

A new chapter

Meeta Ramnani visits the revamped BookGanga International Book Service and lists the changes that have taken shape in it

The revamped BookGanga International Book Service, with its orange grills and brown book shelves is the talk of the town. In its erstwhile avatar — known as simply the International Book Service (IBS), its owner Upendra Dixit would ensure that visitors had an easy access to rare and most prized copies and occasional discussions on writers and their works. A stellar presence on the Pune's literary scene since the 1930s, the bookstore was going to tread the path of the Manneys (Camp), BookWorld (F C Road), Twistntale (Aundh) and Landmark (Camp) and was about to down its shutters. But Mandar Joglekar, Founder and CEO, BookGanga.com and his sister Supriya Limaye, Director, Finance, BookGanga.com, stepped in and gave it a new look.

"We have reopened this book store purely out of passion," says Limaye, who is currently taking care of the day-to-day business at IBS.

The brother-sister duo who originally hail from Sakharpa, in Ratnagiri, came to Pune for their higher studies and took up part-time jobs in Deccan Gymkhana area. That explains their connection with the IBS, which is a landmark in the Deccan Gymkhana neighbourhood. They learnt that the septuagenarian Dixit was in the process of closing down the store and approached him with a plan, which was later finalised.

The book store, in its new avatar, has a collection of 40,000 books in five languages — English, Hindi, Marathi, Sanskrit and Gujarati, on a range of topics like philosophy, astrology, cooking, children's books, story books and self help books.

"There are more than 1 lakh books on the BookGanga website, which will be made available at the store if anybody asks for them. Books not stocked or listed on the website too would be sourced," says Limaye.

If the book lovers are looking for a particular book, they have to

enter the title in a laptop which will throw up the details of the rack and the shelf number where the book has been kept. Customers can make use of two laptops kept near the reception.

The new team has also made a few changes to the store. The first floor has been designated for customers to read books and sip coffee. At least 50 people can sit and read books in this space.

"There is one boy of Std V who comes regularly and sits in the reading area for more than four hours," informs Supriya.

The store is also open to conducting author signing and book reading sessions. During the vacations, they will be conducting sessions for children in which older kids (those studying in Std VII and VIII) will read from books for the younger ones.

In this world of e-commerce, this physical store offers books with a lot of warmth and respect for customers.



**ST READER
SERVICE**

■ BookGanga International Book Service, near Deccan Gymkhana, Shivaji Nagar is open from 7am to 9pm on all days

**FRESH
LOOK:**
Supriya
Limaye at
BookGanga
International
Book Service

Pic: Parag Jadhav