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya in New Delhi on 3 June 2024. This significant event was attended by Shri K Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ms. Archana Sharma Awasthi, Joint Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shri Gaurav Singh, Director – Digital Education, Department of School Education & Literacy and Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, National Book Trust, India, Department of Higher Education.

The Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya initiative aims to establish an institutional framework that promotes and nurtures a lifelong reading habit among students. The initiative

seeks to provide students with access to a wide variety of literature, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and biographies, catering to diverse reading preferences and helping students explore various types of literature in their preferred language.

One of the salient features of Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya for Children and Adolescents is its device-agnostic accessibility, offering applications for Android and iOS devices and a web interface for Windows, Linux, and macOS devices. Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya will provide a variety of non-academic books in genres such as adventure, mystery, humour, literature, fiction, classics, non-fiction, self-help, historical, biography, comics, picture books, science, and poetry. Books will be categorized by age groups according to the NEP 2020 schooling structure (ages 3-8 years, 8-11 years, 11-14 years, and 14-18 years), genre, and language.

Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya will also highlight the history, culture, scientific, and other achievements of India, aiming





to instill a sense of pride in children and make them aware of India's rich heritage and culture. Books will be available in all 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India, along with English.

The first phase includes contributions from publishers who have provided books free of charge, such as Amar Chitra Katha, Book Dash, Children's Book Trust, Children Temple (Bihar SCERT), Diamond Pocket Books, Eklavya Publishers, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, NBT-India, NCERT, NIOS, Oxford University Press, Pratham Books, Room to Read, SCERTs of various states, Storyweaver, and The Asia Foundation – Let's Read. The next phase will incorporate a mix of royalty-free books and books procured from reputed publishers on a royalty/ subscription basis. To start with, over 1000 books have been uploaded on the platform.

In addition to the vast array of books, the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya will feature content designed to highlight India's cultural and historical heritage. This includes works that delve into India's scientific advancements, significant historical events, and notable figures in various fields. By presenting these works, the initiative aims to cultivate a sense of national pride and cultural awareness among young readers. The digital library's categorization by age, genre, and language ensures that content is appropriately tailored to the developmental stages and interests of the readers. This structured approach aligns with the NEP 2020's emphasis on age-appropriate learning and literacy.

Moreover, the initiative's focus on inclusivity and accessibility is evident in its support for multiple formats and devices,

with plans to add audiobooks, reflects a commitment to making literature accessible to all, regardless of the readers' technological preferences or abilities. This inclusivity extends to the range of languages offered, ensuring that children from different linguistic backgrounds can access literature in their mother tongue.

On the day of the launch, a panel discussion was also organized on the topic of 'Re-developing the Habit of Reading Among Indian Youth' moderated by Shri Anjum Sharma. The following distinguished individuals graced the dais: Shri Piyush Kumar, Head of Prabhat Group; Shri Prashant Pathak from Wonder House Books, representing the perspectives of publishers; Shri Chamu Krishna Shastri, President of Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti; and Dr. Biswajit Saha, Director of CBSE. During the discussion, Shri Shastri emphasized that youth should develop the habit of reading in languages other than just their medium of instruction. Dr. Biswajit Saha recommended incorporating various activities into the curriculum to make it engaging and thereby help foster a reading habit among students. The discussion underscored the crucial role that parents, community, culture, and curriculum play in developing a reading culture.

Overall, the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya is poised to become a cornerstone of India's educational landscape, promoting literacy and a love for reading among children and adolescents. By providing access to a rich and diverse collection of literature, the initiative supports the development of critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness.



Karnataka Pustak Parikrama: Journey to Promote a Reading Culture

The National Book Trust-India's Karnataka Pustak Parikrama was inaugurated on 25 June 2024 at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya in Malleswaram, Bengaluru. The event was ceremoniously flagged off by Ms. Sreevidya P.I., IAS, Commissioner of Panchayat Raj, Karnataka, marking the commencement of an ambitious journey to promote reading and literature across the state. The occasion was graced by the presence of renowned children's writer Ramendra Kumar, who conducted an engaging storytelling session. During this session, students were given the opportunity to learn the art of creative storytelling, enhancing their narrative skills and fostering a deeper appreciation for literature. His interactive approach captivated the young audience, inspiring them to explore the world of stories with enthusiasm and creativity.

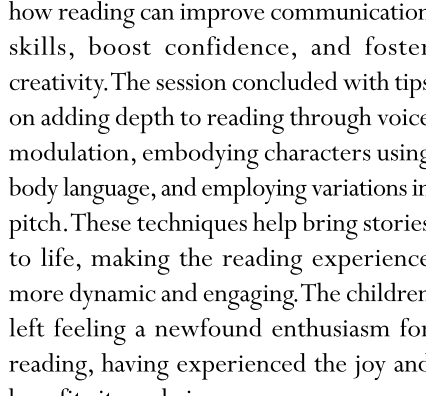
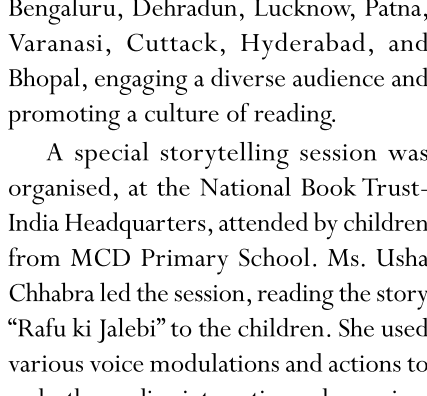
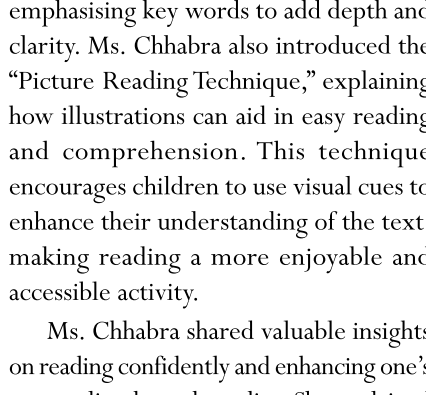
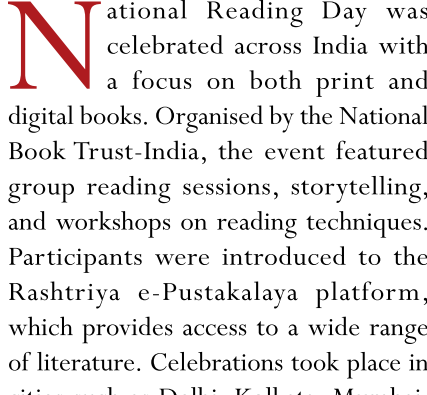


Over approximately 40 days, the Mobile Book Exhibition will traverse Karnataka, covering a diverse range of cities including Bengaluru and 12 other key locations. This initiative aims to bring books and literary activities directly to communities, making literature accessible to a broader audience. The mobile book tour is designed to foster a love for reading and create a

cultural and educational impact across the state. The Karnataka Pustak Parikrama promises to be a journey of literary enrichment and community engagement, contributing significantly to the promotion of literacy and learning in the region. This initiative not only aims to encourage more people to engage with books and reading activities but also to nurture a vibrant reading culture throughout Karnataka.



National Reading Day Celebrations Across India



National Reading Day was celebrated across India with a focus on both print and digital books. Organised by the National Book Trust-India, the event featured group reading sessions, storytelling, and workshops on reading techniques. Participants were introduced to the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya platform, which provides access to a wide range of literature. Celebrations took place in cities such as Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Dehradun, Lucknow, Patna, Varanasi, Cuttack, Hyderabad, and Bhopal, engaging a diverse audience and promoting a culture of reading.

A special storytelling session was organised, at the National Book Trust-India Headquarters, attended by children from MCD Primary School. Ms. Usha Chhabra led the session, reading the story “Rafu ki Jalebi” to the children. She used various voice modulations and actions to make the reading interactive and engaging,

emphasising key words to add depth and clarity. Ms. Chhabra also introduced the “Picture Reading Technique,” explaining how illustrations can aid in easy reading and comprehension. This technique encourages children to use visual cues to enhance their understanding of the text, making reading a more enjoyable and accessible activity.

Ms. Chhabra shared valuable insights on reading confidently and enhancing one’s personality through reading. She explained how reading can improve communication skills, boost confidence, and foster creativity. The session concluded with tips on adding depth to reading through voice modulation, embodying characters using body language, and employing variations in pitch. These techniques help bring stories to life, making the reading experience more dynamic and engaging. The children left feeling a newfound enthusiasm for reading, having experienced the joy and benefits it can bring.

Himachal Pradesh Pustak Parikrama

On 21 June, Mr. Salim Azam, the Sub-Divisional Collector of Nahan (Sirmaur), inaugurated the Himachal Pradesh Book Tour with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking the start of a significant literary initiative by the National Book Trust, India. This ambitious tour is designed to promote reading and enhance access to literature across Himachal Pradesh.

Spanning approximately 1800 kilometres from 21 June to 29 July, the tour will visit key locations such as Solan, Shimla, Mandi, Manali, Palampur, Dalhousie, and Una, each selected to reach

diverse audiences and foster a love for books. At each stop, the NBT-India team will engage children and youth through a variety of activities, including interactive storytelling sessions, book readings, and discussions.

These events aim to make literature accessible and enjoyable, sparking an interest in reading among young participants. By directly reaching out to communities and providing enriching literary experiences, the tour seeks to bridge gaps in access to literature and support the development of lifelong reading habits across the State.



Celebrating World Environment Day at Ghaziabad RRTS Station

On World Environment Day, NBT-India in collaboration with National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) organised a special storytelling session at the Ghaziabad Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) Station on 5 June 2024. The event aimed to raise awareness about environmental conservation and encourage eco-friendly practices among the public. The Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, played a key role by engaging participants with interactive activities such as riddles and snake-and-ladder games, which conveyed important messages about keeping the environment clean in a fun and engaging way. The storytelling session featured captivating narratives that highlighted the beauty of nature and the



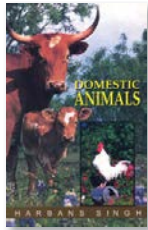
urgent need for its preservation. Through expressive storytelling techniques, the narrators effectively captured the audience's imagination and attention. Participants were also provided with practical tips on how to contribute to environmental conservation, such as reducing plastic use, recycling, and conserving water.

The event concluded with a collective pledge from attendees to commit to environmental stewardship in their daily lives. This collaborative effort between NBT-India, NCRTC, and the Wildlife Institute of India successfully combined education and entertainment, fostering a greater awareness of environmental issues and inspiring action towards a cleaner, healthier environment.

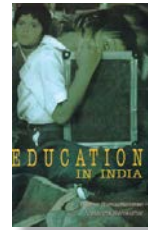


Books on National Reading Day by NBT- India

Explore your next favourite read with NBT-India's latest curated selection of books



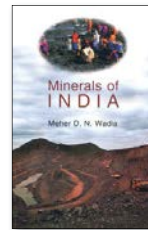
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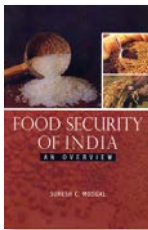
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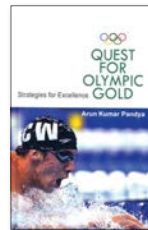
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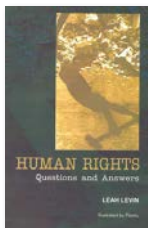
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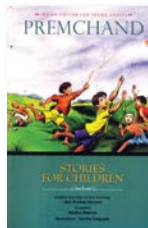
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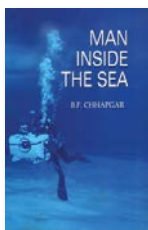
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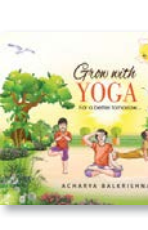
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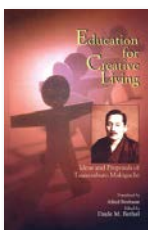
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Book Excerpt

Pleasures of Reading

On National Reading Day (19 June 2024), NBT-India celebrates with the theme “Read Your Way” to emphasise nurturing a love for reading across all ages. The following excerpt is taken from NBT-India’s publication, *Pleasures of Reading* by Prem Pal Sharma.

Reading lucidly written non texts as well as academic books can give s much of enjoyment. Furthermore, they help us build a command over the concerned languages and improve our general awareness. Teachers and parents should definitely encourage reading of such material which is not a hindrance to the children’s imagination and joy. Writings in this book are based on the author’s thoughtful comments on school education, students and various aspects related to them.

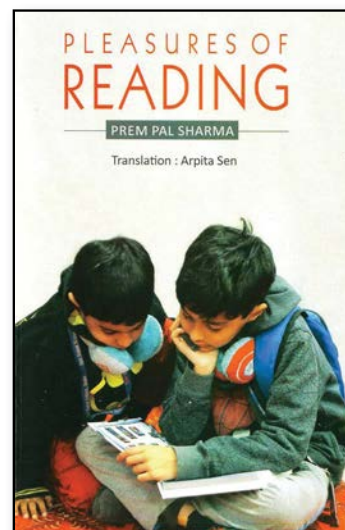
Meaning of education is to understand certain things and this understanding has to be in one’s own language. Once you have grasped the basics in your own language, it becomes easier to learn further in other languages. If one learns in one’s own language, learning can be fun. In this way, one can easily understand one’s environment, science and society at large. This is true not only in the case of doctors, it is true in the case of everybody connected with imparting and gaining of education. Education can prove to be that magic wand which can bring in fundamental changes in India. We can say this with conviction after seeing our experiences over the decades after our independence. The examples of some states can be given here. 70 to 80% of the population are outside the ambit of education and a miniscule percentage are loaded with degrees like MA, PhD, BA/BTech. These are the people who form 70 to 80% of the Civil Services, leading us to the wrong conclusion that the quality of education is very good. The fact is that quality education is imparted in very few elite institutions where the poor have no access. The poor cannot be blamed as we have failed to address this basic issue of education. The scenario in female education is even worse. The result is that in the human development index, our country figures very low. The educated people try to migrate abroad in search of better environments.

In any case, the students from rural areas first come to the big cities for higher education and then use them as spring boards for Aying abroad. The lack of balance and foresight in the field of education is the reason behind this brain drain. There are exceptions like the state of Gujarat where the quality of education may not have produced many Civil servants, but still the state is flourishing socially and industrially.

The setting up of Kendriya Vidyalayas had brought some hope in the field of education. It was based on pan-India presence and a common curriculum. It was aimed at the service class who are subjected to all India transfers and who can bring in some fundamental changes in the society. The children do not face any difficulty in case their guardians get transferred from one place to another as the syllabus and medium of instruction remains the same. The idea was to provide quality education at affordable costs

to the serving middle class. As children of employees at all levels study together, some higher placed parents started taking out their wards from these schools apprehending that their children would get spoilt in the company of children of the lowly placed employees. They are under the wrong impression that qualify education can only be got by paying more fees in public schools.

In this manner, the standards of Kendriya Vidyalaya began falling and the vacant seats started getting occupied by those for whom these schools eats startean atal. Theatracion oi less fees made parents of ineligibile children to find out way and means of getting into Kendriya Vidyalayas, The damage was actually done by those who took out their children from reading lucidly written non texts as well as academic books can give s much of enjoyment. Furthermore, they help us build a command over the concerned languages and improve our general awareness. Teachers and parents should definitely encourage reading of such material which is not a hindrance to the children’s imagination and joy. Writings in this book are based on the author’s thoughtful comments on school education, students and various aspects related to them.



Pleasures of Reading

Prem Pal Sharma

ISBN 978-81-237-9523-2

₹ 175.00

International Yoga Day: Promoting Wellness Through Yoga

In celebration of International Yoga Day on 21 June, a special yoga session was organised on 18 June 2024 in NBT-India, under the expert guidance of Yogaguru Dr. Puran Chand. This highlighted the benefits of yoga and promoted its practice among the employees of NBT-India. During the session, Dr. Puran Chand demonstrated various yoga postures and breathing techniques, emphasising how these practices can be integrated into daily routines to enhance physical health and mental well-being.

Dr. Puran Chand explained the significance of yoga in improving physical flexibility, reducing stress, and fostering



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Postal Regd. No. DL-SW-01/4076/21-23
Licenced to post without prepayment.
L.No. U(SW)-21/2021-23
Mailing date: 5/6 Same Month
Date of Publication: 01/06/2024
Posted at LPC, Delhi RMS, Delhi-110006
Total number of pages: 8



NBT Newsletter is the house magazine of the National Book Trust, India — an autonomous organisation of the Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, Government of India.

The views expressed in the signed articles do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Trust.

Editor: Kanchan Wanchoo Sharma
Editorial Associates: Gaurav & Gauri Sharma
Production Officer: Narender Kumar



NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA
Ministry of Education, Government of India
5 Institutional Area, Phase-II Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-110 070
E-mail: office.nbt@nic.in
Website: www.nbtindia.gov.in

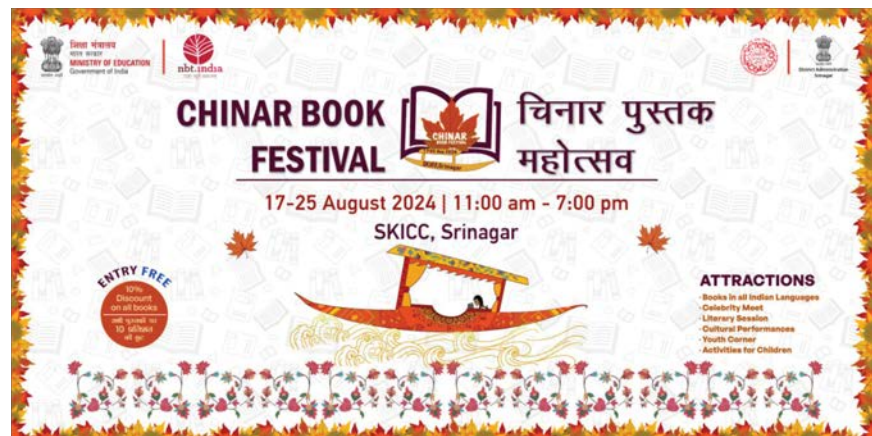
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Printed and published by Anuj Kumar Bharti on behalf of National Book Trust, India and printed at First Impression Corporate Services Private Limited, E-114, Sector-63, Noida-201301, Uttar Pradesh and published at National Book Trust, India, Nehru Bhawan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase-II Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070.

Typeset and designed by Akansha Jain

overall wellness. The session included an interactive Q&A segment where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and receive personalised advice on specific yoga practices. By the end of the programme, attendees were inspired to incorporate yoga into their

daily lives, aiming for positive changes in their health and lifestyle. The event not only provided valuable insights into yoga but also fostered a sense of community and commitment to personal wellness among the employees.



You can also find the e-Newsletter on our website www.nbtindia.gov.in

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