

# **Provision of financial sources in Public Libraries Acts in the states of North East India**

**Mitali Barman<sup>1</sup>; Prof. Narendra Lahkar<sup>2</sup>**

Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Gauhati University, Guwahati, India<sup>1</sup>; Former Prof. & Head, Department of Library and Information Science, Gauhati University, Guwahati, India<sup>2</sup>

*mitalibarmanbora@gmail.com; nlahkar@gmail.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Legislation on public libraries helps attain state-mandated library services, financial support, resource and network sharing among libraries, and administrative effectiveness. An attempt is made in the paper to study different aspects of the Public Libraries Act and to explore the provision of different sources of library funds in the three states of North East India where the Public Libraries Act is enacted. The paper is based on data collected from primary and secondary sources like journals, books, web sources and other relevant publications. The study has found that implementing the Public Libraries Act is a neglected part of these states. Making adequate provision for fund collection in the library legislations of the northeastern states is a powerful means for its growth and extension of services.*

**KEYWORDS:** Public Library, Legislation, Public Libraries Act, Library Fund, North East India.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

An educated, socially developed, and culturally active civilization is largely determined by the existence of a robust, productive, and well-maintained public library system. The shifting of societal perspectives has caused the public library system to change dramatically over time which has recently taken new dimensions. One of the main components of the current public library system is the library legislation. The library legislation for the establishment and orderly functioning of a network of public libraries is, in any case, an essential condition for the growth of the public library movement [1]. The Public Libraries Act, which empowered local governments to establish the idea of free public libraries, was largely drafted by the United Kingdom Parliament. According to UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, public libraries should be established under the clear mandate of law, so framed as to ensure the national provision of public library service [2].

Depending on the variation of physical characteristics of India, the nation has been split up into six main regions: North India, North East India, South India, Western India, East India and Central India. All these regions include 28 states and 8 Union Territories of India [3]. Of them, library legislation has been passed by 20 states and Union Territories. North East India is comprised of 8 states namely; Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. During British rule, in 1945, the first Libraries Act of India was passed in Kolhapur Princely State, which is now in Maharashtra. On March 24, 1948, the Madras Public Libraries Act was passed in India, becoming the first Public Libraries Act among the full-fledged states following independence.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the study are -

- ✓ to explore the developmental history of Public Libraries Acts enacted states of North East India.
- ✓ to investigate the sources of library funds in Public Libraries Acts in North East.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The information gathered from primary and secondary sources serves as the foundation for the investigation. The raw copies of Public Libraries Acts, which are published in each of the North East Indian state's government gazetteers, have been the sources of primary data for extensive analysis. Additionally, a literature search was conducted, looking through a variety of sources including journals, books, proceedings, websites, and other pertinent publications.

## **4. BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACTS OF THE THREE STATES OF NORTH EAST INDIA**

Library legislation is an essential need for the provision of sound, integrated and systematic development of a public library network in a region [4]. As previously noted, three states of North East India, namely, Manipur, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh have passed library laws in 1988, 1993, and 2009 respectively. These three Public Libraries Acts, their corresponding provisions regarding financial sources in the Public libraries Acts of the states mentioned, as well as their implementation, have been briefly discussed here.

### **4.1 Manipur Public Libraries Act, 1988**

Dr. H. Atul Chandra Singh, a philanthropist, social reformer, and all-around multifaceted person of the 20th century, initiated the library movement in Manipur on April 17, 1927, by founding the Manipur Club and providing library facilities. The nature of the library movement, which was started in Bengal in 1925 by the Bengal Library Association, with Vishwakavi Rabindranath Tagore serving as president, also greatly inspired Dr. Singh. On January 1st, 1931, the Manipur Club changed its name to the Manipur Club Library. On April 19, 1933, the library's name was once more changed to Juvabati Memorial Library. With the founding of the District Library and Children Library-cum-Museum In 1958, the government took a bit of a late lead in the development of public libraries in the state. The Department of Art and Culture oversaw the general management of matters about public libraries. The Manipur Library Association (MALA) was founded on May 24, 1987, marking the beginning of the rapid development of the library movement in Manipur. On behalf of MALA, the State's Minister of Education, Shri Y.

Erabot Singh took the initiative to move a Private Member's Resolution on the Manipur Public Libraries Bill to the House floor on July 26, 1988. Dr. M. Narar Singh, MLA made every effort to add the Bill to the agenda of the House for discussion in his capacity as a member of the Business Advisory Committee of the Assembly. The Manipur Public Libraries Bill was approved by the Assembly on August 1, 1988, and enacted as Manipur Bill No.14 in the same year. When the Bill was forwarded to the President of India for the required approval, it was the subject of numerous controversies, which were later addressed. On June 9, In 1993, Dr. Sankar Dayal Sharma, the Indian president at that time, signed the Bill into law after much work by the Manipur Library Association (MALA). As a result, the state might overtake West Bengal to become the sixth state in the nation to have such an Act. Since October 1, 2002, when Dr. M. Nara Singh was the state's Minister of Art and Culture, the same has been partially implemented.

#### **4.2 Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993**

The Mizoram Public Libraries Bill, passed by the State Legislative Assembly in 1993, established State, District, Sub-Divisional, and Village Libraries. The Department of Art and Culture took over management of Mizoram's library service in 1989, having previously been under the Director of Education until 1988. The "Aijal District Library," the first public library in Mizoram, opened its doors in Aizawl in 1969. In 1974, the State Library of Mizoram was founded. Established on October 23, 1987, the Mizoram Library Association (MLA) has been actively involved in advancing and growing library services throughout the state.

The Mizoram Public Libraries Bill was drafted in 1980 and sent to the government for consideration as legislation. However, for a variety of reasons, it was not introduced in the Assembly, and when it was submitted again in 1988, the Law Department repeatedly returned the draft for necessary revisions. The former Education Minister, Dr. H. Thansang, took the initiative to introduce the Bill in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in 1992. It was then referred to the Select Committee. Following the Select Committee's revisions, the Education Minister presented the Bill to the Assembly in 1993. On January 6, 1993, the Assembly approved the Bill, which became "The Mizoram Public Libraries Legislation, 1993," and on March 5, 1993, the government gave its assent.

#### **4.3 Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act, 2009**

Arunachal Pradesh (formerly known as NEFA) began offering library services in 1956 and continued until 1968. District Research Officers (DROs) oversaw the opening of libraries during this time in all district headquarters, including Pashighat. The state government started the initiative to develop libraries in the state during the 7th Five Year Plan period and several libraries were established at the Block and Circle levels. Arunachal Pradesh's State Central Library was founded in 1956 in Itanagar, the state capital. The Directorate of Public Libraries, part of the Arunachal Pradesh government, is in charge of the state's public libraries. The Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh in 2009.

### **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTS**

Each of the three states has experienced the Act's implementation differently. Through a pilot study involving the heads of the state departments, it was determined that Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh has partially implemented the Public Libraries Acts in the states. A significant advancement has been made in Mizoram with the passing of

library legislation. Manipur has not submitted any information about how the Library Act is being applied in the state for the development of the public library system. However, Manipur's implementation began in part on October 1, 2002, when Dr. M. Nara Singh was the state's minister of Art and Culture. Manipur has failed to bring any change even after passing the Library Act in the state [5].

## **6. PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SOURCES IN PUBLIC LIBRARY ACTS IN THE STATES OF NORTH EAST INDIA**

To meet the day-to-day expenditure and maintenance of libraries every library authority should maintain the library fund at state and district levels. Library cess is regarded as an important source of fund generation. Library cess is also one of the important tools or measures to increase the library fund for proper functioning and implementation of the Libraries Act. Besides cess, the Public Libraries Acts of India have also made some other provisions for financial sources for the funding of the public library system. There is no provision for library cess in all the enacted Acts of North East India.

### **6.1 Other sources of library fund**

In Arunachal Pradesh, the main source of public library finance is the government fund which is associated with the annual budget of public libraries in the state. Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act has the provision for the formation of a Public Library Development Fund which will be comprised of any contribution or special grant from the central government like the Eleventh Finance Commission or Twelfth Finance Commission, etc. Moreover, contribution of gifts from the public or any other agencies are also regarded as the source of public library development fund. Again, in Manipur Public Libraries Act, the main sources of library funds are contributions, gifts and income from endowments made to the District Library Authority, any special grants from state government and collection made by the District Library Authority.

Again, the Mizoram Public Libraries Act has not explained the financial sources of the public libraries. The Act only considers the grant in aid to recognize village libraries. This Act only considers the grant received from Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) as a financial source.

Mizoram Public Libraries Act and Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act have not mentioned clearly about the authority of the library fund, whereas Manipur Public Libraries Act bestowed this power to the Local Library Authority. The success of the Public Libraries Act depending upon the proper utilization of the library funds which are collected from the different sources of the state. In the studied Public Libraries Acts, Mizoram Public Libraries Act and Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act has only explained the utilization of library fund. Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act explains it under the heads of 'Modernization and Development of Public Libraries' while Mizoram Public Libraries Act discuss it under the head of allowances and honorarium admissible to the members of authority and compensatory allowances.

From the study, it is found that Mizoram Public Libraries Act has laid down some criterion or eligibility for selecting the public library to receive the grant-in-aid which includes a functioning period of the library not less than

12 months, organized and maintained by a reliable body, cash or any other kind of method is used to accord the sanction grant, training on library techniques through workshops or seminars and timely report submission.

Proper maintenance of accounts is another essential part in a Library Act. Every Local Library Authority or State Library Authority must have a provision for the maintenance of accounts. In the studied Acts, there is no provision for accounts. Manipur Public Libraries Act and Mizoram Public Libraries Act gives information about the maintenance of accounts while Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act has not given any clause about the maintenance of accounts. Manipur Public Libraries Act opens the account for inspection and audit but Mizoram Public Libraries Act does not mention any inspection and audit of the fund. Moreover, regarding the audited report submitting agency, Manipur Public Libraries Act and Mizoram Public Libraries Act are not mentioned in the Acts.

## **CONCLUSION**

The main advantage of levying a cess is that it yields a sizeable amount which steadily increases from year to year and is combined with the other sources of income indicated in the various Acts, assuring reasonably adequate financial resources for public library development. As regards, the non-cess levying states, their main financial stay is the government grant. However, the quantum of the government grant has not been specified in some cases and this stands in the way of any long-term public library development plan being formulated and implemented. But in the Indian situation, the amount of donations and endowments will be scarce.

All the three Acts of North Eastern states have not made any provision of cess for the collection of library funds. From the social welfare point of view, non-levying cess is good but to run the public library system, cess is regarded as one of the powerful components of fund collection. All three Acts mainly depended on the financial grants from the state and central government but this depended on the government's will. Arunachal Pradesh has taken a good step by associating the library fund with its annual library budget. All the three Acts need to amend this financial clause for the fund collection. They have to impose at least a small amount of cess for fixed fund collection which will be helpful to run the public library system of the state.

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