

An online steal for booklovers

Instead of shelling out big bucks for a book you have been waiting to lay your hands on or stacking up old books in a box, or even worse, selling them to the raddi wallah, you can now surf BuySellOldBooks.com

A brainchild of Alekh Aggarwal, 25, the site just made buying, selling, exchanging and lending books easier with its endless list of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, literature, maths, science, economics and medicine books.

Just over two months old, this virtual version of the popular Sunday market for books at Daryanganj in Old Delhi has caught on with Netizens and has already chalked up 4,000 members.

'It's mostly students and middle-aged people who surf this site, hunting for books. And since we don't charge anything extra, it's becoming very popular,' Aggarwal, an NRI from Australia, told IANS over telephone from Lucknow.

Those who want to sell, lend or exchange books need to open an account and list the books. Interested buyers can see the list on the site and get in touch with one another by mailing the owner through the website.

There are no online transactions. The buyers and sellers get together at a place of their choice, after being put in touch by the web site.

'We get hundreds of mails every day. A man got in touch with us because he wanted to sell his grandfather's books that are 100 years old! Then there are others who want to either lend, exchange or sell their art books, antique and poetry books that are more than five decades old,' Aggarwal said.

And if that's not enough, there are a few who are ready to even give up their books for free! 'The Suitable Boy' by Vikram Seth is listed in the site as free.

Popular fiction like 'Da Vinci Code' by Dan Brown and 'Eleven Minutes' by Paulo Coelho are priced as low as Rs.100 while poetry collections by William Wordsworth, Robert Browning and P.B. Shelly are available for Rs.50.

Academic books like question bank for Pre Medical Test (PMT) is priced at only Rs.25. Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe' and R.L. Stevenson's 'Treasure Island' are priced at Rs.30. Some like Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Glimpses of World History' are up for exchange.

'During one of my trips to India, I visited the Old Delhi book market and realised that there's so much of wastage of books here,' Aggarwal said.

'Instead of throwing away books that you had once cherished, it's so much better to trade them. That's when the idea of creating this site came up,' said the software engineer who developed, launched and marketed this site with help from his father, who is also an engineer in Australia.

'There's no site of this kind in Australia and it's unique in India as well. I am sure I can sustain this site without charging anything for the next five years,' Aggarwal claimed.

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