



The Publishers, Writers and Illustrators Compact with the Free Library Network

Whereas the people of India and in surrounding regions have suffered from and struggled against a lengthy, historic exclusion from books and reading,

Whereas free libraries ensure inclusion for all those who are excluded from reading for historic, social, political and economic reasons,

Whereas free libraries compensate for an education system that emphasises limited reading skills and reading only for the purpose of studying,

Whereas free libraries allow for books and reading as acts of independent, critical and imaginative thinking, introspection and lifelong learning,

Whereas free libraries are crucial to creating a vibrant ecosystem of support for those who cannot singly and alone find their way to reading,

Whereas free libraries support community building, socialisation, increased empathy, increased participation in democratic processes, and

Whereas publishers, writers and illustrators within India and in the South Asian region are deeply committed to widening people's access to books,

Whereas publishers, writers and illustrators have a stake in growing readership and in growing literature,

Whereas publishers, writers and illustrators acknowledge that without a viable public library system a significant majority of potential readers cannot access books through existing distribution channels such as schools and bookshops,

Whereas publishers, writers and illustrators welcome such gains from increased participation in readership as increased empathy, socialisation, critical and imaginative thinking, community building, new voices in literature and strengthened democracy

Therefore, the Free Library Network (FLN) and Publishers, Writers and Illustrators are resolved to work together to build a free library movement which in the time to come will create the demand and meet the demand for a public library system that serves all people with free of cost access to books and reading.



To this end The Free Libraries Network-FLN pledges to:

- Create hundreds and thousands of libraries that are free of cost to members,
- To welcome all people to library membership, irrespective of caste, class, creed, gender and other divisions,
- To promote a pedagogy of reading for the pleasure of thinking,
- To cultivate community ownership of libraries
- To document, assess, analyse and improve upon practices that are successful at inviting non readers and first generation readers to readership
- To maintain standards such as a high ratio of books to members that are consistent with standards set by international bodies that govern library practices
- To develop high standards and library practices that are promoted across the subcontinent so that libraries and library services are successful at attracting and retaining people in readership
- To promote writing alongside of reading so that our literature is enriched by new and previously excluded voices
- To advocate for an excellent public library system that serves all people with free of cost access to books and reading

To this end publishers, writers and illustrators pledge to:

- Provide a list of free of cost books annually to the Free Libraries Network, which will in turn distribute those books which are of relevance and in demand to member libraries.
- Provide libraries in FLN with significant discounts on sticker price when FLN purchases books in bulk. It is expected that publishers who are already providing low cost and subsidised books to the public may not be able to offer greater discounts.
- Develop an industry standard for the discount or purchase price publishers offer free libraries. This industry standard should be driven by those who are willing to offer the greatest discount. This discount should be greater than that offered to other buyers. This industry standard can be governed by the understanding that free libraries are strategically significant partners in growing the market for books.



- Provide FLN and FLN member libraries with funds or in-kind donation to operate book distribution, reading programs and creative writing and illustration programs
- Donate their time and participate in Meet the Author events, writing, illustration and other workshops
- Stand with free libraries to advocate for free of cost access to books through the creation of an excellent public library system