

Library: BOOK LOVER'S PARADISE

I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of Library." This quotation by Argentine essayist, poet and short story writer, Jorge Luis Borges highlights not just the bliss a book lover experiences, but the positive vibration one feels when they step into this paradise. How calm and vibrant were those days, when in the list of our daily routine, going to a Library was given its share of importance. Reading, which not just acts as a tool in giving wisdom, but also dons the role of an angel in spreading happiness is something that has been limited to reading E-books, all thanks to the wonders of Science. But, if one travels deep within them, one would definitely agree with this quote by American novelist and essayist, Ray Bradbury, "Without libraries what we have? We have no past and no future."

There are various libraries, where some house books belonging to a mixture of languages and some treasure collections of just one particular language. "Library is not just the storehouse of books, but the key to unraveling the secret of being young at heart," says Zain Sakrani, who is an IT/ PR manager at Alliance Francaise. "Alliance Francaise, which aims at educating French worldwide and spreading the spirit of the language French across the globe, came up with the idea of French Library, where students can borrow books, magazines and language learning materials in order to keep the spirit of the language 'French' alive. By doing so, the goal of keeping the habit of Reading vibrant will definitely pay rich dividend in changing the term 'average' to 'crowded'," adds Sakrani.

Having a vibrant collection of books catering to the needs of the crowd, keeping in mind the present generation's likes and dislikes plays a crucial role in keeping the charm of a Library alive. Isa Cultural Library, which houses a mixture of English as well as Arabic books, admires the collection of the books it houses. "Having a wide collection of books where 75% of the books are in Arabic, but seeing students and the youth visit our library, makes us feel that we are going on the right track in keeping the habit of reading alive. To enroll in our library, a CPR is required, where one can borrow 2 books for two weeks. For two year membership, 2BD is all that is required. We are also trying to develop the collection of our books, where we aim of housing more and more of English books, so that there is not just balance between both the languages, but also the crowd will be more, thus keeping the spirit of the

library vibrant", says Nasser Mohammed Ali, who is the Chief of Library Services at Isa Cultural Centre. Technology. This ten-letter word may have made life easy, but it serves as a culprit in not just diminishing the interest and enthusiasm one generates from visiting a library, but reducing visits to the library. "Today's society is full of screens (Tablets, phones, computers, TV etc). And people tend not to go to the libraries and borrow books because they think everything is available on their screens. This is one primary factor in eliminating the interest in not just reading books and reducing visits to the library, but building one's excessive passion for technology," adds Sakrani. "One reason why visits to the library have diminished owes to availability of the content online which has not just made the work of the public easier, but has drifted the crowd away from the library, thus resulting in the decrease of the visitors to the library. Most of the sources that a person wants, they can depend on books rather than spending too much time on PCs and laptops," says a Librarian, who does not wish to be named. Not necessary, the ideas and viewpoints will always be negative about technology. "I strongly believe that technology acts as tool in helping students in their research projects. Whatever the books fail to provide, technology bridges the gap in giving the required information, thus donning the role of a blessing. Yes, I do admit that technology has diminished the spirit of reading books and enjoying the warmth of a library, but having a proper balance and utilizing your gadgets when required will definitely go a long way in the development of a child," adds Ali.

"Library is indeed a paradise on the Earth. Our library is open to everyone where outsiders must pay BD 30 membership fee + BD 20 security deposit per annum for whole family," adds Sakrani. My suggestion to all the parents is to develop the habit of reading at an early stage, where the creativity of a child not just unleashes, but also helps in the development of their vocabulary." adds Sakrani. "Library is not just a paradise, but a place of information, where one inculcates the habit of life-long development of their personality. One cannot force people to read, as Reading is a habit, which should be developed at an early stage of a child's development. After all, liveliness springs from imbibing the positivity of a library, isn't it?" Nasser signs off.

