

ADINET (Advanced Information Network of Libraries in Gujarat)
e-News Digest

No. 127

Apr – 2026

CONTENTS	Page No.
Pause & Ponder	2
The role libraries play in education and community	2
Karnataka Auto Driver Converts Rickshaw Into Viral Mini-Library	2
Women libraries encourage readership	3
A nation of libraries, a crisis of readers	3
Letter: Libraries are vital part of infrastructure	3
Why India's young would rather pay for a crowd than sit quietly in a library	4
Thousands of shady ads sell paper authorship for cash, large-scale investigation finds	4
US saw record high of 5,668 books banned in libraries in 2025, says agency	5
Why India Must Do More to Support Its Public Libraries	5
6 Centuries-Old Libraries in India That Are Still Open to Anyone Who Loves Reading	6

Pause & Ponder

“The most important asset of any library goes home at night – the library staff.”

– Timothy Healy

****Readers Please Note****

Tap the Title to read the full article

The role libraries play in education and community



ALPENA — Libraries offer community, support, educational resources, and more importantly, a space to hang out with no purchase required.

National Library Week took place last week, April 19 to 25, celebrating local libraries and all they have to offer to the communities they serve.

“Libraries are very unique in the fact that taxpayers vote on the millage for this library, in particular and for a lot of other libraries,” Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library Director Tina Markowski said. “So the community wants to have a library of free resources that they can utilize.”

Libraries become a hub of information and services that people can use, Markowski said.

“People can come in and reserve the conference room or just hang out with

friends and chat without the expectation of having to purchase anything,” she said.

The Alpena County Library offers activities for people of all ages. On alternating Mondays, kids can participate in Lego club or Pokemon club. Adults can attend events including historical presentations or crafting events. Teens and tweens can be a part of the Beyond Differences group...

Source: [*The Alpena News*, 27 Apr 2026](#)

Karnataka Auto Driver Converts Rickshaw Into Viral Mini-Library



In a heartwarming departure from the standard urban commute, an auto-rickshaw driver in Karnataka has captured the internet’s attention by converting his vehicle into a functional mini-library. The unique mobile setup, which features a curated collection of books, handcrafted bookmarks, and a jar of complimentary candies, has gone viral following an Instagram video shared by a passenger named Varsha. Located primarily in the Mysore hospital area, the vehicle has been transformed into a cozy sanctuary for literature enthusiasts navigating the city’s busy streets.

The viral footage highlights a passenger browsing through a diverse range of genres while mid-transit, illustrating how the driver has turned a routine journey into a reflective reading experience.

Beyond providing reading material, the driver's attention to detail—such as the swaying, colorful bookmarks and the invitation to enjoy a sweet treat—has been widely praised as a masterclass in compassionate service. Online commentators have lauded the initiative, with many observing that the vehicle seems to run on “kindness and compassion” rather than just fuel...

Source: [Infomance, 27 Apr 2026](#)

Women libraries encourage readership [Paywall]

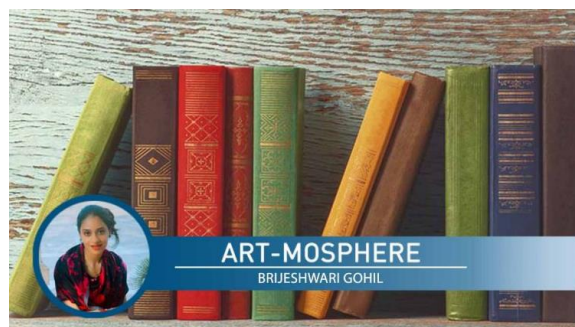


In a small corner on the busy Babu Jagjivan Ram Road formerly known as Bells Road, a quiet library dedicated to women readers exists. Speeding through the lane, it's easy to miss the library. Sporting a new look, the library continues to steadily grow its readership.

“My college is over at 1 p.m. and I come here to study and finish any work. My mother works nearby at a canteen. We travel to Chengalpettu once her work is over by 5 p.m. I used to spend my time on the beach, but when I discovered the library, it was a relief not just to focus on my studies but also for my safety,” said Preetha. M, a first-year student at Queen Mary's College...

Source: [The Hindu, 26 Apr 2026](#)

A nation of libraries, a crisis of readers



On World Book Day each year, the global conversation turns predictably towards the future of reading, digital libraries, shrinking attention spans, and algorithmic curation. In India, however, reading culture resists such neat framing. It is not simply evolving; it is layered, uneven, and deeply historical. To trace its contours is to move between palm-leaf manuscripts and public reading rooms, between royal patronage and grassroots revival, between a civilisation that has long preserved knowledge and a society still negotiating the act of reading itself.

Long before the modern idea of a public library emerged, India's engagement with books was embedded in systems of knowledge transmission: gurukuls, monasteries, and courts. The Sarasvati Mahal Library, among the oldest surviving libraries in Asia, stands as a testament to this inheritance. Originating in the 16th century under the Nayak and later Maratha rulers, its vast collection of palm-leaf manuscripts in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Marathi preserves disciplines ranging from medicine and astronomy to music and philosophy. Such collections were not merely repositories; they were living archives of intellectual life, curated through patronage and sustained through continuity...

Source: [The Week, 24 Apr 2026](#)

Letter: Libraries are vital part of infrastructure

Dear Editor:

Where is the ONE PLACE we can all acquire movies, recipes, bestsellers, the latest news, crochet patterns, essays, biographies, self-help books, history, e-books, wi-fi access, fiction, art books, free technical assistance, DIY books, 9 free copies, after-school programs, computer access, children's books, poetry, craft-making and story times, free meeting space, gardening books, magazines, a welcoming warm up place during a chilly weekday walk, guest speakers, voter pamphlets, webinars where friendly assistance is provided by folks happy to help and to have local jobs? OUR LOCAL LIBRARIES!

A well-managed foundational resource, our libraries are a vital part of our collective infrastructure. Over \$6 million in physical materials were borrowed through SCRLD in 2025! All 7 libraries in Stevens County Rural Library system are interconnected, creating a vast selection of resources from Northport to Suncrest and in between, with public services available 5 days a week at minimal cost.

Local property taxes provide 93% of the library system's operating budget. Libraries of Stevens County have not had a levy adjustment in 28 years. The time is now! The additional 17 cents requested in the levy is necessary and worthwhile...

Source: [The Independent, 23 Apr 2026](#)

Why India's young would rather pay for a crowd than sit quietly in a library

If I'm ever looking for a place to work or read, my first instinct is a nearby cafe, not a library. Not because libraries have disappeared or become inaccessible, but because somewhere along the way,

they have slipped out of our collective imagination. For many urban Gen Z, the idea of going to a library feels outdated; functional, yes, but not desirable.



Instead, we've recreated the library in fragments, scattered across cafes. Book clubs meet over iced lattes, panel discussions unfold between espresso refills, and reading hours are tucked into aesthetically pleasing corners with curated playlists filling in the silence. In trying to modernise the idea of a "third space," we may have forgotten the original ones altogether. Libraries, parks, and museums were about coexistence without expectation, which went far beyond productivity or leisure. But now even leisure has become an experience far beyond the idea of doing nothing or relaxing. So once, where someone might've just gone to a neighbourhood library to read or browse books, has turned into an experience of being in a space that is curated...

Source: [The Print, 23 Apr 2026](#)

Thousands of shady ads sell paper authorship for cash, large-scale investigation finds

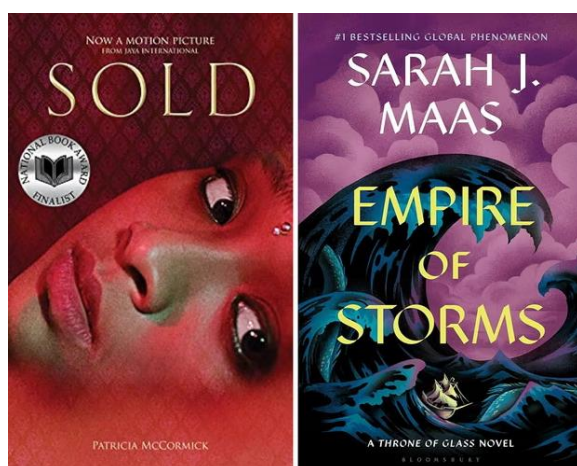


Unscrupulous researchers can buy the first author slot on a manuscript they didn't write for as little as \$57—or as much as \$5600. And since at least 2021, public online ads have offered thousands of opportunities to do so. These are some of the sobering results from an unusually large-scale investigation into a shadowy online marketplace, in which firms called paper mills sell authorships on scholarly reports—oftentimes shoddy, if not entirely fabricated—contributing to the flood of junk polluting the scientific literature.

The ads, on websites and the Telegram messaging and social media app, came from seven businesses in different countries identified by the study's authors as likely paper mills. Submitted this week to the arXiv preprint server, the study provides “so much evidence of how paper mills operate that a lot of people don't have access and exposure to,” says Leslie McIntosh, vice president of research integrity and security at the publishing tools firm Digital Science, who was not involved in the study. “We know there's a problem, now let's do something about it.”...

Source: [Science, 23 Apr 2026](#)

US saw record high of 5,668 books banned in libraries in 2025, says agency



The American Library Association (ALA) has reported a record high in the number of books banned in US libraries.

In 2025, 5,668 books were banned – representing 66% of the total number challenged – with an additional 920 censored through access restriction, such as relocation on the library shelves.

The most-banned book in 2025 was *Sold*, a 2006 novel by Patricia McCormick about sex trafficking in India. Other frequently challenged titles include *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe and *Empire of Storms* by Sarah J Maas.

According to the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), challenges were recorded against 4,235 unique titles in 2025. That figure is the second highest since the organisation began tracking censorship data more than 30 years ago, topped only by 4,240 titles in 2023.

The ALA also found that 40% of the materials challenged this year involved representations of LGBTQ+ people or people of colour.

The organisation usually publishes an annual list of the 10 most-banned books, but this year included 11 after four titles tied for eighth place. The list is compiled based on ALA analysis of 713 attempts to censor library materials and services in 2025. Of those attempts, 487 targeted books...

Source: [The Guardian, 22 Apr 2026](#)

Why India Must Do More to Support Its Public Libraries



In many villages and small towns across India, the day at a public library begins quietly. A librarian unlocks the building in the morning, arranges newspapers on a table and waits for readers to arrive. Soon a school student may walk in to prepare for class, an elderly man may settle down with the day's newspaper, and a young reader might wander through the stacks looking for a book. For these communities, the library is more than a building with books; it is often the only freely accessible space without discrimination — a space for learning and reflection.

Yet, the people who keep these spaces alive — public librarians — remain largely invisible in policy conversations about education, digital access and knowledge infrastructure.

Recent tragedies involving gram panchayat librarians in Karnataka have drawn attention to the fragile conditions under which many library workers operate. Two rural librarians died by suicide after reportedly struggling with months of unpaid honorarium payments and administrative neglect.

The deaths of Bhagyavanti, a gram panchayat librarian in Kalaburagi district, and another librarian from Bengaluru Rural district shocked the library community and highlighted the precarious realities faced by many rural library workers...

Source: [The Wire, 13 Apr 2026](#)

6 Centuries-Old Libraries in India That Are Still Open to Anyone Who Loves Reading



India's history doesn't just live in the past, it lingers in places you can still walk into.

In temple towns, colonial-era buildings, and unassuming streets, history lives on not just in monuments, but in pages. Long before the digital age, knowledge here was carefully written, preserved, and passed down on palm leaves, parchment, and paper.

What makes India's oldest libraries so fascinating is that they're not frozen in time; they're still alive, still functioning, still welcoming curious minds. They hold centuries of stories, waiting to be rediscovered.

So if you've ever felt drawn to history in a more intimate way not just to read about it, but to step into it, here are six of India's oldest libraries you can still explore, each one layered with its own legacy...

1. Sarasvati Mahal Library (1535)
2. Rampur Raza Library (1774)
3. Asiatic Society of Mumbai (1804)
4. State Central Library (1829)
5. National Library of India (1836)
6. Romain Rolland Library (1827)...

Source: [The Better India, 18 Mar 2026](#)

**This issue has been compiled by
the Institute for Plasma Research
(IPR) Library, Gandhinagar**