

The Kunjru Library: A quest for knowledge and art

"A library is the key to the knowledge of the world, as rightly pointed out by our esteemed late Prime Minister Nehru."

The Year 1973 marked the inauguration of the Kunjru Library in Seva Mandir. At that time, it was felt that a proper well-equipped library and documentation center for an institution like Seva Mandir is evidently an essential need. A building with a spacious reading room, adequate stacking space, possibility of a new research cubicles, a librarian room and cellars was constructed at an initial cost of Rs.2, 25, 000/-. Shri G.S. Pathak, then the Vice- President of India agreed to inaugurate the library for public use on October 7, 1973. The Executive Council decided to pay homage to our most distinguished leader and a veteran social worker, Dr. Hriday Nath Kunjru by naming it as Kunjru Library.

The library started with an aim of keeping up the intellectual progress of Seva Mandir workers who could continue their education and re-education in the spheres of Social Science and Community Development. Besides the Library was created to feed and support the libraries and reading rooms of the villages served by Seva Mandir.

Today, the library has covered a journey of nearly 3 decades. It has grown a lot in terms of books, collection of literature on varied issues as well as in membership. There are more than 7000 books in collection. There are many subscribed magazines and free magazines for readers. Besides this, there are many news dailies, chronicles, journals, Official Gazettes, Maps, general knowledge book and other literature in the collection. The library boasts of English fiction as well as literature on all topics right from Prem Chand / Vivekananda and Tagore literature to the latest best sellers. For children also we have very good books, cartoon strips, Nancy Drew series, Indian and other countries' folk tales etc. All the books have been systematically categorized and placed for the convenience of the readers.

In addition to serving the kunzru library acquires materials from many other Institutions including academic and research.

The library purchase publications from a network of book dealers, Government press and from a host of bookstores in the region. The library committee selects and acquiring titles that will be of value of to the teaching and research programs of the institutions.

New serials, expensive titles and reprints are offered in the units of seva Mandir via circular letters and new arrival list and are acquired only on demand. The library acquires publications on all subjects and in all formats from the commercial book trade. Government and institutional publishers, the academic presses and non governmental sector.

People from all walks of life, be it students preparing for

Civil services exams, volunteers from outside the institution as well as from foreign countries, elderly people retired from offices, school children reading comics are a part of daily Library scene. The staff members' children are getting the opportunity of membership of the Library. We get return of our efforts in the smiles of these small children when they come for library membership.

Today we feel satisfied at the rising ratio of the membership of library. We feel that we have played a small role somewhere in bringing people closer to the books. The process of learning is a continuous process. A human has the capability to read and understand as much as possible. We endeavor to provide congenial surroundings for people to study, read and learn more and more about the world we live in. at a nominal membership charge of Rs.150/- (Rs.100 as security which will be refunded and Rs.50 membership charges). Our aim is to make more and more readers. What we feel is that the most significant reader segment is children today. If we cultivate the habit of reading in children in the early years only then it will go a long way in making them more aware of surroundings, more knowledgeable and more inclined towards reading. Few years ago there was a bit of indifference of people towards the libraries but positively now we are observing that people are again making a move towards reading and that gives us a sense of contentment. Today there are 357 outside members besides the Seva Mandir staff and Volunteers. At times, we do face difficulty when the readers take the books and do not return them back.

The Documentation Center is a very significant part of our library. All the studies conducted by Seva Mandir, Reports by Volunteers from India and abroad and research papers on various topics have been systematically recorded in the Documentation Center. All in all there are many reports and case studies with us. Besides these, we also have Posters, Charts, Audio/ Video cassettes for training programmes on Health, Women Development issues, Education Programme etc. Seva Mandir's all publications up till now like The Newsletter, Saksharta Sandesh, Seva Mandir Gatibimb (Wall Newspaper), Cheto Behena are available in Seva Mandir Documentation Centre. What is more delightful is that now all the records of Documentation Center are being fed in the Central Database of Seva Mandir. All the studies conducted at all Block levels will be fed into the Database, so that each and every publication is recorded centrally. Be it on Anicuts, Watershed, Panchayati Raj, Environment or any related issues. The Project Reports of Management Interns are also kept in Documentation centre. The library is in touch with publisher through Internet facilities so that we can online place order for new books as well respond to the outside queries. We have prepared a catalogue of Seva Mandir Reports, from which we send the reports to interested persons.

Our efforts are going on to make this library a treasure house of the best in literature and for this purpose; we welcome suggestions and support from our

www.sevamandir.org



readers to make it more informative and recreative and to
build it into a valuable of the society.