

Making India's big dreamer's dreams come true - ANDHRA PRADESH - The Hindu

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Srijan Pal Singh is realising his mentor A.P. J. Abdul Kalam's dream with his Nukkad Library network

Imagine a scene where educated youngsters spread knowledge giving audio-visual presentations on their laptops to underprivileged children in rural areas, that too at their street corners.

India's 'Missile Man' and former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was a dreamer and a doer.

To fulfill his dream, his close lieutenant Srijan Pal Singh, an IIM-Ahmedabad gold medallist, is in the process of appointing 150 young graduates as Kalam Library Ambassadors. They will kick off Nukkad (street corner) Libraries on July 27, the third death anniversary of Dr. Kalam to bring libraries to the un-reached millions.

As part of this, youth in the age of 18-25 will get certificates from Kalam Centre - founded by Mr. Singh after the demise of his mentor to propagate his ideals - for conducting 100 hours of classes.

Pupil and mentor

It all started with an invitation from the former President, with whom Mr. Singh came in contact during Dr. Kalam's lectures at IIM-Ahmedabad as a visiting professor where the former was a student. Later, he joined as Officer-on-Special Duty and Advisor to the President.

Before entering the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Mr. Singh had a stint at Boston Consulting Group, and headed a project on governance and transparency in public distribution system in Maoist-affected areas of Odisha's undivided Koraput district. Later, he became a full-time follower and associate of late Dr. Kalam, who gave a call to children to dream the dreams to build a resurgent India.

A popular social entrepreneur, Mr. Singh co-authored with Kalam best-sellers, Target 3 Billion, Reignited: Scientific Pathways to a Brighter Future and Advantage India: For Challenge to Opportunity. During his association with Kalam from 2009 to 2015, he was instrumental in popularising 'What Can I Give Mission' and, Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA).

A knowledge mission

"As part of PURA we want to start Nukkad Libraries as a humble beginning and slowly make it into a big movement. It is a knowledge mission to promote the habit of reading

among all by setting up libraries across India, on an average one for each km by spending Rs. 7 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh,” he told The Hindu .

Funded by a network of well-wishers and corporates, Nukkad Library is a mobile library with volunteers educating rural children on various subjects like history, constitution, values etc. Kalam Centre is also encouraging families to have home libraries with a minimum of five books.

“In the digital age, the habit of reading is fading away. Hence, there is a need to promote it in a big way among all sections,” Mr. Singh points out.

He was here to inaugurate a Kalam Library set up by Kalam Centre and its partner Startup Accelerator India (SAI), set up by Singapore-based Govin Capital to promote startup culture, at the Sunrise Incubation Hub, Rushikonda.

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/making-indias-big-dreamers-dreams-come-true/article24357210.ece>