
STATUS OF LIBRARIES IN NAGALAND: A PROFILE

Lendina

Mhonbemo Ngullie

Abstract

Traces the over all library status & systems in Nagaland. Points out the problems being faced by the libraries in over all management and organizational aspects. Suggests certain points for the over all improvement of public and academic library services in the state.

Keywords : Higher Education; Automation

1. Introduction

Nagaland, the 16th state of the Indian Union is one of the seven sister states of North-East India. It is known as the "Switzerland of the East" for its beautiful natural sceneries and fascinating landscapes. It has an area of 16,579 sq. kms. and a population of about 19, 88, 636 (Census 2001). Predominantly a tribal state, Nagaland is blessed with great valleys, high mountains, deep gorges, meandering streams and rich variety of flora and fauna.

Nagaland lies approximately 250 60' to 270 40' latitude North of equator and between 930 20'E to 95015' E longitude, having an area of 16, 579 sq. kms (approx). The state is bounded by Assam in the North and West, by Burma and Arunachal Pradesh in the east, Manipur in the South and runs more or less parallel to the left bank of Brahmaputra. The topography is severe full of hilly ranges which breaks into a wide chaos of spurs and ridges. The altitude varies between 194 mts. and 3048 mts.

Nagaland enjoys monsoon climate unlike the adjoining plains of Assam. The winter is cold and the summer is warm in the daytime and cool in the night. The main form of cultivation in this state is jhum cultivation with main crops like paddy, maize, millets are grown. The climate is also congenial for fruit farming. The state has rail and air connectivity at Dimapur, the main commercial hub of the state.

2. Literacy & Higher Education

Nagaland has recorded a significant growth in literacy percentage since 1991. According to census 2001 it had a literacy rate of 67.11% (male 71.77% & female 61.92%) for the whole of Nagaland state. There is one central university, Nagaland University and 30 affiliated colleges under it. The Nagaland University came into being in 1996 and is operating in three well defined campuses, i.e., Kohima, Lumami and Medziphema. Most of these affiliated colleges are under deficit and ad-hoc

system. Education as a forceful vehicle for creating enlightened and useful citizens has been well acclaimed. That is why continuous efforts are made to improve its form and content. It expects active participation of all those likely to be involved, like managers, policy makers, voluntary agencies, teachers, scientist and others. But inexplicably and unfortunately it omits the very importance of libraries and the librarians.

3. Library Services

Libraries have been considered as "Temple of Learning". Though not directly involved in imparting education, their potentials as custodians and disseminators of knowledge is immense. But the new education document while expounding measures for restructuring of the education system in the State, in terms of curricula, teaching methods, examination system, it does not even mention the poor state of libraries in our education system. There is only one state library, 11 district libraries and 305 rural libraries. With increasing enrolment in universities, colleges and schools, the demand for library services has been considerably growing in the state. Unlike the past, it has now many undergraduates, post-graduates and research scholars from the state. The reason for increasing importance of a public library is made clear by the fact that there is no well-equipped, well-organized public library in the state and also within the educational institutions to contribute for disseminating knowledge of the universe through informal education. It is sad to note that many of the colleges and schools in the State does not even have a library of its own within the educational set up, or even the students might not have been learned the very importance of library.

A well equipped and well organized library is the foundation of modern educational structure. Though the colleges in Nagaland seems to be coping up with the changing educational patterns, it is very unfortunate to say that there is no proper library infrastructure attached with the colleges for catering to the needs of the students and teachers. The conditions of most of the college libraries in Nagaland are very discouraging and unsatisfactory. There is a lack of awareness among the Head of the institutions themselves on the very importance of library in modern educational system in this age of competition where students and teachers need to access to latest source of information. Most of the colleges have established libraries with little disorganized collection but most of these libraries do not have qualified librarians, headed by non-professional and with no proper staffing structure the libraries lacks in providing prompt and efficient services to the users.

In a backward state like Nagaland, where the reading habits of the people in not well developed and the economic conditions are not very sound, the students and teachers neither like nor can afford to buy books on account of high prices and higher cost of living. Even if one venture to buy some books of one's subject they are not sufficient to help him in his extensive or intensive studies and to keep pace with the fast growing knowledge and the changing world. With the enormous growth of printed materials the college and the schools too has its financial difficulties to purchase all relevant materials for its students and teachers. To even talk about the fact, the schools and colleges in the state, the libraries are practically non-existent.

4. Automation Status

The automation of library system in Nagaland is yet to initiate. Want of trained professionals, computers and software, infrastructure in respect of building, tools for processing books, library

budget are some of the bottlenecks. So far only one private college library, Patkai Christian College in Nagaland is automated. An effort for automation and networking of libraries, under Nagaland University has been initiated under the sponsored Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) programme. The existing library professional staff is also being trained to enable them to help and handle the computerization of the library. After, receiving the initial help under INFLIBNET, the libraries in the three campuses under Nagaland University have started its automation works. However, computerization for most of the libraries in Nagaland is still a distant dream.

5. Suggestions & Recommendations

1. The state government should constitute a Library committee comprising of professional experts be constituted to examine the existing library situation in the state and propose a future library development plan.
2. Immediate efforts should be taken to introduce library legislation in the state.
3. Appointment of non-professionals as head of the library should be ceased, and qualified librarians should be appointed to the college libraries according to UGC norms.
4. Librarians should have autonomy, freedom and financial powers to look after the growth and development as well as the functioning of the libraries.
5. The use of modern technologies should be made available without any hesitation whenever feasible and necessary for efficient service.
6. Needed for in-service training course, refreshers course, seminars, workshop for the library staff.
7. Need for infrastructure in respect of library buildings.
8. Computers should be made available.
9. Assistant Librarian in college Libraries should have at least B.Lib. Sc. or C.Lib. Sc.
10. Library assistants should have at least some training in the field of Library Science.