

Libraries

Can you imagine a world where libraries have become an out-of-the-ordinary place or perhaps a world where people walk into a library with purposes far from reading, writing, or doing something productive with their time? Well, allow me to surprise you and welcome you to the year 2024, a time where a library has lost its meaning among people.

The 17th and 18th centuries were known as the golden age for libraries because those were the times when some of the most important and memorable libraries were constructed across Europe. For India however, changes came around in the year 1902 when the Imperial Library Act was passed when the Calcutta Public Library was merged with the Imperial Library under the viceroy Lord Curzon. That act started a wave and soon a plethora of libraries were founded across the nation. Every state university made it a must to have a library across all of their colleges and a public library was set up in every district. The number of public libraries has since grown but unfortunately, the base of users has not.

Due to the extreme digitization of the academic and creative aspects of our lives, many people have lost touch with actual paper-based research and leisure. Students who once worshiped libraries as a safe space to both work and enjoy a good book have completely forgotten of their existence and don't even use them. It is also heart-breaking to witness a majority of readers shift to electronic devices from paperbacks and hardcovers, in fact even newsreaders have switched over. It is even more demoralizing to see how libraries are now becoming a factor of showoff among the youth of our nation. People walk inside libraries just to let the world know that they have done so, through their social media presence, only to walk out immediately or worse sit and do absolutely nothing.

Even in such a time, it eases one's heart to see people who still value libraries around them. Even though in a smaller proportion, there are people who have not let digitization of life consume their love for reading and continue to visit libraries. We as citizens need to understand the importance of these book-filled rooms. They were constructed for a purpose and so we should continue to use them accordingly instead of letting them collect dust and become a part of the past. One should take it upon themselves to visit libraries frequently and enjoy an

atmosphere meant specifically for reading and writing. The fact that digitization has made things considerably easier for us cannot be denied in any way but it still does not justify the way libraries are being forgotten, even when they are right in front of us.

To add a personal note to this article, I, as a fellow reader and writer, urge you all to visit your local library again. Walk inside and try to relive those days when technology had not consumed us as much as it has now. The scent of old pages will take you back to a simpler time. I hope that more people understand the dire need to save libraries in this time because if we don't then such a treasure will become lost forever.