

## Public Library Services in Arunachal Pradesh

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Describes in brief the land and its people. Describes the various developments in historical perspective, leading to the present situation. Discusses administration, financial resources, collection, staff, services of the State Central Library. Briefly describes district, subdivisional, block and circle libraries. Concludes that the public libraries have a long way to go before being able to achieve an integrated network of library services.

### 0 INTRODUCTION

The commencement of administration in this territory, which is now known as Arunachal Pradesh may be traced back to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department Notification of 1914, which provided that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation, 1880 would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Singphos, Khamptis, Bhutias, Akas and Nishis. Consequently, the three frontier tracts collectively known as North East Frontier Tracts came into existence under:

- (1) the Central and Eastern Section,
- (2) the Western Section, and
- (3) the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract.

In the year 1919, the Central and Eastern sections were renamed as the Sadiya Frontier Tract. The western section was renamed as the Balipara Frontier Tract. There was no change in the name of Lakhimpur Frontier Tract. In the year 1937, the said frontier tracts came to be known as the

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Excluded Areas in the Province of Assam, under the Government of India (excluded and partially excluded areas) Order, 1936 issued under the provisions of Section 91(1) of the Government of India Act, 1935. In the year 1943 a new administrative unit known as Tirap Frontier Tract was formed. The territory was collectively known as North East Frontier Agency, popularly known as NEFA till 1971.

When the Constitution of India came into force the areas were included in *Table B* paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution which provided for the tribal areas within the State of Assam. On 21st January, 1972, the territory was constituted into the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh under the Provisions of Section 7 of the North East Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 and ceases to be a tribal area within the State of Assam. On 20th February, 1987 Arunachal Pradesh became a full fledged state of the Indian Union by virtue of the state of Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986 (Act 69 of 1986).

Arunachal Pradesh is a border state covering an area of 83,734 sq km with a population of 8,56,392 (1991 census) and density of 10 persons per sq km. Literacy rate is 32.87%. The state has an international border with Bhutan in the West, China in north and north-east and Burma in the east. The total length of international border is about 1,628 km. It has inter-state borders with Nagaland in south-east and with Assam in the south.

The terrain and other physiographic features of the state are such that still many areas are yet to be linked by road. The only means to reach these places is either by foot or helicopter services.

The state is mostly inhabited by tribes. There are some 25 major tribes with various sub-tribes residing in the territory. Some of the major tribes composing the population are: Monpa, Shefdukpen, Aka, Khowa, Miji, Bangni and Sulungs of undivided Siang district; Nishi, Apatani Hill-Miri, Tagin, Sulung and Mikir of undivided Siang district, and Mishmi, Khampti, Siangpho and Lisu of Tirap district.

The state has at present eleven districts (*Table 1*).

Administrative set up of districts is further subdivided into the following units.

|              |   |       |
|--------------|---|-------|
| Sub-division |   | 28    |
| Blocks       |   | 100   |
| Circles      |   | 104   |
| Villages     | 2 | 3,257 |

Table 1  
Districtwise Population

| District          | Population (1991 Census) |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Tawang          | 27,574                   |
| 2 West Kameng     | 56,402                   |
| 3 East Kameng     | 50,238                   |
| 4 Lower Subansari | 154,591                  |
| 5 Upper Subansari | 49,163                   |
| 6 West Siang      | 89,778                   |
| 7 East Siang      | 99,985                   |
| 8 Dibang Valley   | 42,928                   |
| 9 Lohit           | 109,632                  |
| 10 Tirap          | 185,210                  |
| 11 Changlang      | 92,891                   |

## 1 DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The year 1965 to 1968 marked the beginning of library service in Arunachal Pradesh (formerly NEFA). During this period, all the district headquarters and Pasighat were provided with a library each, and at the top a Central Library was established at Shillong. A system of relay services was also introduced to facilitate despatch of books on temporary loan basis to various administrative outposts.

The library services were further extended to the sub-divisional headquarters at Daporijo and Roing in 1960-1962. A library was also opened at Changlang in the Tirap District in 1966. Later, in the same year, libraries were established at Tawang and Seppa in the Kameng district. During 1967-68, two more libraries were set up, one at Koloriang in the Subsansiri district and the other at Tuting in the Siang District. Eventually, yet another came into existence in the remote administrative centre at Mechuka.

When in 1978, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh was shifted from Shillong to Itanagar, Secretariat Library was converted into the State Central Library and a qualified librarian was appointed to manage its affairs. With the passage of time and increasing demand for library service, Sub-divisional and Block libraries and Circle libraries sprang up.

During the eighties when 6 more districts were created for administrative convenience, number of district libraries also increased simultaneously. The growth of libraries is shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2

*Growth of Libraries*

| Year         | State<br>Central<br>Library | Dist.<br>Library | Sub-Div.<br>Library | Block<br>Library | Circle<br>Library | Branch<br>Library | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Upto<br>1980 | 1                           | 5                | 2                   | 3                | 5                 | 2                 | 18    |
| 1984         |                             | 5                |                     | 7                |                   |                   | 12    |
| 1985         |                             |                  |                     | 3                | 2                 | 1                 | 6     |
| 1987         |                             |                  |                     | 1                | 4                 |                   | 5     |
| 1988         |                             | 1                |                     |                  | 4                 |                   | 5     |
| 1989         |                             |                  |                     | 3                | 8                 |                   | 11    |
| 1990         |                             |                  |                     | 3                | 1                 |                   | 4     |
|              | 1                           | 11               | 2                   | 20               | 24                | 3                 | 61    |

Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation is also playing a very crucial role in developing Public Library Service in Arunachal Pradesh. From 1976 public libraries of Arunachal Pradesh are getting books on matching assistance system.

At present, Government of Arunachal Pradesh has engaged one Minister to look after Public Libraries, Research and Labour Department.

Thus, it is apparent that all 11 district headquarters are covered by library services. On the other hand, only two subdivisions out of 28 are covered by library services. Similarly, 20 blocks out of 100 and 24 circles out of 104 administrative circles are covered by library services. It means that the state has yet to go a long way in providing library services to the people. Villages are yet to be covered.

## 2 STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY

State Central Library of Arunachal Pradesh is situated at Itanagar in the Secretariat complex and housed in two office blocks. It has no building of its own. There are three branch libraries of the State Central Library located at Indira Gandhi Park, Itanagar, Naharlagun and Soochnanagar.

### 21 ADMINISTRATION

There is a State Library Committee at the apex to advise government in all matters relating to libraries. The Chief Secretary is the Chairman of the Committee. Secretary Education, being the administrative controller of the public library system, acts as a permanent member of the Committee.

Dy. Chief Librarian is the convener of the Committee. The State Central Library is also functioning according to the directives of this Library Committee.

## 22 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The main source of finance is government grant. All grants are received by the State Central Library and, later on, it allocates to different libraries. Table 3 shows the expenditure on public library services in the state for 3 years.

Taking the figures of expenditure for 1989-90 and population data for 1981, it can be safely derived that the per capita expenditure comes to Rs 3.46.

Table 3

### Expenditure on Public Libraries

|                 | 1987-88  |          | 1988-89 |          | 1989-90  |          |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
|                 | Plan     | Non-plan | Plan    | Non-plan | Plan     | Non-plan |
| Salary          | 204,875  | 331,617  | 238,317 | 448,554  | 398,914  | 357,004  |
| Wages           | 94,212   | 109,112  | 94,060  | 36,890   | 155,630  | 126,509  |
| Travel expenses | 21,691   | 18,886   | 22,014  | 16,131   | 16,560   | 15,650   |
| *Office         | 149,937  | 169,022  | 308,649 | 228,562  | 179,090  | 153,903  |
| *Other expenses | 667,836  | 252,141  | 378,398 | 157,240  | 556,900  | 225,925  |
| Total           | 1138,551 | 884,778  | 1041338 | 981,377  | 1307,094 | 878,991  |

\*Office expenses include: Stationeries, machines, vehicles, maintenance, furniture etc.

\*Other expenses include: Periodicals and binding.

## 23 COLLECTION

Table 4 shows the growth of the collection of the State Central Library according to language.

Table 4

### Scatter of Collection according to Language

| Sl No | Language  | Year   |        |        |        |
|-------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|       |           | 1987   | 1988   | 1989   | 1990   |
| 1     | English   | 39,846 | 40,496 | 41,246 | 41,796 |
| 2     | Hindi     | 2,000  | 2,100  | 2,200  | 2,305  |
| 3     | Assamese  | 2,000  | 2,105  | 2,200  | 2,300  |
| 4     | Bengali   | 2,600  | 2,704  | 2,800  | 2,850  |
| 5     | Malayalam | 554    | 604    | 658    | 704    |
|       | Total     | 47,000 | 48,009 | 49,004 | 49,955 |

A Study of the table reveals that the average growth is of 985 volumes per year.

## 24 STAFF

The staffing pattern of the State Central Library consists of the following posts

|   |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|----|
| 1 | Chief Librarians          | 1  |
| 2 | Deputy Chief Librarian    | 1  |
| 3 | Assistant Chief Librarian | 2  |
| 4 | District Librarian (HQ)   | 2  |
| 5 | Technical Assistant       | 2  |
| 6 | Library Assistant         | 2  |
| 7 | Counsellor Assistant      | 7  |
| 8 | Catalogue Assistant       | 1  |
| 9 | Ministerial Staff         | 11 |

## 25 SERVICES

Excepting mobile library service, other services provided by the State Central Library are mostly confined to lending and consultation facilities with the library

## 3 DISTRICT LIBRARIES

There are eleven district libraries in the state. They have more or less same pattern of administration, financial assistance, collection, building and services. The data relating to district libraries presented in *Table 5* reflects upon the phenomenon of uniform pattern.

## 4 SUBDIVISIONAL LIBRARIES

At present, there are two sub-divisional libraries located at Tuting (West Siang District) and Roing (Dibang Valley District). These libraries work under the control of ADC (Additional Deputy Commissioner) and are looked after by a part-time Librarian.

## 5 BLOCK LIBRARIES

Out of 100 blocks, so far only 20 blocks are covered by library service. Seven block libraries are having regular librarians, whereas others are still managed by part-time librarians. Government grant received is about Rs 10,000.00 per year. Service provided is only lending.

Table 5

*Districtwise Data*

| Name of the library                       | Administrative Control    | Financial Assistance  | Services | Collection in 1989-90 | Staff in 1989-90 |
|---|---------------------------|---|----------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Tawang District Library, Tawang        | Under Deputy Commissioner | State Central Library allocates funds controlled by the DC. In 1989-90 it was Rs 89,000 | Lending  | 9,200                 | 2                |
| 2. West Kamenga District Library, Bomdila | District Librarian        | -do-  | -do-     | 13,523                | 2                |
| 3. East Kamenga District Library, Seppa   | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 9,197                 | 2                |
| 4. Lower Subansiri District Library Ziro  | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 12,600                | 2                |
| 5. Upper Subansiri District Library, Ziro | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 11,600                | 2                |
| 6. West Siang District Library, Along     | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 14,896                | 3                |
| 7. East Siang District Library, Pasighat  | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 13,346                | 3                |
| 8. Dibang Valley District Library, Anini  | -do-                      | -do-  | -do-     | 13,625                | 3                |

Table 5 (Contd.)

| Name of the library                      | Administrative Control    | Financial Assistance   | Services | Collection in 1989-90 | Staff in 1989-90 |
|--|---------------------------|--|----------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 9 Lohit District Library, Tezu           | Under Deputy Commissioner | State Central Library allocates funds controlled by the DC. In 1989-90 it was Rs. 89,000 | Lending  | 17,655                | 2                |
| 10 Tirap District Library, Khonsa        | -do-                      | -do-   | -do-     | 13,550                | 2                |
| 11 Changlang District Library, Changlang | -do-                      | -do-   | -do-     | 11,171                | 2                |

## 6 CIRCLE LIBRARIES

Out of 104 circles, 24 circles have been provided circle libraries at their headquarters. These libraries are being looked after by part-time librarians under the control of Circle Officers. Government grant received is about Rs 10,000.00 per year. Lending is the only service provided.

## 7 CONCLUSION

To conclude it can be said that the framework of public library service developed in the state has to go a long way before being able to achieve an integrated network of library services. Rural areas are yet to be covered by library services. This is crucial in a border state like Arunachal Pradesh. New innovative services to reach the inaccessible areas are the needs of the hour. The Librarian of the State Central Library has to play a pivotal role in providing leadership. Moreover, library legislation is necessary to create, and maintain library services on sound footings.