

SOCIETY

How these libraries in Bengaluru are keeping love for reading alive

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A look at libraries in Bengaluru that help inculcate the reading habit



The Garden City is constantly evolving with technology, but there is always a place to fuel your reading habit. Book lovers in Bengaluru are continuously curating accessible libraries to keep up with the culture of reading in the virtual era.

Think Box

Bhakti Shah (52) founded Think Box, a children's library, in 2008 on Malleshpalya Main Road. The idea sprung up when she could not find a library for her four-year-old son.

With zero business knowledge and a mere passion for books, Bhakti steered the Think Box to cater to young readers in the age group of 1-16. She has seen children adapting to reading and she believes content, illustrations, and topic make a lot of difference. “Giving children the freedom to choose their books is the first step to getting them to read,” says Bhakti.

Often, it is difficult to get a child to get into the reading habit. “The concept of a library in children’s minds is of dusty shelves with enormous books,” she says. With this in mind, she gave Think Box colourful walls, toys, CDs, and fun workshops to ensure children enjoy the atmosphere of the library. Bhakti also began ‘Actionable Ideas’ where parents and children can bond over activities that inculcate a love for reading.



Think Box library, Bengaluru | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

Pragun. P (16) who has been a member of Think Box since he was three, was honoured with the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar Award 2020 (Art and Culture) for his writing. He credits Think Box for his success and says, “From picking up picture books and slowly discovering different genres, Think Box helped me develop my imagination, which eventually encouraged me to write. ”

The staff at Think Box suggest books according to a reader’s needs. “The sheer joy of hearing my daughter say she wants to visit the library and take out books is unbeatable. Thanks to Think Box’s influence, we now have a small library room for our children who have developed a healthy reading habit,” says Vasumathi Vijaykumar, a library member for the past 10 years.

Think Box also has a bonding room for parents where they can read out stories to their children. Bhakti suggests parents spend 20 minutes reading with their children daily to help them develop the habit. Think Box also operates online where parents can pick up a book and get it delivered to their doorstep, anywhere in India.

For more details visit: www.thinkbox.co.in

Swan Books on Wheels

The Swan Books on Wheels, an initiative to provide library services at the doorstep of readers through mobile vans, was started in 2021 by Kameshwari Susarla.

Kameshwari, who grew up reading books through a mobile library service in Hyderabad, decided to replicate it to reach out to more people in Bengaluru. This library on wheels is completely run by women and helps build a community of readers. “The main purpose of this mobile library was to encourage children, housewives, and senior citizens to get back to the habit of reading as well as remove barriers and provide the experience of a library at one’s doorstep,” she says.

The staff ensures the books are well sanitized with a UV Bag and UV Lamp before going on their rounds. Currently, the mobile van visits residences in Whitefield, Bellandur, Koramangala, and a few other areas in the city. With a collection of about 7,000 books, the library is well stocked with material in different languages and genres so it can cater to readers of all ages.

Rathna Swamy (75) a member of the library for six months credits Swan Books for making it very convenient for senior citizens to access books. “Reading content on social media is nothing like reading it on paper. Swan Books provide a library experience at everyone’s reach,” she says.

For more details visit: <https://theswanbooksonwheels.com>



Swan Books, a mobile library in Bengaluru | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement



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