

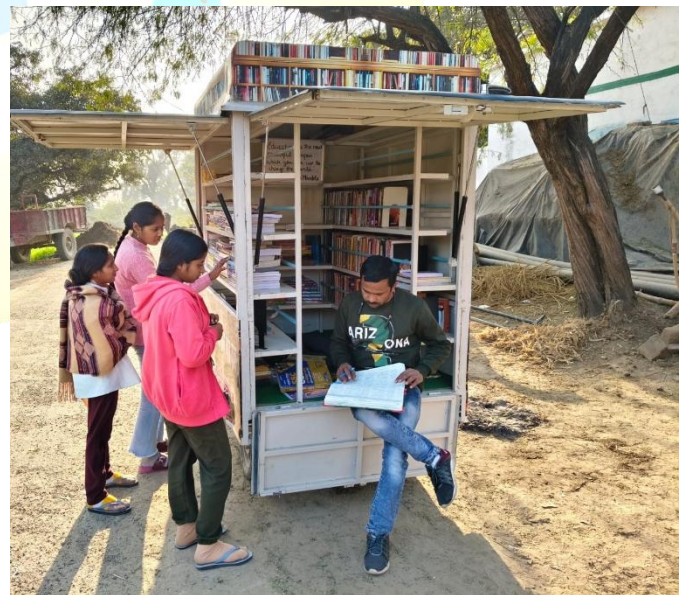


Dear Friends of the Library,

As the year moved towards its close, December offered us a moment to slow down, look back, and hold gratitude for the journey so far. The library remained a steady presence, open, welcoming, and alive with stories, even in the heart of winter. Many members chose to stay indoors, wrapped up against the chill, taking a natural pause as the year slowed down. On days with sun out, sunlit corners filled with conversations, familiar faces returned with renewed enthusiasm.

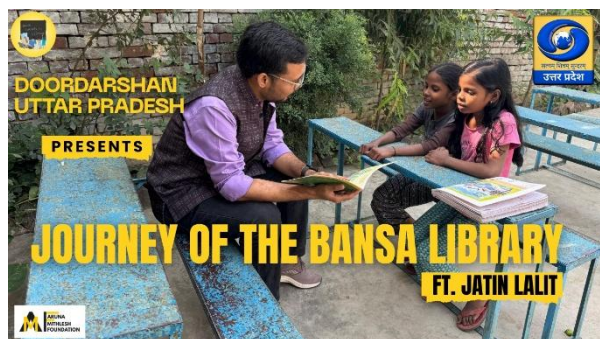
This month, we are excited to share a new milestone with you. For the first time, **we crossed 1,000 book circulations in a single month with 1171 books being circulated in the month of December.** This number represents books that are not just being borrowed, but are finding their way into homes, conversations, and everyday lives. Reaching this milestone during the winter months, when footfall traditionally slows, makes it even more meaningful.

There is another important reason behind this remarkable number- our Chalti Phirti Bansa Library, an initiative of Kutumb Foundation with Aruna Mithlesh Foundation as its knowledge partner. While the physical library in Bansa continues to remain a warm, welcoming space for the community, this initiative has allowed the library to move beyond its walls. Through the Chalti Phirti Bansa Library, we are now reaching villages beyond Bansa, meeting people where they are, and carrying the spirit and strength of the library with us. We are not only taking books into these villages, but everything that a community library stands for, read-alouds, shared discussions, moments of curiosity, and spaces for reflection. Along with physical books, we are also introducing digital resources, creating new ways for members to access information and learning opportunities. With each visit, we are reaching more people, expanding our community, and reinforcing the belief that access to knowledge should not be limited by geography. Every day, the Chalti Phirti Bansa Library helps us take the power of the library a little further.



This month, we also had the opportunity to represent the library at the Justicemakers Mela in Jaipur, a two-day gathering that brought together organisations and individuals working across the social sector. The experience was deeply energising. Being in a space filled with people driven by purpose, passion, and a strong commitment to justice and equity reminded us of the many ways meaningful change is being shaped across the country. Meeting fellow practitioners, listening to their journeys, and exchanging ideas

offered not only learning but also a sense of renewed motivation. The mela gave us time to reflect, and reconnect with why we do the work we do. We returned feeling inspired, refreshed, and reaffirmed in our belief in community-led change, carrying new ideas, perspectives, and energy back to our work at the library.



December also brought a moment of recognition and reflection for our work, as Doordarshan Uttar Pradesh featured Bansa Community Library in a special documentary capturing our journey. The film traces the library's growth through voices from the community, and highlights how access to books, shared learning spaces, and collective effort can create lasting change in rural contexts. For us, this coverage became an opportunity to look back at how far the

community has come together. For those who would like to watch the full documentary and learn more about the people and stories behind the library, click on this link: https://youtu.be/77ShIwvv-5g?si=i7oj4SOnLv_A2HNh

One of the most encouraging shifts we continue to witness is the growing sense of ownership among competitive exam aspirants who use the library. Many of these young people have chosen to stay back in their villages instead of migrating to cities in search of books, resources, or guidance for their aspirations. The library has become that space for them, a place where access, support, and seriousness of purpose coexist.

The Skill Centre at the library has grown in ways that continue to inspire us. What began as a small, informal space, where a few women gathered in their free time to learn and practice Silai–Kadhai, helping one another and sharing skills, has now evolved into a structured and vibrant learning centre. Today, the Skill Centre is supported by a full-time instructor and is accessed regularly by a growing group of girls and women.



Every day, the space is filled with creativity, women experimenting with new designs, learning techniques, and creating pieces that reflect both skill and imagination. Alongside the technical learning, we see something equally powerful taking shape: a strong sense of ownership and growing confidence. Many women are now using these skills to earn, while others are exploring their creativity and possibilities beyond what they had earlier imagined for themselves.

December also brought a moment of pride for us, as the story of Jatin and the inception of Bansa Community Library was featured by Amar Chitra Katha in their new comic series on India's changemakers. Our journey, from a village library to a movement now reaching over a hundred villages, has been translated into illustrated panels and shared in 13 Indian languages, making it accessible to readers across the country. This recognition holds special meaning for us. Comic books play a powerful role in shaping early reading habits, imagination, and curiosity, especially for children encountering books for the first time. To see our story become part of a format that has inspired generations of readers feels a vision slowly becoming a reality.



As the year draws to a close, we are also reaching out to our wider community for support through a books fundraiser aimed at strengthening our libraries across villages in Uttar Pradesh. With growing memberships and an increasing demand for diverse reading material, our shelves are struggling to keep pace. This fundraiser is an effort to bridge that gap, so that children, students, women, and first-generation learners do not have to wait for access to books that can inform, inspire, and expand their worlds. Through this campaign, we hope to add thousands of new books to our libraries and build collections that reflect the questions, aspirations, and lived realities of our readers. For those who would like to learn more about the campaign or contribute in any way, click on this link- <https://give.do/fundraisers/help-us-get-more-books-for-our-free-community-libraries>

December unfolded at a gentler pace, marked by winter days, familiar faces, and a steady sense of togetherness. During the month, we **welcomed 800 visitors to the library** and recorded 1,171 book circulations, reflecting a growing habit of reading within the community. Our collection also grew meaningfully, **with 117 new books added to the shelves**.

We were glad to **welcome 166 new members** this month, **62 children and young adults, 70 adults (including 1 woman and 22 men)**, along with **47 competitive exam aspirants**. Each new member adds to the life of the library, bringing with them curiosity, purpose, and new possibilities for learning and growth.

As the year settled and a new year began, with it began new endeavors, we sit with a sense of gratitude. for the communities that continue to hold this space with us, form the readers who return even on the coldest days. For the warmth found in shared spaces, for stories that travelled far beyond pages, and for a community that continues to grow in ways both seen and unseen. We close the year gently, holding onto the belief that every book placed in a reader's hands carries the possibility of something new. With that spirit, we look ahead to the new year, ready to continue this journey together.

We also express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey from near and far. This journey has never been ours alone. It has been built collectively, through a shared belief in the power of books and community.

Read and bloom where you are planted!

Here's to the Free Library Movement, and to the endless stories still waiting to be told.

Niharika & Jatin

10th January 2026

Address: Village Bansa, District Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh.

Order books for our members, [Amazon Wishlist](#)

Write to us: contact@bansacommunitylibrary.org

Website: www.arunamithleshfoundation.org

