

An Exploratory study of Status of Public Libraries in Tripura State

Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha¹, Surendra Kumar Pal², Saumen Datta³

¹Associate Professor & Head DLIS, Assam University (A Central University), Silchar-788 011, Assam

²Assistant Librarian, Central Library, Tripura University, Agartala-799022, India

³Sr. Librarian, Tripura Public Service Commission, Agartala-799001, India

Abstract - This paper is exploring the public libraries system in the Tripura State of India. The public libraries in Tripura State are not in sufficient no against the State population i.e. 3,671,032. So there is need to open more public libraries in the state. According to IFLA (4) standard there should be one library for every 3000 people. The total population of Tripura state is 3671032 as per census 2011. As there is only 25 Public Libraries in Tripura, so there is need of 1224 more public library to be open to provide the information to all Tripura people.

Key Words: Public Libraries, Public Libraries in Tripura, Types of Public Libraries in Tripura.

1.INTRODUCTION

Public libraries strive to be one of the most popular cultural institution and a few civic or communal spaces that can be used gratuitously by the people for education and enjoyment. The rationalism underlying the institution of public library is to pave the way for greater accessibility to information for every section of people living in a community regardless of their age, gender, education and socio-economic milieu. According to (Mantel, 2011; Prentice, 2011) public libraries in general are the crucial resources during the difficult economic times for job seeking and training, but are also one of the first public resources to face the budget cuts. Moreover, public libraries have a positive impact on children's performance in school and on the neighborhood as a place of stability and safety (Diamond, 2010). These are no longer a collection of information resources and services but are public places of importance that contribute to the social capital of their communities (Hillenbrand, 2005; Johnson, 2010). However, (Rasmussen and Jochumsen, 2003) feel that this success of public libraries is not the same so that they can sit back and relax. They further argue that the foundation of public libraries is surrounded with deep-rooted uncertainty where one moment the book is declared dead, the next alive and kicking and while some argue that the library should dissolve its physical presence into cyberspace, others suggest that the library should strengthen its role as a physical space in the local community.

The innate rationalism of the public libraries services can be apprehended at its best against the backdrop of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) which states: "The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups". It concedes that public libraries are the quintessence of their communities, which provides free, easy accessible spaces, resources and services for everyone. Being a basic component of a nation's knowledge tank, public libraries accommodates scholarly works and information in different formats and languages.

1.1.Objective and Function of Public Libraries

The objective and function of public library as enumerated by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan are as follows:

- ❖ In common work for continued social wellbeing as the organization in charge of all socialized though.
- ❖ Help the lifelong self education of one and every one.
- ❖ Preserve the literacy remains of humanity for future generations as vehicles of culture and source materials for antiquarian research.
- ❖ Distribute in an unbiased way all sources of recorded thoughts and reviews to one and every one, and serve as a help in the discharge of their political responsibilities in respect of local, international and national affairs.
- ❖ Furnish up- to- date facts and information on all subject to one and every one.
- ❖ Contribute to productive drive by information to management of the new trends in diverse enterprises by plugging back in the minds of researchers, technologists and designers, every piece of relevant latest though promptly.
- ❖ Provide to one and every one worthy and elevating use of leisure.

American Library Association, in its publication entitled Public Library Services: A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards, points out the function of a public library as follows:

- ❖ To encourage wholesome pleasure and constructive use of free time.
- ❖ To meet the information required of every one.
- ❖ To enrich and further growth the subjects on which individuals are taking conventional education.
- ❖ To support the educational, culture and civic activities of organization and groups.
- ❖ To facilitate informal education of every one people in the community.

Public Library Enquiry Committee United Kingdom presents the following functions:

- ❖ To provide authentic information to the community.
- ❖ To provide opportunities for self education to young people, children, women and men.
- ❖ To collect resources on order to promote an enlightened citizenship and enhance personal life.(Thomas V.K 1997):.

1.2.About Tripura State: The Land of Forest, Hills, & River.

Tripura is a state in North East India & third-smallest state in the country. It covers 10,491 km² (4,051 sq mi) and is bordered by Bangladesh (East Bengal) to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. In 2011 the state had 3,671,032 residents, constituting 0.3% of the country's population. The Bengali Hindu people from the ethno linguistic majority in Tripura. Indigenous communities, known in India as scheduled tribes, form about 30 per cent of Tripura's population. The Kokborok speaking Tripuri people are the major group among 19 tribes and many subscribes.

		No. of Districts	08	
		AREA (Sq.Kms)	10486.00	
1	POPULATION	2001	Persons	3,199,203
			Males	1,642,225
			Females	1,556,978
		2011	Persons	3,671,032
			Males	1,874,376
			Females	1,799,541
2	DECADAL GROWTH RATE	:	1991-2001	16.03
			2001-2011	14.84
3	DENSITY	:	2001	305
			2011	350
4	SEX RATIO	:	2001	948
			2011	960
5	LITERACY RATE (%)	2001	Persons	73.19
			Males	81.02
			Females	64.91
		2011	Persons	87.22
			Males	91.53
			Females	82.73

Table -1: Statistical data of Tripura State as per the 2011 Census, Govt. of India.

Tripura is a land of forests, hills and rivers. Located in the rugged and hilly terrain of the tropical forests, the erstwhile princely state of Tripura in north-eastern part of the country was abode of about 1 million people in 1949 when it merged with Independent India as a Union Territory. It was granted statehood in 1972. It is bounded by Bangladesh on three sides sharing about 80% of its boundary of its perimeter. The remaining 20% of its boundary is shared with the states of Assam and Mizoram through land routes, and have a narrow corridor with Assam to link the state with rest of the country. As per the 2011 census, the state has a total population 3,671,032 comprising tribal and non-tribal. Nearly two-third of the area of the state is hilly and about 59% of its total area is covered with green forests. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood. Severe constraints of cheap and convenient modes of transport, geographic isolation and poor economic growth have not deterred the people of the state from acquiring education, and have a literacy rate of 97.75% as per the govt record of 2013.

In the 2011 census of India, Bengalis represented almost 70 per cent of Tripura's population while the Tripuri population amounted to 30 per cent. The state's "scheduled tribes", historically disadvantaged groups of people recognized by the country's constitution, consist of 19 ethnic groups and many sub-groups, with diverse languages and cultures. In 2001, the largest such group was the Kokborok speaking Tripuris, which had a population of 543,848, representing 17.0 per cent of the state's population and 54.7 per cent of the "scheduled tribe" population. The other major

groups, in descending order of population, were the Reang (16.6 per cent of the indigenous population), Jamatia (7.5 per cent), Chakma (6.5 per cent), Halam (4.8 per cent), Mog (3.1 per cent), Munda (1.2 per cent), Kuki (1.2 per cent) and Garo (1.1 per cent). Bengali is the most widely spoken language. Kokborok is a prominent language among the Tripura tribes.

1.3. History of Public Library in Tripura State

Tripura has its great and glorious past of the King Dynasty. The kings of Tripura were great patron of arts, culture and literature. The subsequent kings like Dhanya Manikya (C.1490- 1520 A.D.), Rajdhar Manikya (C.1586-1680 A.D.), Kalayan Manikya (C.1624-1660 A.D.), Ramdev Manikya (C.1673-1660 A.D.), Ramganga Manikya (C.1804-1809 A.D.) and their successors established many institutions for public utility. Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (1862-1896 A.D.) was not only an able ruler but a great lover of arts, culture and university wits. He established a library at Comilla (now in Bangladesh) probably in the year 1896 A.D. which was then within his territorial jurisdiction and also a very culturally enlightened place. This library was popularly known as the Palace Library and was the first library in the state. It was started with the collection of two hundred valuable books including manuscripts, palm leaf puthy of Bangal, hand written Rajmala, Krishnamala, Champak Vijoy and the other chronicles of the Royal house of Tripura. The King Radhakrishna Manikya (1896-1909 A.D.) constructed the Ujjayanta Palace Library in 1900 A.D. The establishment of the Palace Library was the land mark of the library movement of Tripura, though the library was closed to the common people. Afterwards the strictness was relaxed and the men of letters were permitted to use the said library. A great significant incident led to the bifurcation of the Place Library. In June, 1897 an earthquake shook the entire North-Eastern India and demolished almost all the important buildings of Agartala. At that time the library collection was temporary shifted in a separated shed. The public in general were for the first time got a chance to use the library. Subsequently important collections were housed in the Palace Library. After several shifting, the library was housed in the present location in a newly constructed building during the reign of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Bahadur in the year 1924. The library was kept open only for the four hours daily. The palace library thus became the first public library in the state and is presently known as the Birchandra state Central Library. It is matter of regret that after a long journey, the public library services in Tripura are not up-to-the-mark. There are only 25 public libraries in the whole state. Lack of technical staffs and poor financial condition may be attributed to the present unsatisfactory functioning of the public libraries in Tripura. There are insufficient staffs, specialized in the field, no computer facility and poor collections of valuable books and journals. The Libraries have become merely a store house of knowledge out of limited collection of books. In Tripura, public library has its more than one hundred year history but the improvement is far from the level of

achievements to be reached. The public library functions under the Higher Education department of the Govt. of Tripura. It appears that the said department is not looking after the development of the public library as it deserves. It is also surprising that there is no Public Library Act for the Public Library of Tripura.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- ❖ To know the Administrative & Functional Set-Up of Public Libraries in Tripura State.
- ❖ To know the No. of Public Libraries of Tripura State. To explore & illustrate the categorized Public Libraries in Tripura State.
- ❖ To know the distinct wise public libraries in the Tripura State.
- ❖ To justify the need of more Public Libraries against the population of the State.

Das (2007) in his paper makes a theoretical discussion of the various services rendered by the rural public libraries for the educational, socio-economic and cultural development of the rural masses and also put forward some suggestions for abolition of illiteracy, socio-economic development of rural people with the help of public libraries which is only possible though the enactment of library legislation in all the states and UT of India in general and North Eastern States in Particular.

In his study, Sinha (2009) has picturesquely presented the Status of Public Libraries (Rural Libraries) in the North Eastern Region of India by pointing out the several aspects by several heading by "the North Eastern Region (NE Region) of India has attracted the attention of the Government of India since two decades for overall development of the region. The North Eastern Region comprises seven states which are popularly known as seven sisters and recently in 2001 the eighth State "Sikkim" has been included in the North Eastern Region. These states, viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.

Jeena (2012) has enlighten the status of public Libraries in Tripura are confronting with many problems due to lack of physical, human and financial constraints as a result of which libraries are not capable to provide effective and efficient services. This lacuna can only be overcome by imparting modernization in the Libraries of Tripura under the changing information scenario and requires a drastic change to keep tune with other developed Library systems in India.

3.METHODOLOGY:

For this study, we have follow-up the interview methods & collect the date from Head Librarian, State Central Library, also we have gone through the information on web-portal of State Central Library of Tripura, Gazette of Tripura, and other previous study on public library of Tripura State.

4.DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

On the basis of data collected from the Interview and observation the data has been analyzed and tabulated. All the results have been shows in tabular form made by using MS-Excel as follows

4.1.Administrative & Functional Set-Up of Public Library in Tripura State

Tripura was a Princely State before its accession to the Indian Union on 15thOctober 1949. It became a Union Territory on 1st November 1957 and on 21stJanuary 1972 it was made a full-fledged State. So far no effective efforts have been made for library legislation. At present public library are governed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Govt. of Tripura, followed by Secretary & Director of Higher Education, Govt. of Tripura. The detail architecture of administrative & functional set-up is given bellow in the Fig.

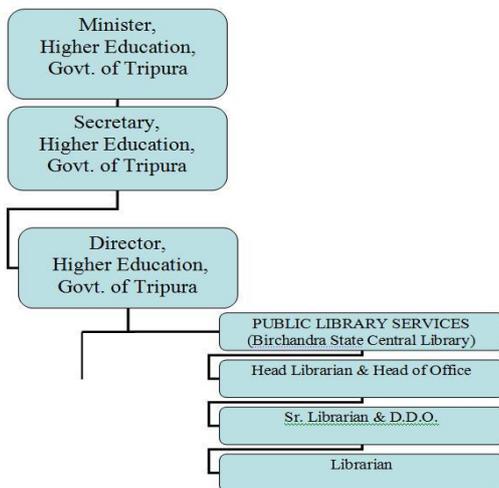


Fig -1: Administrative & Functional Set-Up of Public Library in Tripura

4.2.Types of Public Library in Tripura State

In Tripura State, there are basically 6 types of public libraries namely State Central Library, District libraries, sub-divisional Libraries, Block level Libraries, Town level libraries, & Rural Libraries.

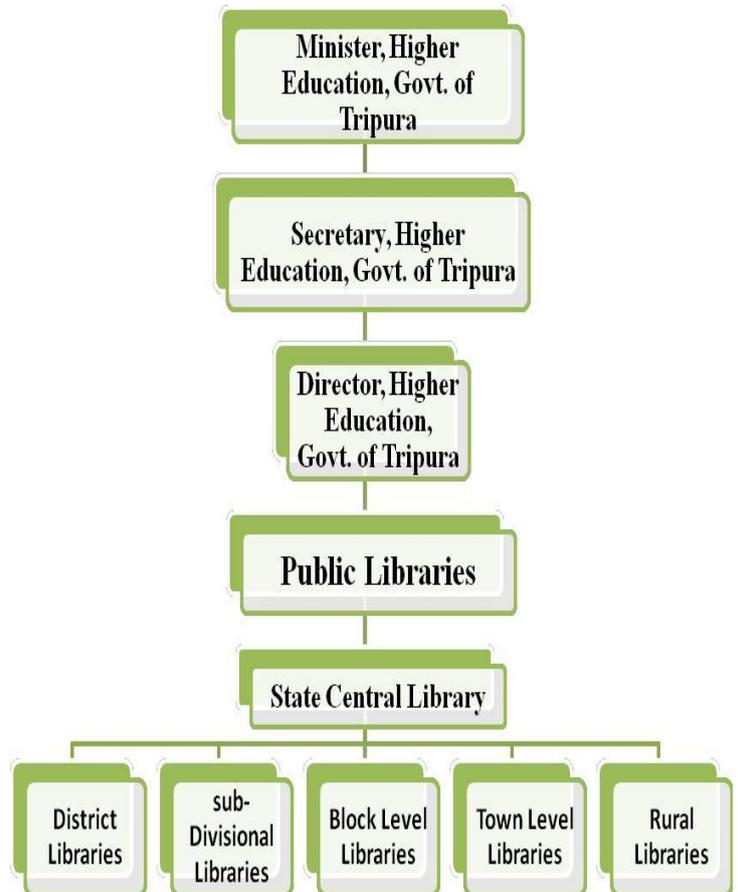


Fig-2: Functional Set-Up & Types of Public Libraries in Tripura

Table -2: Public Libraries in Tripura State

Sl. No.	Name of Public Library	Establishment
		Year
1.	Birchandra State Central Library	1895
2.	South Tripura District Library	1955
3.	North Tripura District Library	1954
4.	Khowai District Library	1958
5.	Khumulwng District Library	2011
6.	Dhalai District Library	1978
7.	Unakoti District Library	1954
8.	Nazrul Grandhaghar Udaipur	1954
9.	Kanchanpur Public Library	1989
10.	Panisagar Public Library	1977
11.	Bimal Singha Smriti Grandhaghar	1961
12.	Teliamura Public Library	1974
13.	Amarpur Public Library	1960
14.	Bishalghar Public Library	1964
15.	Sonamura Public Library	1956
16.	Sabroom Public Library	1961
17.	Melaghar Public Library	1967
18.	Kakraban Public Library	1977
19.	Bangata Public Library	1977
20.	Rajnagar Public Library	1977
21.	Kathalia Public Library	2009
22.	Nazrul Pathgar Boxanagar	2011
23.	Vshabazar Public Library	1973
24.	Baikhora Public Library	1991
25.	Paharmura Public Library	1980

Table 3: Nos. of Public Libraries in respect of Types of Public Library in Tripura State

Sl. No.	Types of the Public Library	Nos. of Public Libraries
1.	State Central Library	01
2.	District Library	07
3.	Sub-Divisional library	08
4.	Town Library	01
5.	Block Level Library	06
6.	Rural Library	02
	Total	25

Table -4: District wise distribution of Public Libraries of Tripura

Sl. No.	Districts of Tripura	Nos. of Public Library
1.	West Tripura District	05
2.	Khowai District	02
3.	Sepahijala District	03
4.	South District	05
5.	Gomati District	02
6.	North Tripura District	03
7.	Dhalai District	02
8.	Unakoti District	01
		25

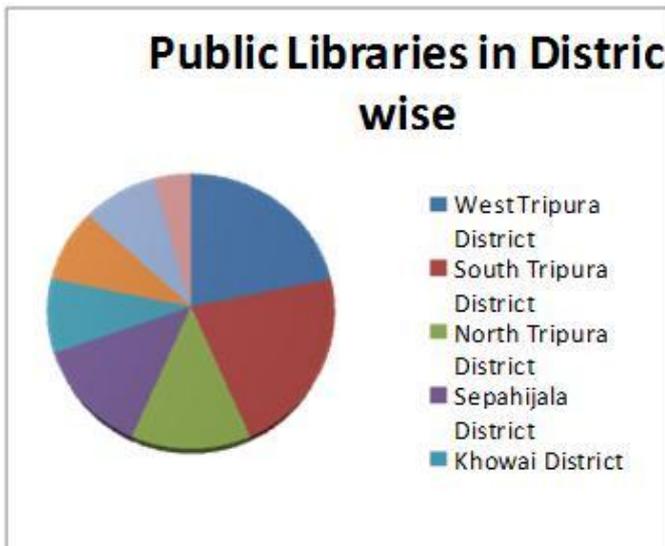


Chart -1: District wise nos. of public library.

5.SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ Keeping in mind the population of Tripura State, Government should open more nos. of public libraries in sub-divisional level, block level, town level, village level & talluka level, so that all people can get the information as desired by them. It can be make more developed the state by the peoples of Tripura.
- ❖ Keeping in view of the geographical location, lack of adequate information, infrastructure and necessary of promoting the higher education in Tripura, Government should provide sufficient financial support to all public library for their resources & services.
- ❖ At the time of budget allocation of Tripura State, Government should make provision to special budget allocation for the all public libraries development.
- ❖ In the present ICT age, every public library must be connected with internet access facility and should have Library Website with linkup of OPAC & other online resources & services of particular library.
- ❖ Immediate attention should be given to fulfill the post of library professional staffs to every public library & provide the training-ship to all existing staff to upgrade their skills towards the implementation of ICT& new technology to improve the services of public libraries.
- ❖ Government should take an initiative to automate the all public libraries wit any Open Sources Software & develop a union catalogue of all public libraries in Tripura.
- ❖ Government should make a provision of mobile libraries services & must be constitute the Public Library Act in Tripura State for the development of libraries as well as the State.

6.CONCLUSIONS

Public library system efforts to support resource sharing have greatly contributed to the development of system. Public library system members serve library and Information professionals. Public library system compatibility has greatly improved the library user's ability to access materials not available locally, but held by other public library system members. The increase in interlibrary loan traffic has caused a corresponding expansion of area and statewide interlibrary delivery services; also heavily Tomorrows information professionals will be knowledge navigators instead of information collectors.

In the Indian situation the new generation of librarians will have to face these challenges and risks to remain in the information business in all the sectors. Inter-changeability and capabilities to adjust from one sector to the other will be the biggest challenge for Indian librarians.

The public libraries in Tripura State are not in sufficient no against the State population i.e 3,671,032. So there is need to open more public libraries in the state. According to IFLA (4) standard there should be one library for every 3000 people. The total population of Tripura state is 3671032 as per census 2011. As there is only 25 Public Libraries in Tripura, so there is need of 1224 public library to be open more to provide the information to all Tripura people. It is evident that only a few percentage of the total population are enjoying the benefit of the public Library System while the large numbers of the rural people are being deprived of this facility.

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Surendra Kumar Pal is Assistant University Librarian in Central Library, Tripura Central University.

BIOGRAPHIES



Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha,
Associate Professor & Head,
DLISc, Assam University, Silchar.