

IN SCHOOL

Bringing children to public libraries

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Once a favourite spot for learners and scholars, most of the 70,000 plus public libraries in India have now turned into haunted houses with few visitors to grace their premises.

This depressing image of the vital institutions may soon witness a change.

The various stakeholders in revitalising public libraries in India under the Ministry of Culture are now eyeing at tapping the interest of the younger generation to reinforce substance and provide better resources to libraries in accordance with the needs of children.

Spearheading this programme is Indian Public Library Movement (IPLM), supported by the Global Libraries initiative of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and hosted by NASSCOM Foundation in the capital.

Consider the Summer Fest for children that IPLM organised recently in partnership with Delhi Public Library. Spanning over a period of one month, this fest aimed at bringing children to libraries in the capital and engaging them in a host of activities that ranged from storytelling and poetry recitations to painting and stage play performances – all within the four walls of libraries.

While such summer camps are almost customary to institutions like the British Council and the American Foundation in the Capital, it comes but rarely at a public institution like Delhi Public Library. The free-of-cost programme is a boon to the many parents, who cannot afford to send their children to expensive summer retreats that cost anywhere from Rs 5,000 to Rs 35,000.

Hundreds of children joined this programme and came face-to-face with all that the libraries offer.

Dozens of libraries have been digitised with computers and audio-visual centres. There is also special attention towards building 'Children's Corner' in public libraries that cater to young audience with its especially curated catalogues and decorations. IANS

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