

Gujarat: Hanging library gets primary students hooked to reading

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RAJKOT: Innovation, if fuelled by a purpose, becomes a treasure for the society. This has been proved amply by this innovative teacher in Amreli district's Nigala primary school, Prakash Solanki, whose efforts were driven by a noble purpose - of inculcating reading habit in students.

Unhappy at finding very few takers for books in the school's library, Solanki thought of changing things, and how! He took the books out of the cupboards and onto the branches of a neem tree on the school campus.

Solanki's hanging library served dual purpose - he made books appear more interesting for the young eyes and also convert curiosity into readership. He hung 25 chosen books from the branches. This sparked interest among the students who soon started plucking knowledge straight from the tree and also began 'savouring' the fruits of their labour. Solanki's idea turned into a trend and the reading ratio among students of Class 6 to 8 increased significantly. Solanki himself chooses the books - from general knowledge, autobiography, literature, to other stories - which he changes every Monday. "We have 3,000 books in our library but nobody was interested in opening even one. Now, even students of Class 3 to 5 have started reading books!" said Solanki while talking about his experimentation with reading.

Solanki's efforts also won him the national award given by Sri Aurobindo Society for zero investment initiatives for educational

innovation. It was handed over by MHRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyalji in New Delhi in August 2019.