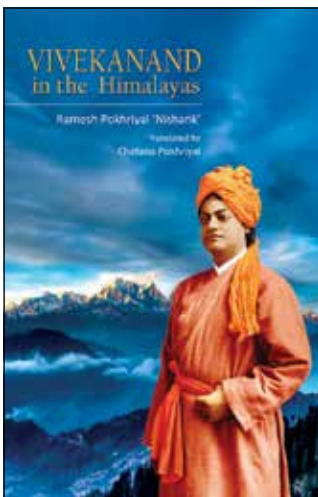


Contents

New Delhi World Book Fair 2019	1-3
Understanding the Differently Abled	3-4
Showcasing Sharjah	5
Literary Representations of the Disabled	6
Microsoft Accessibility Experience Booth	6
CEOSpeak	7
Obituary	8

PICK OF THE MONTH



Vivekananda in the Himalayas
Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'
Chetana Pokhriyal (Tr.)
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New Delhi World Book Fair 2019



“Books and culture are inseparable. The world of books is unique. Books have their own fragrance and to appreciate it, we need to read books,” said Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Human Resource Development while inaugurating the 27th edition of New Delhi World Book Fair at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on 5 January 2019. He said that reading is an integral part of Indian culture.

He expressed his happiness for Sharjah being the Guest of Honour at the Fair. He said that more than two million Indians have made UAE as their home which shows that the cultural ties between the two countries have grown over the years. He also said that the real friendship and real partnership between India and UAE is exhibited through this joint effort.

Emphasising on the importance of reading, Shri Javadekar said, “Reading 50 pages of a book every day brings new ideas, imagination, and dimensions in life.” He remarked that our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has a great love for books

and even with his busy schedule, he finds time to read books.

“With growing presence of Kindle and audio books,” Shri Javadekar observed, “the number of people who read printed books, has not diminished and the number is only increasing day by day.”

He said, “This year the theme of the Fair is ‘Books for Readers with Special Needs’, and during the Fair several literary and cultural activities will be organised.” He further said last year more than 12 lakh booklovers visited the Fair which shows that the culture of reading is increasing.

At being the Guest of Honour at New Delhi World Book Fair, Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations, Sharjah, said, “We are excited today to turn this opportunity into a memorable cultural event.” He also said that book fairs are essential platforms that allow us to share our intellectual property and to learn from cultures and strengthening relations. He said, “As a



member of Executive Council of Emirate of Sharjah, the body which translates the vision of His Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, I am honoured to be here today to celebrate another significant milestone. We are all here today at New Delhi World Book Fair, a major calendar event in the cultural and publishing world.”

“India is UAE’s long standing partner and continues to be on economic, scientific, educational and cultural front,” remarked Mr Fahim, and occasions such as these are necessary to foster stronger relations, he added.

Mr Fahim said that we have a long standing history of trade and cultural exchange which lasted hundreds of years. “I often think about that time when spices and other materials left India to arrive at the shores of Gulf. I think of the words that may have been written and exchanged at the inception of our cultural relations.”

Appreciating India’s unity in diversity, Mr Fahim

said that here in India, people of different languages, cultures, intellectual movements and faiths get equal opportunities and come together to form India’s diverse and vibrant social cultural fabric.

Welcoming the guests, Prof. Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT said that though technology has become an integral part of our life, but printed books are very close to Indian readers. The number of people visiting the book fair, shows that books still attract readers. He also talked about the diverse nature of publishing programme of National Book Trust, India. He said that NBT publishes books in over 40 major and minor languages for readers of all age groups. He hoped that the booklovers will get an opportunity to read

books in over 20 Indian languages at the Fair. He remarked that booklovers wait for the New Delhi World Book Fair for a year to look for those books which are not easily available.

Later, Shri Prakash Javadekar also presented a copy of book, Exam Warriors, authored by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the guests from Sharjah.

During the inaugural function, NBT Calendar 2019 based on the theme ‘Readers with Special Needs’, the Hindi and English editions of the book *Bibi Fatima and Her Sons*, authored by H H Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and published by NBT, and catalogue of Braille books published by NBT were also released.

While proposing vote of thanks, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT said, “Across societies, we all worship words in some way or the other. And wherever the words are worshipped, it becomes the place of worship. Here, the only ritual is reading. It brings



all together: men or women, children or elderly, students or professionals. She also thanked Sharjah for being the Guest of Honour at the Fair, All India Confederation of Blind, ITPO, Delhi Police, Kailash hospital, media and banks for their support.

Mr Ahmad bin Rakkad Al Ameri, Chairman, Sharjah Book Authority; Shri J L Kaul, Padma Shri awardee and Secretary General, All India Confederation of the Blind; Mr Habib Youseff Abdallah Al Sayegh, Authors' representative from Sharjah; Shri R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Shri Deepak Kumar, Executive Director, ITPO were felicitated on the occasion.

One of the important features of the inaugural function this year was the interpretation of the proceedings in sign language.

The programme concluded with the screening of a video of National Anthem,



directed by Govind Nihalini in which Shri Amitabh Bachchan, noted actor performed

National Anthem in sign language along with disabled children. Earlier, welcome song was presented by the differently abled children of Alpana, an NGO.

Later, Shri Prakash Javadekar, Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Qasimi and other dignitaries inaugurated the Theme Pavilion and the Foreign Pavilion.

With the special focus on 'Books for Readers with Special Needs', the Theme Pavilion hosted a number of

programmes and discussions on various issues concerning readers with sight or ear impairment, differently abled, autistic kids, children with ADHD, behavioural problems, etc. A Film Festival focussing on disability was also organised at the Pavilion.

The Sharjah Pavilion, specially designed for the Guest of Honour Country and the Events Corner at the Foreign Pavilion also hosted a number of literary and cultural programmes.

Understanding the Differently Abled

“There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more,” said Robert M. Hensel, Guinness & Ripley's world record holder for the longest non-stop wheelie in a wheelchair, covering a total distance of 6.178 miles.

This year, the theme presentation of the New Delhi World Book Fair was focused on 'Books for Readers with Special Needs,' especially children, with emphasis on their reading needs. It was projected to carry out the idea of Inclusive Learning, and explore various issues and dimensions of creating, producing and disseminating content for readers.

A portrait of Ashtavakra, great Indian sage of Vedic times, greeted the visitors as soon as they entered the Pavilion. It is believed that eight of his body parts were deformed. Overcoming this deformity,



he read and wrote works like *Ashtavakra Gita*. He is known for his wisdom and spiritual knowledge. This painting by Shreekant Dubey was a combination of high-contrast earthy colours.

The walls of the Pavilion were decorated with the panels and posters of well-known differently abled celebrities like Stephen Hawking who are known for their extraordinary achievements.

Their achievements bring to light the fact as Martina Navratilova said, “Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you're needed by someone.” Besides there were panels of books on and for persons with special needs, panels defining disorders like autism, etc.

An exhibition of artworks made by talented artists with disabilities was put





up by 'Family of Disabled,' at the Pavilion. The paintings in black and white or colour with pen, pencil or pastels were aesthetically pleasant. These paintings had been drawn by both veteran and young artists like R Venkatesh, Santanu Bhattacharya, Imamuddin, Sanjana Nagpal, Thakare Naik among others. Besides, there was an exhibition of paintings by visually-impaired children of Inside Me, an NGO working for the welfare of visually impaired children.



The colours in the paintings illustrated the fact that these children also love to draw and feel different colours of life.

The tools and instruments used by visually impaired persons like geometry kits, Braille slates, orbit reader, signature guide, typed arithmetic frame, Perkins Braille were also part of the exhibition by All India Confederation of Blind. Besides, there was a display of inclusive education products by Inklude like books for small children and games. These products creatively integrate custom-made transparent Braille and tactile shapes printed along with sighted text, shapes and images. These materials enable all readers, irrespective of the level of impairment, to comprehend the same piece of information



and engage in games with their sighted counterparts.

Over 500 books including Braille books, audio books, silent books, tactile books, integrated print-braille books, books for differently-abled, children with sight or ear impairment, autistic kids, children/readers with ADHD, behavioural/psychological problems/anxieties were displayed at the Pavilion. A special catalogue of books based on the theme was also brought out in which details regarding the books of different publishers displayed at the Pavilion was provided.

National Book Trust, India in collaboration with All India Confederation of Blind (AICB) have jointly published a set of books in Braille for visually impaired readers. So far, over 250 books in Hindi,

English and other Indian languages have been published. Some of these books were also the part of the exhibition. A catalogue of these books has also been brought out by NBT.

One of the major highlights of the theme presentation was International Disability Film Festival. For the first time, an International Disability Film Festival was organized at the New Delhi World Book Fair, where over 50 documentaries from 27 countries were being screened daily during the Fair. Organised by UNESCO and We Care, the documentaries brought to light the many socio-economic challenges faced by the differently-abled people and their efforts to overcome their disability and be independent.

Lively conversations, discussions, seminars and other literary and cultural programmes were organised at the Pavilion. Some of the well-known speakers in these programmes included Prof. G N Karna, Rajinder Singh (paralympian and Arjuna awardee), Manpreet Kaur, Parvinder Singh, Swarna Raj, artists including Sonal Mansingh, Atul Satya Kaushik (theatre) and Bant Singh Jhabbar (singer) and among others.



Showcasing Sharjah

Sharjah was the Guest of Honour country at the Fair. The Sharjah Pavilion at Hall No 7E attracted a steady stream of visitors. The aesthetically designed pavilion introduced the visitors to the region's folk music, traditional musical instruments, calligraphy, art and artifacts, traditional costumes and of course books. Also, the pavilion was a one-stop solution for publishers looking for information on world's third largest book fair, Sharjah

Book Fair; for quality translators looking for generous funding to get their works published; and for students and researchers looking for information on Emirates' history, politics, culture and literature.

Calligraphy, or Khatt as is known in Arabic, is an artistic practice of handwriting. At the Sharjah Pavilion one could see the live demonstration of the art.

Arabic has had a long history of translating works from other languages into Arabic. Also, many Arabic works have been translated into Indian languages. As many as 57 books translated from Arabic into Hindi on a wide range of subjects were on display at the Pavilion.

Publishers seeking exponential growth in their business visited Sharjah Publishing City corner at the Pavilion. Setting up of offshore offices in a tax free environment with provisions of exemption from all commercial levies, repatriation of capital and profits, 100% business ownership and zero restrictions on economical wage structures for expatriate workers, make



it lucrative for publishers. Besides, those who were looking for access to the huge African, Asian, European and Middle Eastern markets, came to Sharjah Pavilion to understand what Sharjah Publishing City is all about.

For those who have an eye for modern and abstract art, Sharjah Pavilion

showcased some of the finest artists from Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. The art works held the discerning visitors in thrall.

Books displayed at the Pavilion gave an insight into Emirati writings. Whether it is children books, short fictions, or academic books—the flair and finesse of Emirates Publishing Industry was conspicuous everywhere. A scholar of repute, His Highness Sultan Bin Muhammad Al

Qasimi, the Ruler of Sharjah's works found a prominent place at the Pavilion. The four volumes of his widely acclaimed autobiography viz., *My Early Life, Taking the Reign 1971-1977*, *The Consolidation Years 1979-1987* and *Culture, Education and Change 1987-2004* were on display along with many of his other books on a variety of subjects. It is worth mentioning that Hindi versions of the His Highness's Autobiography were also on display.

Named as World Book Capital for the year 2019 by UNESCO, Sharjah has been on the news for the Knowledge without Borders (KwB), a unique concept dedicated to fostering a love of reading among the community by establishing a library in each Emirati household. Each household was provided a selection of 50 valuable books in Arabic. The initiative has benefited more than 42,000 Emirati families. The Guest of Honour presentation by Sharjah at the Fair was an important milestone in strengthening the ties between India and the Emirates.



Literary Representations of the Disabled

The very idea of 'disability' is a state of mind. Often a social construct, it is also problematic, in the sense of being seen as a deficit or as difference. For long historically, the perception of physical impairment as a sign of 'badness' was prevalent. The disabled have been subjected to alienation and isolation. Writings have often reported ignorance and absurdity, like those with disabilities were the result of sins of their parents or for their businesses with devils.

In our epics the portrayal of Dhritarashtra, the blind king and father of Kauravas as also Shakuni with a bodily deformation in *Mahabharata*, or that of Manthara in *Ramayana* have shades of evil in them. Disabled gods and mythological characters are often eschewed and justified in the name of sins they committed in their previous births.

Over the years many of such perceptions gave way to a certain understanding and kinder responses. Literature has played a major role in this altered perceptions toward disability. It may be difficult to enter into the skin of the disabled, but a better understanding of their lives can be brought about not by generating sympathy but only through empathy.



Cutting across genres, novels, non-fiction, drama as well as disability studies, one can see an altered sense of perception, in the portrayal of the disabled with a strong empathy. Brit or Brittle Bones in *Trying to Grow* by Firdaus Kanga; the autistic Baba in *Clear Light of Day* by Anita Desai; Parkinson affected Nariman in *Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry; the deaf and mute John Singer in Carson McCuller's *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*; Chief Bronden in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; in *Blindness*, Jose Saramago, uses the disability as a metaphor to tell the story of human ideals, tragedy and triumph; Lucie, the partially deaf and mute mother and Etienne the deaf and partially mute uncle of the protagonist in the autobiographical account of Albert

Camus' *The First Man*; bringing readers into an autistic mind in the memoir of 26 years old Naoki Higashida; Christopher Boone, a boy with autism who sets out to solve the murder of a neighbour's dog in Mark Haddon's *The Curious Case of the Dog in the Night*.

In children's literature, though historically infrequent, the portrayal of disability or disabled children are far and few in between. But those portrayed made sense of disability as a consequence of a wrongdoing.

Today in India, children's book publishers, have taken a lead to feature the disabled portraying them with empathy and sensitivity. *Catch the Cat* by Tharini Vishwanath; *A Helping Hand* by Payal Dhar; *Flute in the Forest* by Leela Gaur Broome; *Manya Learns to Roar* by Shruti Rao; *Abba's Day* by Sunaina Ali; *Unbroken* by Nandhita Nambi; *Why are you Afraid to Hold My Hand?* by Sheila Dhir are some of the books.

Besides, disability courses and academic works like Alice Hall's *Literature and Disability* which introduces the readers to the field of disability have enriched our understanding on the subject.

Microsoft Accessibility Experience Booth

Over the last few years, there has been significant advances in technology. Several software, features and tools and techniques have been developed to help persons with special needs to read and write as well. To enlighten visitors on the recent developments, there was the 'Microsoft Accessibility Experience Booth' at the Theme Pavilion.

"Considering the relevance of this year's Theme, Microsoft has put up a Booth at the Theme Pavilion," said Shri Balendu Sharma, Director, Localization and Accessibility, Microsoft. He added that we wish to connect with readers, authors and publishers at the Fair and inform them that such tools are part of the operating system and are easily available.



The booth, divided into four sections, focussed on different kinds of disabilities viz. visual disability, hearing impairment, physical disability and cognitive disability.

One of the most interesting features at the booth was 'Eye Control'. This feature

helps persons with mobility disorder to control the computer with their eyes and they can even type the words with the movement of their eyes only.

For persons with visual disability, there was a 'SeeingAI' application and 'Edge,' a web browser, through which they can hear printed books as well as ebooks. Similarly, visually-impaired people can use dictation feature of Microsoft office or virtual assistant to type words. For people who cannot hear, the Presentation Translator types the words spoken by the presenters on the screen, which they can read easily.

The visitors were very excited to learn about these tools and had a hands-on experience.

CEOSpeak

The signature event organised on the sidelines of New Delhi World Book Fair, CEOSpeak over Chairman's Breakfast, in its seventh edition, by National Book Trust, India in association with FICCI, hosted the first-ever an India-Emirati Publishing Forum at the Hotel Ashoka on 6 January 2019 in conjunction with the Guest of Honour

Presentation of Sharjah at the Fair. H.E. Sheikh Fahim bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations, Sharjah was present on the occasion as a Distinguished Guest.

Welcoming a 125+ strong congregation of CEOs, MDs, Senior Publishing Professionals of India, Emirates, and also from China, France, Poland, Sri Lanka etc, Prof. Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT, said that India's relations with the UAE were age-old and through the World Book Fair, NBT was striving to strengthen these bonds. NBT, he said, inculcates good reading habits and it is working closely with publishers and authors to strengthen reading culture in the country.

In his key-note address, Mr. Ahmed Al Ameri, Chairman, Sharjah Book Authority, invited Indian publishers to take advantage of the low logistical costs offered by Sharjah publishing city. Stating that Sharjah was the first free zone in the



world for publishing and is a gateway to reach out to third countries, he added. He said that while shipping of goods from India to the Arab world took 60 days, the time taken from Sharjah was a mere two weeks.

Mr. Ali Al Shaali, Vice President, Emirates Publishers Association & CEO Alhudhud Publishing House, said that the Indian publishing industry could benefit from strengthened cooperation with the UAE and Arab World. The potential areas of opportunity are: Foreign rights and licensing support programs to facilitate the buying and selling of translation and distribution rights between UAE and Indian publishers at book fairs in India; Grants and awards programs specifically focused on translation of titles from Indian languages into Arabic and vice versa; Business matching support for Emirati and Arab publishers interested in market opportunities to engage with Indian publishers as well as establish more permanent market presences.

Mr. Dilip Chenoy, Secretary General, FICCI, said that India was the second-largest English language print book publisher in the world. The Indian book market is \$4.6 billion, growing at the rate of 20%. The UAE accounts for 37% of India's total books exports to the Arab World. India's books & printed products exports to the Arab World grew 13% annually (CAGR) from 2000 to 2015.

In his presentation, Mr. Vikrant Mathur, Director India & Asia Pacific Nielsen Book, said that the vernacular trade books accounted for 44% of the market and English trade books 56%. He said that within English trade books, the highest contribution was that of Adult Non-Fiction at 45%, followed by Adult Fiction (30%) and Children (25%). Hindi contributes maximum (35%) followed by Malayalam (9%) and Bengali (8%).

A panel discussion on 'India-Emirati Co-operation in Publishing' was also held. Moderated by Shri Ratnesh Jha, MD, Cambridge University Press, the participants included Ms. Sayoni Basu, Ms. Atiya Zaidi, and Mr. Ravi Dee Cee from India; and Mr. Ali Al Shaali, and Mr. Tamer Al Sayed, MD, Kalimat Publishing from the Emirates.

On behalf of NBT, Shri Kumar Vikram, Editor & Project In-charge made the closing remarks. The programme was anchored by Shri Sumit Gupta, FICCI.



Obituary

Eminent historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya passed away on 7 January 2019. He was 81. Dr Bhattacharya was Professor of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University; Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan; Chairman of the Indian Council for Historical Research; and Chairman of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He also held teaching and research positions at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford; University of Chicago and El Colegio de Mexico. In 2011, he was awarded Rabindra Puraskar and D.Litt from Jadavpur University (2016).



Dr Sabyasachi had made remarkable contribution in fields of economic history of India, especially under British rule and history of culture of India. He was the General Editor of *Towards Freedom* series of volumes documenting the last decade of the struggle for independence in India. He compiled three-volumes of *Comprehensive History of Modern Bengal, 1700-1950* in collaboration with sixty-five renowned historians under the aegis of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. His other works include *Talking Back: The Idea of Civilization in the Indian Nationalist Discourse*, *Vande Mataram: A Biography of a Song* (2013), *The Defining Moments in Bengal 1920-1947* and *The Colonial State: Theory and Practice*. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya was closely associated with NBT in many advisory capacities. He is also author of books including *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore* and *Buddha for the Young*, published by NBT in English, Hindi and other Indian languages.

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Hamsdhwani Theatre at the Pragati Maidan came alive in the evenings with cultural presentations like Folk Songs, Music & Dance, Magic show etc during the World Book Fair.

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