

**Festival of Libraries held at Pragati Maidan, hall no.5 New Delhi on 5th and 6th August 2023**

**: a report**



**Library Department  
NSOU**



## Festival of libraries: a report

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### Festival of Libraries held at Pragati Maidan, hall no.5 New Delhi on 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023: a report

#### Day-1

##### Summary of Programme

***Inaugural session and launches – 10.30 AM, Culture and Cuisine – 12.00 NOON, Literary Quiz – 1.30PM, Best Practices in Library Management – 2.00 PM, From pages to Stages – 3.30 PM, Bookstores As Community Spaces – 4.30 PM, Language Learning Tools (Anuvadini) – 5.30 PM, Making Of a Library – 6.00 PM***

Festival of Libraries was organized by Ministry of Culture, Government of India. This festival is a part of the second phase of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' and is in line with the Prime Minister's vision to foster the development and digitization of libraries and cultivate a culture of reading in India. Undersigned was nominated by NSOU authority to attend the programme.

The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the 'Festival of Libraries 2023', at on 5th August 2023 at Hall No. 5 Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The Festival was organised by the Union Ministry of Culture. The Minister for Law and Justice (Independent Charge) and Minister of State for Culture, and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, unveiled the schedule of, "Festival of Libraries" in New Delhi. The Secretary Ministry of Culture, Shri Govind Mohan and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture Smt. Mugdha Sinha were also present on the occasion.

Honourable President in her deliberation said "The Festival of Libraries" will serve as a platform to showcase iconic libraries from around the world, initiating a dialogue on the modernization and digitization of libraries. It aims to facilitate the formulation of action-oriented policies for the development of Model Libraries in India, right down to the village and community levels.



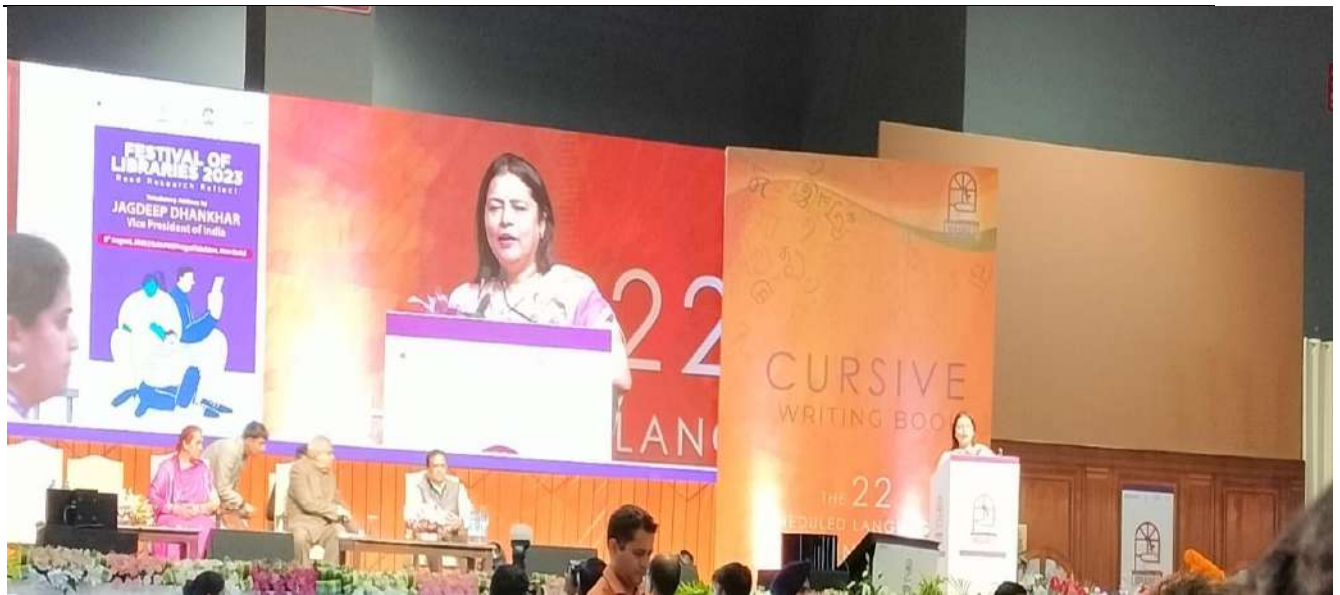
***Photograph-1 President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu deliberating her speech in the inaugural programme of “Festival of Libraries”***

Remarkable launches were happened by The President of India such as a crowd-sourced Directory of Libraries and the signing of a Tripartite MOU between three prominent libraries: Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna; Rampur Raza Library, Rampur; and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Arabic Persian Research Institute, Tonk, for long term collaborative events, commencement of celebration of 250 years of the Rampur Raza library, Launch of the Sassy Library Series with the plot based on Rampur Raza Library, and the release of a set of Cursive Writing Books in the 22 vernacular languages.

The President said the development of libraries is correlated to the development of society and culture. It is also a measure of the progress of civilizations. She stated that history is full of references in which the invaders considered it necessary to destroy the libraries.

"This shows that libraries have been considered a symbol of the collective consciousness and intellect of a country or society. Such incidents do not happen in the modern era but there are incidents of disappearance of rare manuscripts and books," she said.

Honourable Minister of Culture Smt. Minakshi Lekhi said that Delhi public library was once used by eminent personalities and the library will be open to the public with a new get up. She also insisted on building reading habit from childhood. Library going habit and attraction for books may help children and youth to ignore other detrimental addictions and shape a healthy, well aware society.



**Photograph-2 Smt Minakshi Lekhi, Minister, Ministry of Culture**

On the inaugural occasion, Secretary Ministry of Culture, Shri Govind Mohan said that there is a deep connect between Libraries and Museums and there is also a need to have an appropriate mix of physical and digital libraries, and both these issues will be discussed at length during the Festival. Libraries are essential for emotional and mental development and therefore, it is important to revive reading habits among the people. He added that The Festival of Libraries at Delhi will kick off with a series of exciting launch events, exhibitions, and panel discussions. It will also introduce a special ranking system for libraries across India, encouraging healthy competition and progress in the library ecosystem.



**Photograph-3 Smt Mugdha Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Culture**



Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Mugdha Sinha said, "Libraries are the drawing rooms of the community, and while physical libraries continue to proliferate, as does publishing of books, visit to libraries and readership is on a decline. While the world of digital, social media and new-age technologies has made it easy to read from the comfort of homes and devices, libraries- with their rare books, manuscripts, and archives- will need to keep pace with their demanders to reinvent and re-envision themselves with better infrastructure and other digital device facilities to enable them to mimic gardens in the way they are multi-functional egalitarian places easily accessible to all. It is with this in mind that the Festival of Libraries aims to explore the entire ecosystem of the libraries and how they can graduate from bare reading rooms to cultural hotspots."

In the roundtable discussions and panels participants explored library best practices from Indian states and libraries worldwide. Various conversations were held with organizers of literary festivals, young authors, publishing houses, and more. Special sessions focused on schemes for libraries and their collections, including National Missions on Libraries Manuscripts and Archives.

Undersigned got the opportunity to experience ten fascinating exhibitions showcasing cartography, calligraphy, cursive writing, and tribal fonts and scripts. The stall names were

mesmerizing such as bibliophile, biblichor, bibliobibuli, tsundoku etc. There was also a stall of Ministry of Culture.



**Photograph-4 Stall of Ministry of Culture**

The digitization of archives, particularly private collections was discussed, explored a remarkable exhibition featuring rare archival collections and illuminated manuscripts.

There were interactive drawing rooms with book-author sessions, digital displays, podcasts, and the Human Library Project. A dedicated Children's Zone provided hands-on activities to foster a love for reading among children.

Rare maps, illustrated manuscripts took Centre stage at festival of libraries. Maps were arranged chronologically. "Great Trigonometric survey" conducted by Asiatic Society Mumbai in the year 1802 was displayed in the maps section.

Apart from the exhibition on rare maps, there were collections of rare books from the Museum of Word from Kolkata, ancient encyclopaedias, cultural archives, tribal fonts, literature proscribed during the British rule, calligraphy, cursive writing, and illustrated manuscripts.

## Day-2

### Summary of Programme

***Libraries Around the world – 10.30 AM, Why We Must Preserve? : Archives and Oral Histories – 11.30PM, Fostering Reading Cultures – 12.30PM, Read Research & Reflect: Literary Residencies & Retreats-2.30PM, Vision 2047 for Libraries: Ministerial Panel-3.30PM, National Mission of Manuscripts-4.40PM, Valedictory Sessions & Launches-5.30PM***



***Photograph-5 Dr. Shayesta Bedar, Director-cum Secretary Library Board of Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library In the Stall of Manuscripts***

Another section of the event focused on rare manuscripts composed in the Indian subcontinent from the 5th century CE to the 20th century. The manuscripts in the collection

dealt with different subjects encompassing Indian philosophy, spirituality, yoga, medicine, language and grammar, religious texts, Sufism, and legislation.

A collection of illustrated manuscripts, dating between 14th-19th century, contains pages from the Ramayana translated in Persian by Sumer Chand in 1715 CE, pages of Razmnama, a Persian translation of Mahabharata specially made by Akbar in 1580 CE, and pages from the various Ragamala paintings that depict a range of musical melodies in the form of Ragas and Ragini.

The event brought together stakeholders such as librarians, academics, district collectors of 100 aspirational districts and directors of model libraries to develop a roadmap for encouraging Libraries to become the “Drawing Rooms of the Community” and for the Readers to emerge as future Leaders, in consonance with the spirit of a country that reads, is a country that leads.

The two-day event aimed to initiate a dialogue on "the modernisation and digitisation of libraries" and is also a treat for book lovers with several exhibitions, author sessions and other interactions lined up. The festival kindled a resurgence of the reading culture in India. The festival generated the idea of developing model libraries at the village and community levels, ensuring that knowledge reaches every nook and corner of the nation as said Mugdha Sinha. joint secretary, Ministry of Culture.

The event also facilitated panel discussions among organisers of about eight literature festivals, publishing houses, young authors, representatives etc.



**Photograph-5 Stall of Asiatic Society Kolkata**

There were representatives of some institutions of West Bengal such as National Library Kolkata, Asiatic Society Kolkata, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation. Some of them participated in the panel discussions. Stalls also were given by these institutions.





***Photograph-6 Sri Jagdeep Dhankhar, Vice President of India giving his Valedictory Speech***

At the valedictory session was chaired by hon'ble Vice President Sri Jagdeep Dhankhar. He released the first volume of the Directory of Libraries and 'Biblio-on-Demand' scheme as part of the 'One Nation, One Subscription' policy.

New ideas such as gram pathshala, library as drawing room, literary residency/retreat, calligraphy practice, cursive writing, story telling, authors room etc. may be implemented in the libraries to drag users and increase the reading habits of the future generations. Also, it is observed that the authority of the festival gave importance towards preservation of old resources of libraries as well as they are inclined towards digital and e-resources. To revive the status of libraries a huge funding required. But it was observed that there were very few suggestions and guidance towards implementation of these new ideas.

Report is placed for information to The Registrar.

Sd/-

**Deputy Librarian**

CC. ES TO V.C



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