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A mini-empire of books

K. Balasubramaniyan has converted his home into a temple for printed matter

NAHLA NAINAR

It's not just the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves spread across 13 rooms at this Thillai Nagar residence that hold your attention: it's the love that lights up K. Balasubramaniyan's eyes when he talks about his most treasured possessions.

That would be over a lakh of books on topics ranging from engineering, personality development and yoga to environment and climate science. "All the indexing is here," says Mr. Balasubramaniyan, tapping his temples. "I have arranged these volumes to suit my style of research."

Like his library, Mr. Balasubramaniyan's curriculum vitae spans many disciplines, and is best defined by what he terms as 'turning points.' Starting out as a mechanical engineer who specialised in industrial marketing from 1985-91, to a much-in-demand management studies lecturer (handling 42 papers for 35 colleges at his peak), and then corporate trainer and author-publisher of self-development books in English, Tamil and Hindi, Mr. Balasubrama-

niyan clearly doesn't believe in sitting still for too long.

Completely booked

None of it would have taken off without the support of his family, he says, who had to allow his 'addiction' of collecting books that initially depleted his earnings. "When you cross the 100-book mark, people already start questioning you," he says, "they often say 'why bother with books, everything is online.' But nothing can compare to the power of a physical book."

Mr. Balasubramaniyan is not just a collector,

but also a voracious reader, who subscribes to 80 magazines in a month and receives at least 200 books every 10 days from his network of scouts across cities, that he archives according to his requirements.

Continued on Page 5



BOOKWORM K. Balasubramaniyan with some of the books in his vast personal collection. PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

TIRUCHIRAPALLI
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COVER STORY METROPLUS

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