

Good Gifts Catalogue

4021: Newspapers



A library is far more than a room of books. It is a focal point for the community providing education, information and a source of recreation. In India, villages are home to around 70% of the population. While the state does provide some funding for libraries this does not extend to the majority of the 600,000 villages due to lack of resources. Good Gifts is working to provide and stock village libraries. Along with grants for books, libraries receive annual subscriptions to newspapers. Newspapers ensure that the village community is kept abreast of world-affairs and culture. In many villages the librarian will write the daily headlines up on a blackboard to attract villagers to the library. The news is read aloud to those who cannot read and is used as a tool to encourage literacy.

When Manmohan Malhoutra visited one of our libraries at Gundlamachnoor village in the Medak district, Andhra Pradesh, he was delighted by what he saw. In addition to books, the library receives two daily newspapers and they clearly make a world of difference. He asked the villagers who had gathered there and were regular users of its facilities whether they met in the library from time to time to discuss the affairs of their village or perhaps even of the nation or the world at large. They told him that, only the previous week, they had discussed the situation in Iraq and identified it readily on the small globe in the village library.

His astonishment grew when he discovered that, a few years earlier; they had discussed the military coup in Fiji, which had overthrown Mahendra Choudhary's government. They again passed the globe test by accurately identifying Fiji. Such is the difference that even a modest village library can make to the awareness of ordinary village people.