

READING CORNER

HISTORY | LITERATURE | ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE | BIOGRAPHY | TRAVEL | WILDLIFE | RELIGION | SELF-HELP | FICTION | TRANSLATION | CINEMA | FOOD



Education in Indian Tradition

Education is the process by which people's abilities and talents are developed. Education, in this broad sense, is also everything that is learned and acquired in a lifetime: habits, knowledge, skills, interests, attitudes, and personality. From this standpoint, people become educated not merely by attending schools, but by the total experiences of life. They learn through direct experience, imitation, and self-teaching. They learn from parents and friends, from such institutions as temples and libraries, from recreational and social agencies such as clubs and playgrounds, and from the newspapers-magazines, cinema-television, radio, and the like.

In a narrower sense, education is the systematic, organized process of teaching and learning that centres largely in some form of institutions: schools, colleges, and universities. What was the system of education in ancient India? The earliest clues were contained in the *Rigveda*, which was composed in the very early Aryan era. It was followed by the other three Vedas: *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva*. Then the sages wrote the Brahmanas and Aranyakas to explain the Vedas. Then came the Upanishads, composed around 550 BC giving a spiritual exposition of the Vedas. Lastly, the epic *Mahabharata* was composed around 300 BC, followed by the epic *Ramayana*. These texts have been a great source of inspiration, education, information, and integration across the country, over many centuries.

In practice, 'education' was deeply rooted in the Vedas from which were drawn principles of ethics, good behaviour, and values in life. It meant systematic instruction, schooling, and training in preparation of life or some particular task. It had a spiritual underpinning and was

taught in the sacred classic language of Sanskrit. Scriptures and grammar, codes of law, philosophic and literary works formed its content. Notably, in ancient India, there was equality of opportunity for men and women to study. There were many famous women like Maitreyee and Gargi who excelled in the learning and exposition of the Vedas, and some even composed new literary works. In *Atharva Veda*, it was exhorted that women should not marry until they finished their education. As time went on, this ideal position of women gave way to rigid and extreme postures, where women were devalued and not allowed to access education, reflecting on the insecurity of the times, because of the multiple invasions which began to rock the country from 200 BC and continued till AD 1400.

Another important aspect of education in ancient India is the *gurukul* system of the post-vedic period in which boys studied at the ashrams (residences) of the gurus (teachers), who were men of great erudition and learning, generally belonging to the Brahmin community. Boarding and lodging were free in addition to education, but the disciple had to serve the master loyally and unswervingly. The studies were rigorous and long in the oral mode and lasted at least for 12 years. There were many centres of *gurukul* learning all over India.

Buddhism and Jainism (from around 300 BC to AD 800) took this educational legacy to

higher planes. It is said that the world's first university was established in Takshila in 700 BC. In 4th century BC, the legendary Nalanda University in Bihar was a great centre of Buddhist religion and learning, and attracted scholars and students from China, Java, Indonesia, and Thailand. It is believed that Lord Buddha himself delivered many lectures there.

Like the Vedic Age, Buddhism and Jainism also treated women well and allowed them access to education. Women could become monks or Bhikkunis and many of them took to religious education by choice. The main areas of excellence of the Jains in ancient days were in mathematics, astronomy, and geography.

The value of *pi*; the art of navigation; the knowledge of ayurveda; the concept of zero; and the decimal system—were all inventions that emanated in India. Such was the great tradition of education in our country, which, unfortunately started declining since AD 647, with the death of Harsha Vardhana, the last great ruler of the Hindu empire. With the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni from around the beginning of the 11th century, many of our ancient Sanskrit, Buddhist, and Jain texts were destroyed, and with the beginning of the medieval period, we lost that great educational legacy.



Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee
Editorial Director, Niyogi Books

The key to empowerment: Education

A little girl was born in Italy on 31 August 1870. She was so curious that even school seemed dull and boring. She started inventing games to make learning fun. She was none other than Dr Maria Montessori, the first Italian woman physician and an educator, best known for the philosophy of education that bears her name: Montessori Schools. But my motive behind mentioning her is to understand the relationship between schooling/teaching and learning. It is not about why education is important, but about how one teaches and how one learns.

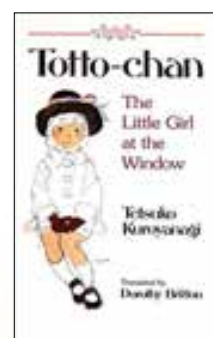
Can these two be perceived separately? Is there a model, which fits all?

On one end, initiatives like the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, Adult Education, Continuing Education, *beti bachao, beti padhao*, and others that are being taken by the Indian government, are important steps for imparting education to all. On the other, there are schools like SECMOL,

Centre of Learning (CLS), Isha Home School, and Marudam Farm School, which go beyond textbook education, and impart more inclusive education. Today, they are termed as 'alternate' schools, but someday, it will become a norm.

Recently, I was introduced to a gem of a book titled *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl At The Window*, by an educator/professor, who in my view, is one of the greatest teachers today. *Totto-Chan* is a memoir by a leading Japanese TV personality, Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, narrating her childhood, mostly her school days.

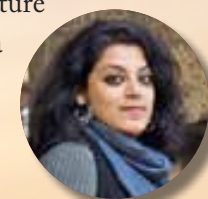
She was curious and intelligent, yet was termed as a special child, and was expelled from her first school. Fortunately, her mother withheld this information and simply suggested taking a look at a new school, which was unconventional. Students were classed in railway carriages in a very inclusive environment including physically disabled and returnee students. The teaching often extended beyond classrooms,



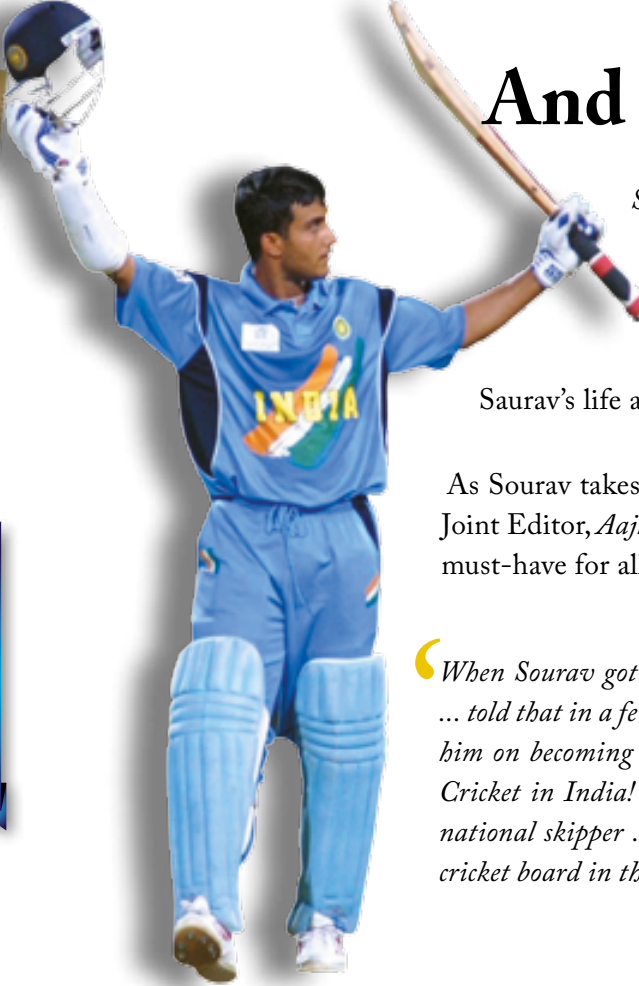
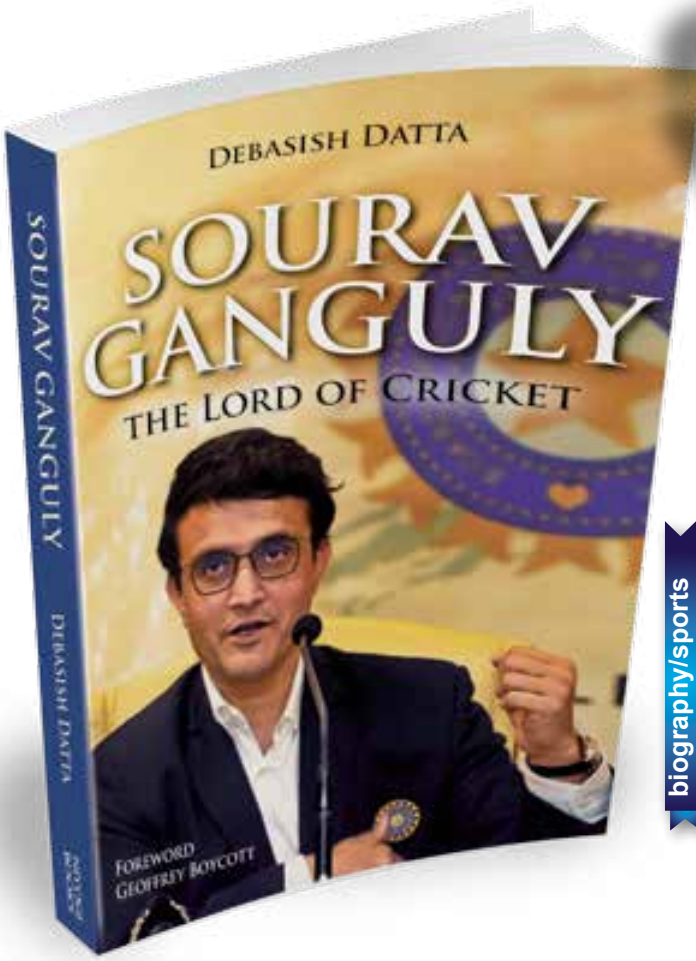
during long walks, through challenges and in lunch breaks. This book pays homage to the work of a visionary educator.

Over the years, I have come to know about many such iconic teachers across India, though have never had the privilege of meeting them; but their contributions cannot escape mortal beings like us. Vinobha Bhave's Sarvodaya Society, Jiddu Krishnamurti's Rishi Valley Education Centres, Shaheen Mistri's Teach for India, and Madhav Chavan's & Farida Lambay's Pratham Books have constructed the pillars of our nation. Several pioneering educators of our time have taken up the mantle and are moving forward. Some of the countless names are Sandeep Rai, Sonam Wangchuk, Anand Kumar, Vimla Kaul, Shyama Chona, and Anand Gupta.

This particular edition of the *Reading Corner* is a **tribute to all the teachers of the world**, the unsung heroes of the past, present, and future in every parallel universe. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of Turkish Republic, is attributed to have said, 'A (good) teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others.'



Trisha De Niyogi
COO, Niyogi Books



And he's back with a bang!

Sourav Ganguly: The Lord of Cricket chronicles the story of a bright young lad's metamorphosis into a leader in the battlefield called cricket. The book is a tribute to the grit, courage, and dedication of the man who taught Indian cricketers to dream. This new edition also features Sourav's life after his years of playing cricket for India.

As Sourav takes on a new role as President of the BCCI, Debasish Datta, Joint Editor, *Aajkal*, enlightens you with the legend's life experiences. A must-have for all cricket fans!

When Sourav got into the Cricket Association of Bengal, I ... told that in a few years' time, I would again congratulate him on becoming the President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India! ... it is wonderful for the sport that a former national skipper ... is helping the most powerful and influential cricket board in the world.'

—Geoffrey Boycott



In the Glow of Your Being examines the issues faced by the modern Indian woman and probes deep into the question of a woman's freedom and its denial by society. **It delves into an intelligent, working woman's dilemma:** how, though working alongside her male colleagues, she is expected to be unaffected by any emotional baggage that such close association triggers off; more so, if the woman has both beauty and brains.

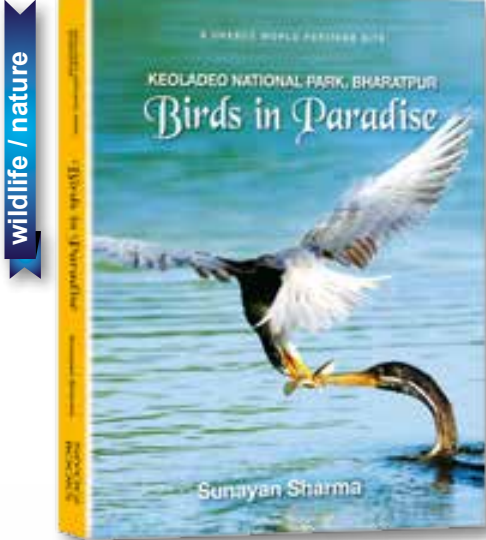
Originally written in Hindi by the award winning author, Govind Mishra, the book sensitively portrays the trials and tribulations of the working woman and her struggle for her rightful place under the sun.



A Perfect Nest

Home to more than 370 species of birds, both resident and migratory, of different colours and sizes, Bharatpur's Keoladeo National Park offers one the experience of a lifetime to witness this birds' paradise. ***Birds in Paradise* presents an amazing tour of this sanctuary**, through its days of glory, debacle, and revival, through the eyes of wildlife conservationist Sunayan Sharma and photojournalist Navin Sharma, compelling the readers to get lost where imagination meets reality among its delightful pages.

Passionate about wildlife and nature conservation, Sunayan Sharma is a man of many roles. His earlier book, *Sariska: The Tiger Reserve Roars Again* and its Hindi edition have received high appreciation. Navin Sharma, a prize-winning, nature photojournalist, is a reputed name in this field.

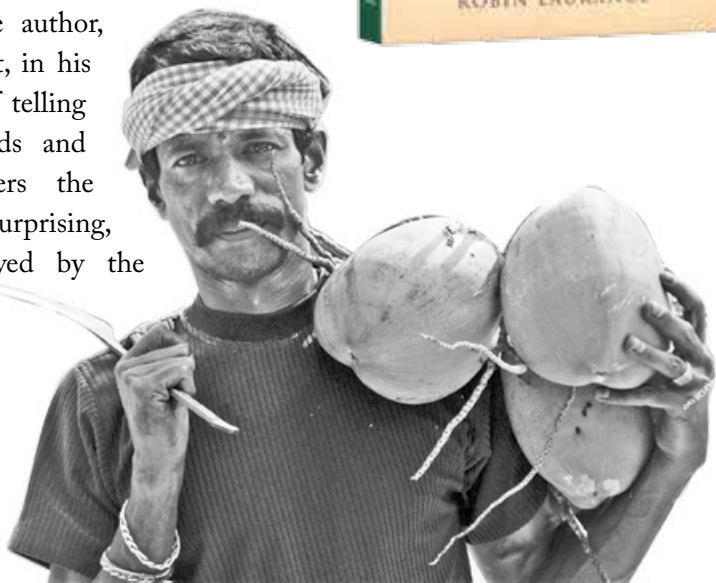
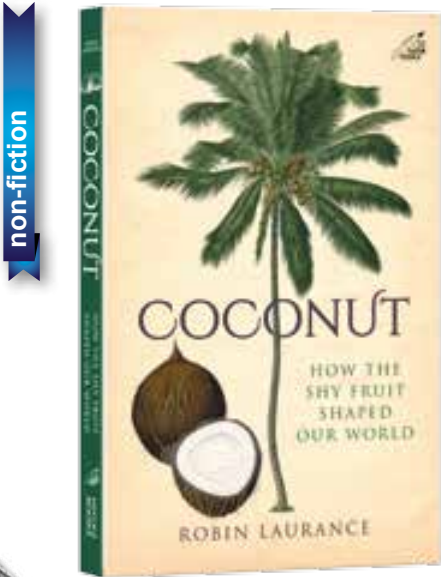


How the shy Fruit shaped our World!



The coconut is a part and parcel of human life—in the form of art, as part of religious rituals, and as a sign of wealth and success. **The coconut has long been the unseen player in the endeavours of industrialists and bomb makers, physicians and silversmiths, smugglers and snake charmers.** To this day, coconuts shape the lives of people around the world.

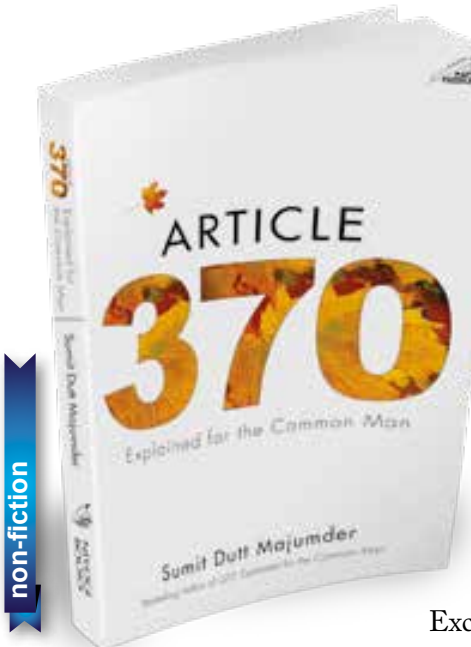
Robin Laurance, the author, also a photojournalist, in his inimitable manner of telling stories through words and photographs, uncovers the unexpected, often surprising, and vital roles played by the coconut palm and its nut in times past and present.



What is Article 370?

With special focus on the implications of the abrogation of the special status of Jammu & Kashmir, **this book by Sumit Dutt Majumder traces the historical background of the Accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 and clarifies the role of Articles 370 & 35A in the Indian Constitution**, in a language easy to read and understand for the common reader.

The author has served in the Indian Revenue Service and the Central Board of Excise and Customs (India). EU appointed him for its project in India on Capacity Building in GST. He is also the author of *GST: Explained for the Common Man*.



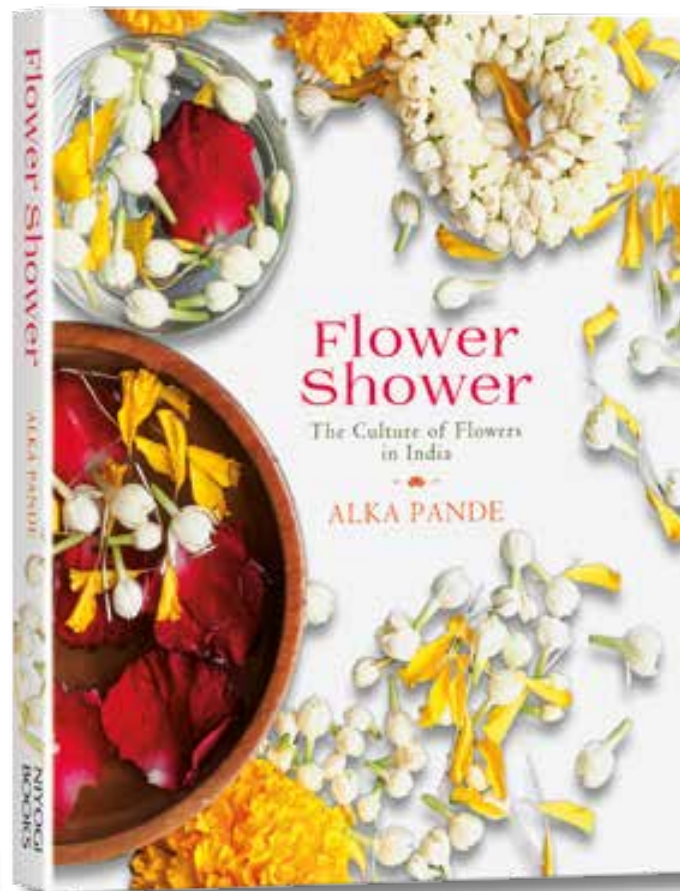
In the Essence of it All...

From the most elevated space of the sacred to adornment in everyday life, there is a flower for every season, every reason, and a special one for each of the numerous gods and goddesses of Indian religions. ***Flower Shower* by the art critic, cultural theorist, teacher, curator, and author, Alka Pande, explores this integral role that flowers play in our world**—as cultural signifiers; as motifs in Indian art, architecture, sculpture, literature and textiles; as culinary ingredients and as divine offerings.

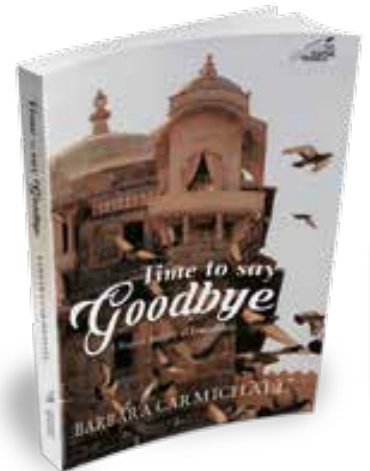
Deeply insightful and featuring a vast compendium of images, this book traverses the range and depth of Indian culture and transports you on a journey which is part memory, part research, part aesthetics, and part lived experience.



culture / art



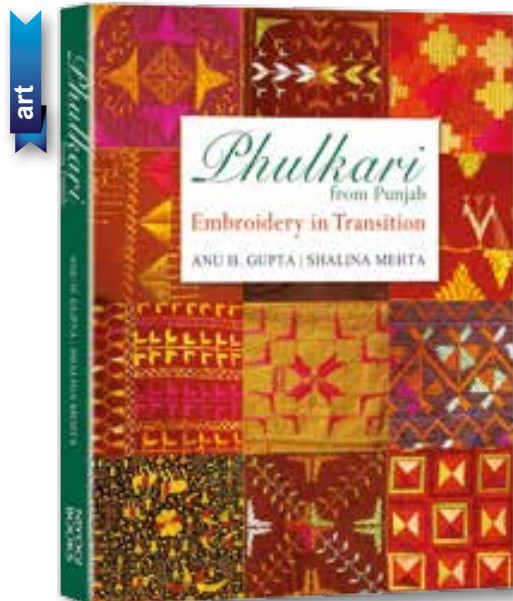
When is the Right Time to say Goodbye?



memoir

This book chronicles the journey of an Australian author and artist, Barbara Carmichael, through the paths of a bona fide Rajasthan, where she travels back and forth to Udaipur over a decade and slowly makes it her second home. In this roller-coaster ride of uncertainty, what connects her to this world is an unlikely friendship with an Indian man and his family. Gradually, it becomes a **tale of attachment, love, and loss.**

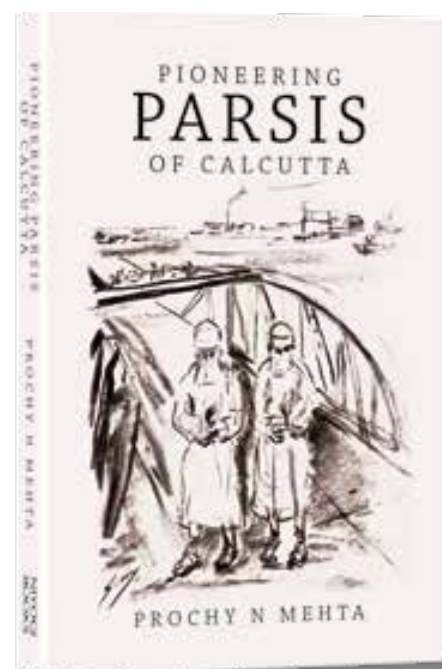
A Stitch, A Story...



art

Every stitch on the fabric tells a story, crafted in emotions, through motifs. *Phulkari from Punjab: Embroidery in Transition* narrates these stories, their sojourns to the villages and by-lanes of Punjab. **The book traces the history of Phulkari through the ages: its decline, revival, and innovation.**

Authored by professionals of the field of fashion, Anu Gupta and Shalini Mehta, this book offers a distinct glimpse of India's heritage and diverse treasure trove in the field of textile craft.



Pioneering Parsis of Calcutta owes its origin to its author's passionate desire to learn more about her Parsi heritage by enquiring into the community's recent history.

This book is a **treasure trove of facts about the rich Parsi heritage of Kolkata.** The nuggets of information and history documented in this book is an effort to preserve the knowledge gained from painstaking research.

Prochy N. Mehta's work is a labour of love that reveals the past and makes it an open book for the community in Kolkata.

Originally written in Bengali, *The Mountain of the Moon* is a story about taking chance—a dare which, with its wings of imagination, leads you to the silver lining after a storm. Shankar, an ordinary young boy from rural India, crosses many skies and seas to explore an altogether different world—Africa. There, he joins a seasoned Portuguese explorer, Diego Alvarez on a daring mission. But is the destination worth the toil of the journey? Moreover, will Shankar get to the peak of his mountain of dreams?

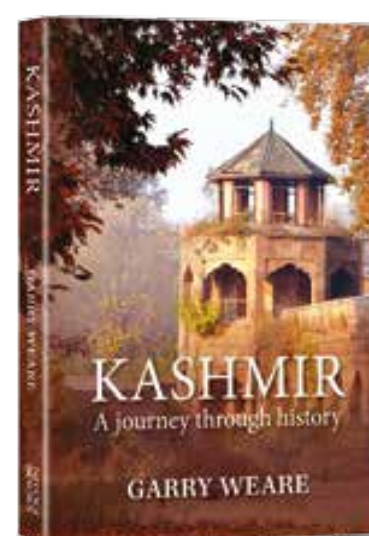
Would you believe that the author, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay, never crossed the boundaries of his dear land? Yet through his writing, he created fantastical kingdoms of his own where faith comes to blend with magic.

Relive this **classic adventurous narrative** in English that will take you back to the era of the picaresque, when one dared to dream.



translation / fiction

An Indian Odyssey



travel / history

Ringed by snow-capped peaks, Kashmir has drawn pilgrims, Sufis, armies, traders, travellers, and adventurers, over the centuries. The place has also managed to attract central attention during various periods of history, since before the Mughal reign, to the British Raj, to 1947, and even to the present day (in particular reference to Article 370).

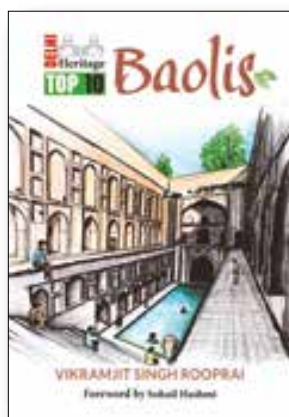
The author, Garry Weare, who has had a long-standing relationship with the Himalayas, has created engaging story lines capturing Kashmir's rich cultural history. **An ideal pick for both the armchair traveller and the history buff,** this book traces Kashmir's journey—an odyssey that continues to inspire, even today.



Welcome to the land of the Reading Corner! Fasten your seatbelts as we take you on to an exhilarating journey of our finest books which are path-breaking. Brimming with meticulous research and unconventional ideas, these titles have not only appeased the book worms, but have initiated conversations of many sorts. From Guru Nanak's hymns to the Bhagavata Purana, from churches to *baolis*, from casteism in society to its prudishness in gender stereotyping, these titles have shattered the conventional barriers between readers and research. We again welcome you all to have a glance at some of our finest titles of the year 2019, which carved a niche for themselves for their ingenious exploration and creativity.

Where the

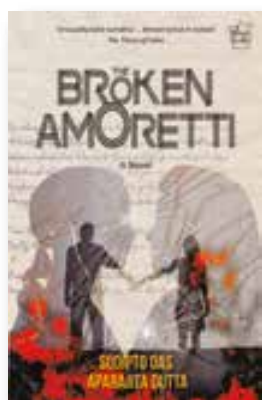
An outcome of an intensive five-year-long research, *Delhi Heritage Top 10 Series* is a comprehensive guide to Delhi's heritage icons walking us through top ten *baolis*. **It is an eye opener for the readers, addressing the raising concern regarding the conservation of water as well as lesser known monuments like the *baolis*.**



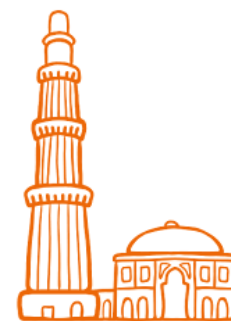
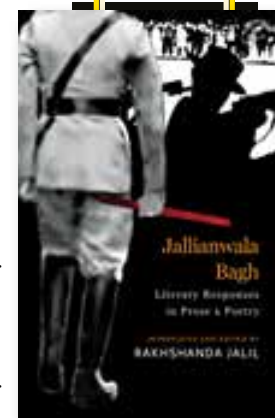
With more than 200 images, specially commissioned from an outstanding photographer of southern Indian art, *Lepakshi* offers a complete description of the temple's architecture, sculptures, and paintings. **It showcases the heritage of the finest achievements in southern India during the first half of the 16th century.** It's authors are renowned specialists in architecture, painting and textile design.



The Broken Amorretti is a novel about a family secret hidden in a poem written in dactylic hexametre, the archaic metre of the ancient Greek epics. It is a bold and lyrical narrative about how love can never be chained by stereotypes. In a subtle and sophisticated manner, **the narrative addresses the social issue of tabooing same-sex love, something that can alter the lives of people forever.**



On the completion of 100 years of the incident known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, **this book is an ode to the tragedy and the national freedom movement.** A collection of novels and poems by doyens of literature – in English, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. It gives the readers a glimpse of the reaction and response of creative minds to the horrific incident and the tragic times and also the brutal side of the Empire.



यह किताब रणथम्भौर बाघ परियोजना, साल 2010 में, एक आक्रामक बाघ के साथ मुठभेड़ का वर्णन करती है। जब बाघ को बेहोश करते समय, बाघ ने लेखक पर जानलेवा हमला कर दिया था, जिसमें वह गंभीर रूप से घायल हो गए थे। एक आक्रामक बाघ के साथ मुठभेड़, बिलकुल मृत्यु के द्वार से लौटने जैसा अनुभव है। इसके अतिरिक्त, किताब में अनाथ शावकों का पालन-पोषण; रहस्यमय तेंदुआ, जो अपने मन-मुआफ़िक़ निडर भाव से इनसानों पर हमला कर देता था; बाघों पर निगरानी रखना एवं आक्रामक नर बाघ उस्ताद (टी-24) के साथ कई अन्य सत्य कहानियाँ भी शामिल हैं।

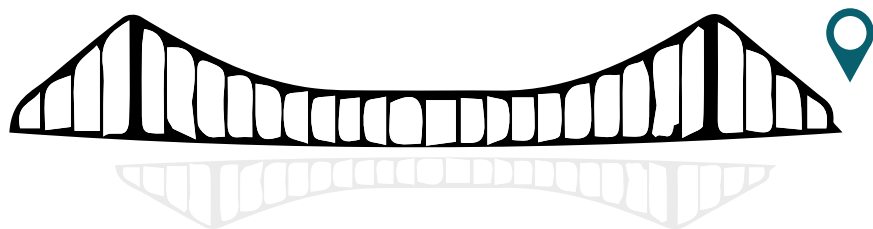


Featuring over to 200 images of exquisite paintings by unnamed illustrators from southern

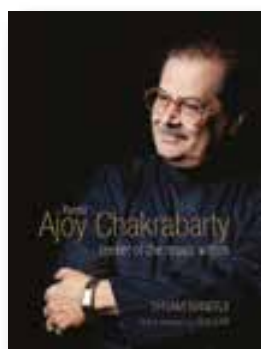
India, this book offers an in-depth analysis of the great and sacred text, the *Bhagavata Purana*. *The Great Mysore Bhāgavata* focuses on the second half of the Tenth Book of the *Purana*. This book from Mysore, stands out, not only because of the splendour of its illustrations, but also because it engages with that great and sacred text, in a manner that is completely distinct.



train of thought takes you...



Dalal's Street is a satirical (financial) thriller with dark humour that **explores the complex interplay of human relationships in a world where there are no winners, only survivors.** It is a story of four young friends and their life in the high pressure jobs in a hyper competitive world of stock broking, where money talks, greed is a virtue, and success is worshipped.

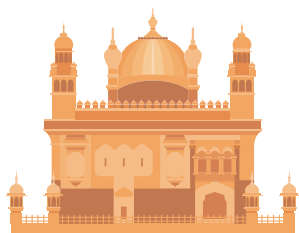
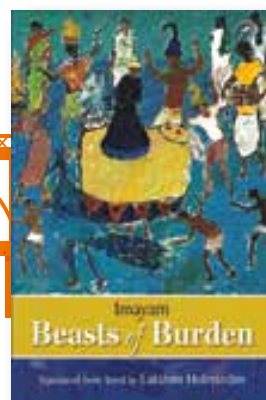


A seamless narrative and a biographical mural—*Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty: Seeker of Music Within*—explores the life, work, and ideas of one of the most eminent vocalists of our times. Featuring over 260 photographs, it **highlights the illustrious journey of a maestro, who was not born into a gharana, but has become an institution himself.**



Preeto is a collection of women-centric Urdu short stories penned by male writers. It includes stories by doyens of Urdu literature, as well as contemporary writers giving the readers **a glimpse of the male point of view regarding women, of male writers who depict women as equal partners** and highlight the problems they face in a patriarchal society.

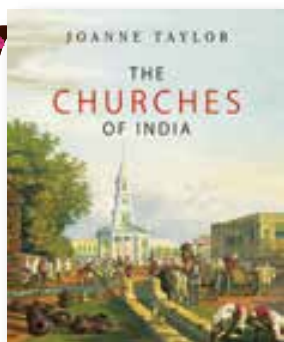
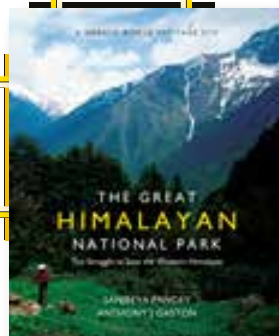
Translated from Tamil to English, *Beasts of Burden* is located in the early 1970s, depicting the oppression of the caste system. It is a tapestry of despair; **a story of decline and change in a village, seen through the eyes of a washerwoman** with an extraordinarily detailed picture of a lifestyle now passed—reclaimed and told with pride.



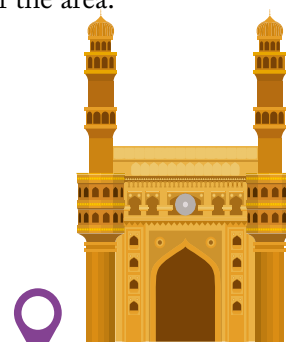
As this year marked Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary, *A Gift of Grace: The Essence of Guru Nanak's Spirituality*, **a book in three parts, brought forward his core spiritual message for the modern reader.** It foregrounds the spiritual foundation of Nanak's worldview, Japji Sahib, the seminal text, and the axis of Guru Nanak's ecclesiastical legacy.



The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the most important protected areas in the Himalayas. **The book delves into its rich history and ecological overview of the park and as a plea for continuing conservation of the rich legacy of Himalayan plants and animals.** The pictures, taken by the authors and their collaborators in *The Great Himalayan National Park* vividly illustrates the grandeur and diversity of the area.



Taking on a fascinating journey to its readers, *The Churches of India* discovers the history and architecture of the country's Christian churches. With fine illustrations and an informative, easy-to-read text, **the book reveals the diverse architectural styles that have evolved in different regions from the very beginnings of the Common Era identified with the birth of Christ.**



The best bridge between students and books is the teacher...



Supriti Chauhan

Principal
Raghav Global School, Noida

Unlike earlier days, it is currently perceived that there is a disconnect between the students and the teachers. Do you also believe so? Or do you believe in the lasting relationship with the teachers?

The perception exists because of the way our social structure has evolved with the new age job opportunities, nuclear families, and information galore with the advent of the age of Internet. However, somewhere this perception has begun to seem very real. I find it exactly what it is—a perception. Teachers today are more involved in their students' lives than they ever were; they aren't mere teachers anymore; they are mentors, caregivers, counsellors, guides, mediators, navigators, leaders, and the list goes on.

One trait, which makes any teacher effective in building bridges and lasting relationships, is **empathy**—a trait which has withstood the changing tides of our fast-paced world. Undeniably, the role of a teacher has undergone drastic transformation and is constantly changing owing to the 21st century learning demands, but empathy has been a constant. Effective teaching-learning cannot take place if you haven't connected with your students before expecting any kind of learning outcomes.

I firmly believe in the lasting relationship between teachers and students, and my experiences cement my belief. Perhaps lack of empathy creates a perception of disconnect. Every child deserves a role-model, a mentor who understands the power of a positive relationship, who nudges and prods the students to become the best version of themselves...an empathetic teacher who will never give up on them.

It is generally observed, and it is particularly felt in publishing, that with the advent of the Internet and other sources of entertainment, students are not reading enough. Is this your perception also? And what are the teachers doing to counter it?

While the Internet and other sources of entertainment have become part of our everyday life, it also has become a rival to good old reading from the book aka the hard-print. To an extent, the migration of reading material from print to the digital realm has been distractive. Students maybe consuming a lot of information from everywhere (the digital realm), but not really reading enough.

It is true that children of parents, who read to them or who themselves are seen reading at home, take up reading seamlessly. However, considering the parents who have to go out for work, one may not find the time to do so. Not only do they heavily rely on schools for their children's learning, but it is also expected of schools to inculcate the reading habit in them. Fair enough, considering we are new-age

schools, after all; we ought to take up this responsibility too. So how do we do it? Just to name a few ways to go about it—

Creating a reading ambience: By surrounding the students with reading material. Having Book-Exchange parties, creating Book-Nooks, Class Library, Swap-a-Book, and Blind Book Exchange. Such ideas should always be followed up by a 'Reading Session' where every child is asked to read aloud their favourite excerpt(s) from the book(s) they have read.

Reading aloud: Making it a fun and joyful experience by voice modulation and animation, to keep the children excited and curious while they listen to you. Creating opportunities for children to read the way you read (allowing them to make mistakes and not checking them while they are at it, which can be dealt with at a 'reflection-time' by giving one-on-one feedback to the students).

Train them to decode: Children become skilled readers by learning the written text as a code for speech sounds. Working on students' phonetics, phonemes, automaticity, accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, etc. can all be dealt with reflective feedbacks in a casual and non-threatening manner. The more they read, the better orators they may become. The goal should be to expose the children to a lot of text, get them excited about reading, encourage them to develop a love for it, and build a muscle memory.

I would love to share one of my favourite quotes by Dr Suess—'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go!'—something that our children must be made to know!

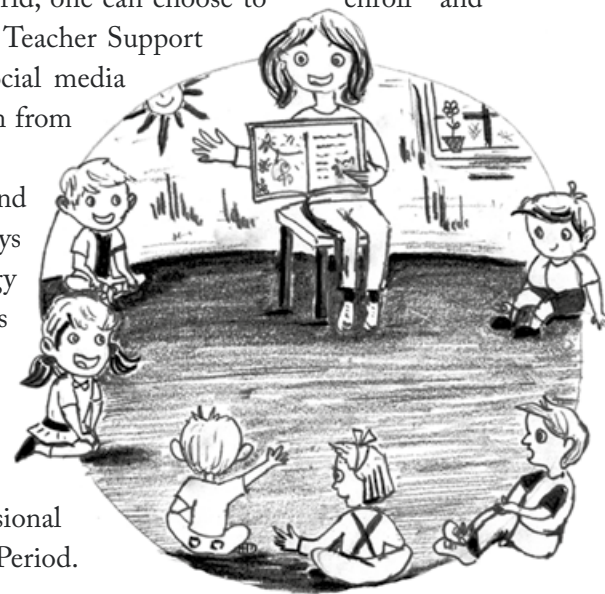
Technology is often described as a good servant but a bad master; with the advent of technology how have you repositioned yourself as teachers and how are you applying tech in your teaching methods?

If one has chosen to be a teacher to teach the children of this millennium, the millennials, then it would be a disaster if the teacher does not upgrade herself/himself with the way these children learn the best. And what better way than to use technology to train and tame them! Technology can be used to make learning highly interactive and collaborative, gamify it, give them simulations—basically 'edutain' your students!

What can a teacher do to stay abreast with these tech-times? There are free short term, self-paced MOOC courses apart from the paid step-by-step video courses, all from good universities across the world; one can choose to enroll and learn from such courses. Joining online Teacher Support Communities, present on almost all social media platforms, would be a good idea to learn from each other.

To keep students interested and engaged, a teacher today must try new ways to deliver the same old lessons. Technology is well integrated into students' experiences outside the classroom; hence, using these tools make much sense.

Adapt and **adopt** to the technological tools as an integral part of self-progression—Continuous Professional Development. There isn't an alternative. Period.



Education is to learning, what teacher is to student...



Aayushi Mehrish

Trained Kathak Dancer
Co-founder, Musafircollab
Student of Arts Management,
LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore

I was 6 years old, when I first started dancing. Belonging to a family of artists and my mother being a percussionist, I started my training under renowned gurus. Over the past 16 years, I have observed the beauty of Indian classical dance forms under the guidance of gurus, who have taught me to work hard, who have taught me to love myself.

But this wasn't quite easy. From exploring different dance styles to finally choosing the one I felt the most for, my journey as a Kathak dancer has evolved

under some aspects of the practice of *guru-shishya parampara* (teacher-student tradition). As a student, pursuing dance in this tradition, I learnt of the commitment needed to train under this practice that talks about a deeper understanding of the student-teacher relationship, where the student completely surrenders to the guru in order to master the art form. It is interesting to analyze my journey, which involved certain aspects of the practice and missed out on a few. I may not have had an opportunity to stay with my gurus, devote all my time to my dance, or completely forget the outside world, but I was fortunate to be given an opportunity to listen to and understand the experiences of my teachers and their traditional style of learning and teaching Kathak.

I believe that the *guru-shishya parampara*, in today's world, is left in books to be read about. Students today are not aware of the intensity this practice holds. However, I also believe that it is important for the same to be inculcated in some aspects of Indian dance education in India, creating deeper knowledge and respect towards art, in any form. If not completely, I do believe that the practice holds the power to retain the value of Indian classical forms through its level of dedication and specific training requirements.

साक्षात्कार



उषा छाबड़ा

लेखिका, कथावाचिका, शिक्षिका

उषा छाबड़ा एक प्रख्यात लेखिका, कथावाचिका एवं शिक्षिका हैं। वे दो दशकों से भी अधिक इस क्षेत्र में कार्यरत हैं। वर्तमान में वह अनेक सामाजिक संगठनों से जुड़ी हैं और बच्चों के समग्र विकास की दिशा में प्रयासरत हैं। यूट्यूब व ब्लॉग पर भी वे काफी सक्रिय हैं।

● क्या आप मानती हैं कि पहले की अपेक्षा बच्चों का रुझान किताबों के प्रति काफी कम हो गया है। अगर ऐसा है, तो क्यों?

बच्चों का रुझान किताबों के प्रति थोड़ा कम हो गया है क्योंकि उनके सामने मनोरंजन के और भी कई स्रोत हैं। मोबाइल ऐप, मोबाइल गेम्स, आई पैड, टीवी इत्यादि में उनका समय व्यतीत हो जाता है। ऐसा नहीं है कि बच्चों ने किताबें पढ़ना बंद कर दिया है। जिन बच्चों को बचपन से किताबें पढ़ने के लिए प्रेरित किया गया, वे बड़े होने पर भी किताबें पढ़ने में रुचि दिखाते हैं। अतः बचपन में ही यदि अभिभावक बच्चों के साथ किताबें पढ़ें एवं पढ़ते हुए संवाद करें, तो बच्चे किताबें पढ़ने में रुचि दिखाने लगते हैं। कई बार देखने में आया है कि अगर छोटे बच्चों की किताबों में आकर्षक एवं रंग-बिरंगे चित्र बने होते हैं, तो बच्चे किताबें पढ़ने को उत्सुक हो जाते हैं। अतः बच्चों की रुचि जागृत करने के लिए उनकी उम्र के अनुसार, उनकी रुचि के अनुसार किताबें उपलब्ध होनी चाहिए, सिर्फ शिक्षाप्रद बातों से भरी किताबें नहीं।

● बच्चों के नैतिक विकास में पाठ्य पुस्तकों के अलावा कथा वाचक परंपरा कितनी मददगार साबित होती है?

कहानियाँ हम सबके दिलों को जोड़ती हैं। हर एक व्यक्ति, हर एक घर में कितनी ही कहानियाँ छिपी हैं। हमारे समाज का इतिहास, परम्पराएँ सभी कहानियाँ ही तो हैं। हर त्यौहार कहानियों से परिपूर्ण है। ये हमारी हमारी सांस्कृतिक धरोहर का वहन करती हैं। हमारे देश के महान नेता, हमारे वैज्ञानिक, दार्शनिक, सभी की कहानियाँ हमें प्रेरणा देती

हैं। महात्मा गांधी हों या इंदिरा गांधी, भगत सिंह हों या सरदार पटेल सभी के जीवन प्रसंग कितने प्रेरणादायी हैं! ये कहानियाँ, जीवन- प्रसंग देश -काल, वातावरण से परे हर समय हमारा मार्गदर्शन करती हैं। इसी प्रकार हमारे राष्ट्रीय पर्व अनेक वीरों की कहानियों से भरे पड़े हैं। आज बच्चों को पुस्तकीय ज्ञान के परे, इन कहानियों की भी उतनी ही आवश्यकता है, जितनी कि गणित एवं विज्ञान की। आज समाज जिस दौर से गुजर रहा है, उसमें एक-दूसरे के प्रति ईर्ष्या-द्वेष, छल-कपट, धोखाधड़ी, हिंसा का बोलबाला दिखाई देता है, जबकि हमारी परम्परा त्याग, बलिदान, देशप्रेम, गुरु- सेवा, अध्यात्म, अतिथि देवो भव, अहिंसा परमो धर्म, वसुधैव कुटुंबकम आदि की है। यह सच है कि कहानियाँ दिलों को जोड़ती हैं, रिश्ते मजबूत करती हैं, जिसकी आज हमें सबसे ज़्यादा आवश्यकता है। अपने विभिन्न जीवन मूल्यों द्वारा ये कहानियाँ हमारे बच्चों का मार्ग प्रशस्त करती हैं। बच्चे शिक्षा से दूर भागना चाहते हैं, अनजाने में मनोरंजन के साथ शिक्षा देना सही रहता है, जो कि कथावाचन के द्वारा आसानी से हो जाता है।

● आप लेखन, शिक्षा व समाज-सेविका के रूप में काफी सक्रिय हैं, इस क्षेत्र में विकास एवं जागरूकता के लिए आप क्या सुझाव देंगी?

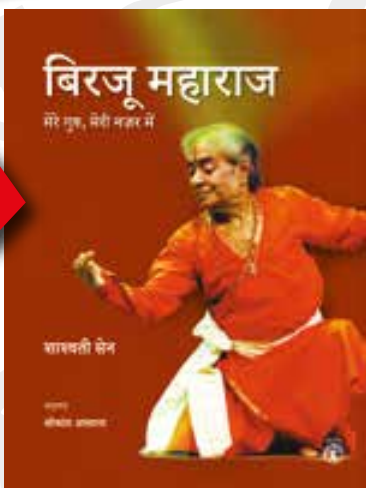
बच्चों की किताबें अगर रुचिकर हों, जटिल शब्दों का प्रयोग न कर, बच्चों की उम्र को ध्यान में रखते हुए अच्छी, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण को स्थान देती हुई, मनोरंजन से भरपूर किताबें लिखी गई हों; और आज की समस्याओं को उजागर करती हों, तो बच्चे किताब पढ़ने को इच्छुक होंगे। कथा वाचन के द्वारा जब हम कोई कहानी सुनाते हैं और बाद में अगर बच्चे उन पुस्तकों को देखते हैं तो उन्हें पुस्तक पढ़ने में रुचि जागृत हो जाती है।

● आज सोशल मीडिया ने जहाँ लोगों को आपस में जोड़ा है, वहीं इसमें कुछ खामियाँ भी नज़र आती हैं। आप इससे कितनी सहमत हैं?

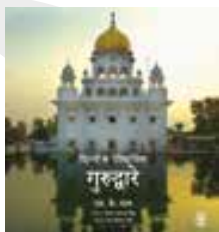
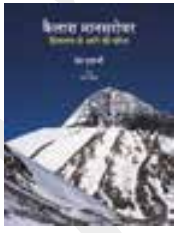
फैस बुक, इंस्टाग्राम, ट्वीटर, ब्लॉगिंग, लिंकड- इन इत्यादि ने लोगों को जोड़ने का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया है। आज कई लोग अपनी रुचि के अनुसार कई समूहों में सक्रिय हैं। इंटरनेट पर पठन की कितनी सामग्री उपलब्ध है! मुझे भी कई लेखकों एवं विद्वतजनों को जानने का मौका मिला, जिनके बारे में पहले सिर्फ सुना करती थी। वहीं, सोशल मीडिया के अपने नुकसान भी हैं। इतने मिला होने के बाद भी आप अकेलापन महसूस करते हैं। जो दिखता है, वह जरूरी नहीं कि सच हो, हम इस मायाजाल में फँस जाते हैं। दूसरों की प्रोफाइल देखते हुए समय का बहुत नुकसान होता है, जिससे हमारा कार्य भी प्रभावित होता है। थोड़ी सावधानी बरतने से हम अपने इस नुकसान से बच सकते हैं।



बहुवचन में अब तक...



नई पुस्तक



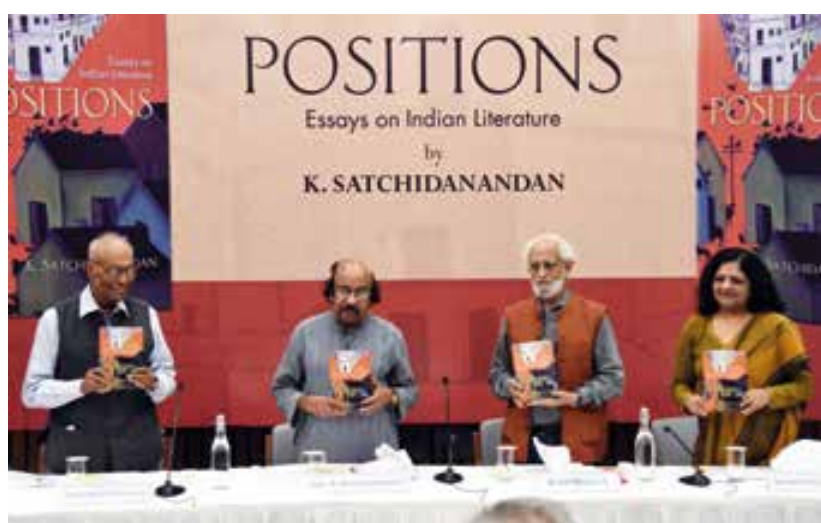
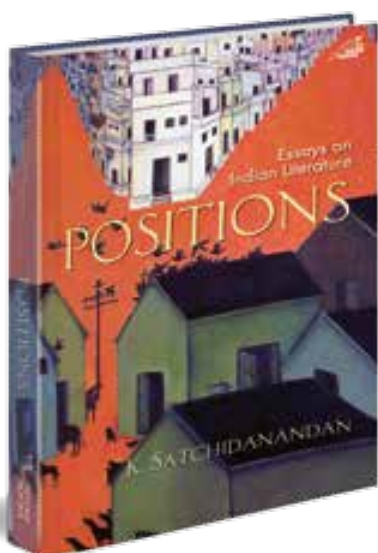
नई पुस्तक

पं. बिरजू महाराज कथक नर्तक, एक गुरु और मार्गदर्शक के रूप में हजारों लोगों की प्रेरणा हैं। ऐसे ही महान व्यक्तित्व के जीवन प्रसंगों से जुड़ी हमारी एक पुस्तक, जिसे उनकी सबसे वरिष्ठ शिष्या शाश्वती सेन ने अंग्रेज़ी में लिखा है। *बिरजू महाराज: मेरे गुरु, मेरी नज़र* में पुस्तक का हिंदी अनुवाद पत्रकार श्रीकांत अस्थाना ने किया है।

दुर्लभ छाया चित्रों से परिपूर्ण इस पुस्तक में पं. बिरजू महाराज के बालपन, नृत्य-जीवन से जुड़ी घटनाएँ, देश-विदेश की यात्राएँ, पुरस्कार, समारोह, सम्मेलन व तमाम मंच प्रस्तुतियों का विस्तृत वर्णन शामिल हैं। पुस्तक में गुरु-शिष्य परंपरा की झलक भी साफ़ नज़र आती है, जब उनके देश-विदेश के शिष्य-शिष्याएँ अपने अमूल्य विचारों को उनके लिए माला-स्वरूप शब्दों को पिराते हुए वे नतमस्तक हो जाते हैं। कुल मिलाकर कला-प्रेमियों के लिए यह एक सार्थक किताब है।

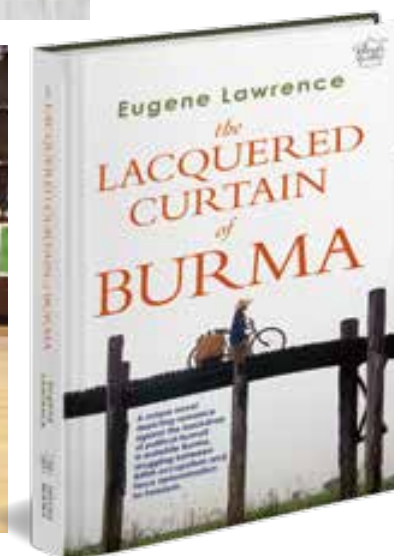
एक सच्ची प्रेम कथा: *एमिली और सुभाष* भारतीय क्रांतिकारी (सुभाष चंद्र बोस) और उनकी आस्ट्रियाई पत्नी (एमिली शेंकल) के जीवन पर आधारित है। अब तक उनके संबंधों के बारे में बहुत कम लोग जानते हैं। वे कब और कहाँ मिले, उनका विवाह किस समय और किन लोगों की सहमति से हुआ, उनकी बेटी का जन्म कब हुआ और सुभाष चंद्र बोस के देश प्रेम और संघर्षरत जीवन के चलते इस परिवार को किन मुसीबतों का सामना करना पड़ा...?

नेता जी के परिवार से उनका पत्र-व्यवहार व रिश्ता कैसा रहा; और ख़ासतौर से माँ-बेटी का अपने पति और पिता के देश से कैसा नाता और भावनाएँ रहीं, सब कुछ इस पुस्तक में विस्तार से लेखिका कृष्णा बोस ने बख़ूबी बयाँ किया है। विभिन्न अभिलेखागारों और पारिवारिक एल्बमों से जुटाए लगभग 50 अनमोल चित्र पुस्तक में ख़ास हैं।



(L-R) Indranath Choudhury, K. Satchidanandan (author), Alok Bhalla, and Sukrita Paul at the book launch of *Positions: Essays in Indian Literature* at IIC, New Delhi

Author of *The Lacquered Curtain of Burma*, Eugene Lawrence, at the book launch with Sourav Roy, Founder, *The Bengaluru Review*, at Atta Galatta, Bengaluru



Upcoming events where you can find us

New Delhi World Book Fair
2020, Pragati Maidan
4th-12th Jan, 2020

Kolkata International Book Fair
2020, Central Park, Salt Lake
29-9th Feb 2020

Apeejay Kolkata Literary
Festival 2020,
Oxford Bookstore
17th-19th Jan, 2020

Jaipur Literature Festival 2020,
Diggi Palace
23rd-27th Jan, 2020

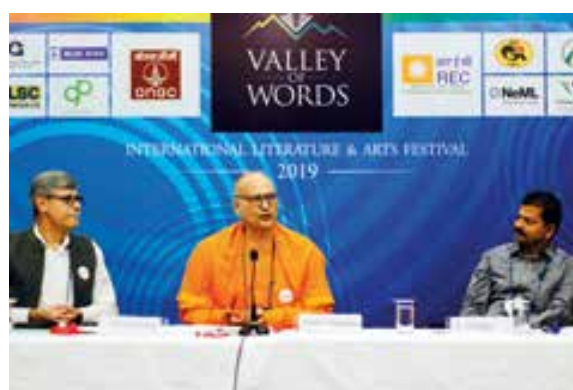
Brahmaputra Literary Festival
2020, Srimanta Sankardev
Kalakshetra, Guwahati
8th-11th Feb, 2020

Vasant Vihar Literary Festival,
Vasant Vihar Club
21st-23rd Feb, 2020

At the Valley of Words 2020



Session 'Lines, Lenses and Landscape'—books on the Himalayas. In discussion (L-R) Trisha De Niyogi, Stephen Alter, Ganesh Saili, and Shiv Kunal Verma



(L-R) Dharmendra Pandey, Swami Samarpanananda (author, *The World of Religions & Living Hinduism*), and C. Sridhar in conversation in a session.



Trisha De Niyogi, an ardent promoter of Tibetan fiction, with Tsering Namgyal Khortsa at the launch of his book, *The Tibetan Suitcase*



Alok Bhalla taking the podium during the session 'Other Worlds in other Words'



(L-R) Arvinder Singh (author), N. Ravi Shanker, and Raj Kanwar in conversation on the author's book, *Morarji Desai: A Profile in Courage*

IN REMEMBRANCE

The world of literature is poorer with the passing of Professor Nabaneeta Dev Sen. She had been battling cancer for some time, but while we were working on the translations of her Naxal trilogy, she remained greatly involved and enthusiastic. Her trilogy was scheduled to be launched in September 2019, but due to her ill health, she had requested us to postpone the release to November. We were looking forward to the event and she was sure that she would get better, but alas, it was not to be. While we have lost a gem of a person, she will always live on in our memories and in her unforgettable works...



Anurag Tripathi, author of *Dalal's Street*, speaking at Dalal's Street Literature Festival 2019 in Mumbai

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