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## How Tea Stalls And Provision Stores Became New Hangouts For Young Book Lovers Of Bangalore Slums

Shreya Pareek • September 30, 2014 • Bangalore, Children, Literacy

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An interesting initiative to convert tea stalls and provision stores into

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reading joints has taken a new step in inculcating reading habits among lesser privileged children. Don't be surprised if you see a kid flipping the pages of an interesting book rather than just buying toffee at your nearest provision store.

*“Is it for free? That is amazing. I have only seen course books all my life; my family could not afford to spend on books other than text books,”* says a kid at a provision store as he quickly turns to the next page, at a slum near Byapanahalli, Bangalore.

Curious kids flipping through pages of a colourful book, reading out stories and sharing their favourite parts – this is not a scene from a school but from Satyam Nagar, a slum in East Bangalore.



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"Textbooks are the only books I had seen till now," says one of the girls who were engrossed in the books. She picked another book from the pouches which were hanging out of the *chai cum Kirana* shop.

Having first caught the attention of three to four kids, these small libraries at provision stores soon saw around a hundred students milling about within 30 minutes. Thanks to Akshara Foundation, this initiative was a fresh change for these kids. Called **Cutting Tea Tales**, the initiative was launched on September 8 on the occasion of International Literacy Day.

*"As per a recent report by UNESCO's Education for All (EFA), India has the largest illiterate population. We want to bring a change in the situation by making books available to the children so that the future looks a bit different," says Kanchan Banerjee, Managing Trustee, Akshara Foundation.*

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India has 287 million illiterate, which is 37 percent of the total illiterate population of the world. Being the youngest country in the world, do we really want this tag? Shouldn't the young energy be channelized better?

Cutting Tea Tales is one small step towards bringing this change. Three small stalls were selected and a mini library was set up. Eight plastic pouches were hung with six books in each pouch. The idea of hanging the pouches was to optimize space along with making it eye-catching.

*“We feel that these places often serve as meeting grounds where people drive conversations. We also think that these places are the starting points where shared aspirations for a community are recognized as are also the challenges they will face in moving towards those aspirations. The community setting approach not only helps connect but also provides a reading environment that is not intimidating,” says the Akshara Foundation team.*



## LATEST STORIES



### Can Children Be Agents of



Various story telling sessions organized by the Akshara Foundation boost the confidence of kids as well as engages adults.

The books are divided in three categories – Green, Red and Yellow, where green indicates the easy reading level and yellow stands for the toughest.

*“The excitement among the children was amazing. We did not expect such a great response from everyone,”* says Banerjee.

A girl, who was a little better than other kids at reading, sat with three to four kids and helped them out with the pronunciation and understanding the story.

The aim to get the underprivileged children closer to books is further

## Change? Yes, Here are 4 examples!

👤 Ashoka India 🕒 June 16, 2015

The article gives a glimpse in to schools which have changemaking as the core and few great initiatives that children have successfully undertaken as a result of this new wave of education.



## How Volunteers from 50 Countries Transformed 70 Acres of Arid Land into a Lush Forest in Puducherry

👤 Catherine Gilon 🕒 June 16, 2015

We have seen signs of it everywhere. Our ponds have dried up, native birds and insects have become

expanded through a story telling session. Kids are asked to pick a small piece of paper from a bowl which contains the name of a book, which they are asked to narrate.

*"It enhances their confidence and reading skills. Also, they are excited to be the center of attention while they are reading it out loud. These kids are getting interested in the culture of reading," says Banerjee.*



The initiative will soon expand to other areas of the city and country after its successful pilot.

extinct, parks have made way for IT Parks. Yet we live like there's no tomorrow. Well, this group of nameless volunteers has taken it upon themselves to script a different future for our children. Their amazing tale will show you how nature can work wonders when you choose to work with her.



## India's First Sanskrit Animation Film has 30 Animators working on it and Ilaiyaraaja's Music

👤 Shreya Pareek 🕒 June 16, 2015

Punyakoti, India's first Sanskrit film, will impart crucial life lessons with the help of a holy cow. Veteran music director Ilaiyaraaja will be



As family plays an important role in imparting reading habits to children, a session for adults is also organized where they are asked to narrate their favourite childhood stories and incidents. The Cutting Tea Tales sessions are open to everyone who want to attend it on Sundays.

*“The slum children often do not have access to books other than their course books, and it is very rare to develop an interest in reading just through the text books prescribed by the school. The colourful illustrations and interesting stories keep the kids engaged,” says Banerjee. The books which are available in different languages including Hindi, English, Kannada and Tamil have something to offer to one and all.*

Having successfully launched their first mini library, Cutting Tea Tales are now planning to move to two more places in Bangalore. Subsequently, they also want to expand to rural areas.

*“But we want to see the impact first. It has been just three weeks and we don’t want to take away the books from these students as they have just started enjoying them,” says Banerjee.*

The books will be changed periodically and various topics will be covered. The shopkeepers act as the keepers of the books and they make sure that kids get to know about the various books in the pouches.

giving the music score and 30 independent animators are working on the project simultaneously. Here's all you need to know.



## Anganwadis across the Country to be Equipped with a Tablet PC for Better Monitoring

Surabhi Katyal June 16, 2015

Anganwadis will be provided with tablet PCs to ensure better record keeping and swift actions.





The initiative received a great response and engagement from Kids.

*"Soon the kids going to the shops to buy kites and toffees will be pulled into the world of books. It was just a trial project but we are amazed to see the response from the kids which, has given us the confidence to expand it,"* says Banerjee.

*"We would be happy if there are book thieves and the books are stained, marked or falling apart with use since there is no better death for a book than by having been read too much and by too many,"* says the team.



## 10 Incredible Things you must know about NL Beno Zephine, India's First Visually Impaired IFS Officer

👤 Shreya Pareek 🕒 June 15, 2015

100 percent visually impaired since birth, NL Beno Zephine fought against all odds to become India's first IFS officer. Her family read for long hours to help her prepare and she used special software to read from the computer screen.



A Chennai-Based Company

If initiatives like this work, soon India will get rid of the unpleasant tag of having the most illiterate in the world. It is amazing to see how just a small push can lead to a bigger impact. We hope to see many such shops with hundreds of kids flipping through the interesting pages of the books hanging from pouches.

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## Sharon Systems, Chennai, Designs a Tactile System for the Hearing Impaired to Understand Speech

Surabhi Katyal June 15, 2015

Sharon Systems, Chennai, has developed a tactile system to enable people with auditory impairment to be able to identify and understand the speech around them with the use of phonetics.



## This Haryana Village Sarpanch started the 'Selfie with Daughter' Campaign to Save the Girl Child

Shreya Pareek June 15, 2015

ting contest - "Selfie with



daughter - in Bibipur village of  
 s improving the status of  
 the girl child in amazing ways. The  
 contest has received over 500 entries  
 so far and the winners will be given a  
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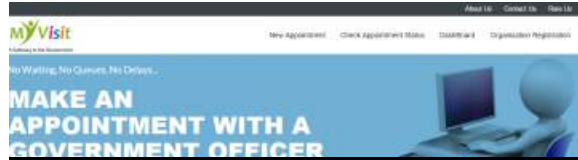




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