

STUDY OF RURAL LIBRARIES IN KAMRUP DISTRICT (ASSAM) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHAYGAON AND HAJO EDUCATIONAL BLOCK

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Introduction:

The rural library is a good component of public library system, which is termed as “people’s university” and “Arsenals of democracy”. The present library services we have in our country owe its origin to the west. The concept of rural library is a phenomenon of 20th century especially in India. Proper rural library services were not started in ancient and medieval times, so it is also true in case of Assam. But library services in different forms were functioning in Assam during the ancient and medieval time, different agencies and systems were also at work to educate the masses. The Rural Library Scheme was implemented in 1985-86 in Assam. With more

than 33.9 million population of the state, Assam has its 33 districts, 78 sub-divisions and 2487 Gaon Panchayats. But all the districts does not have district librarian. Sometime two or more district libraries are tagged with one librarian, so is the case with subdivisions, only 13 sub-divisional libraries and other subdivisions are not having libraries. The horrible case is with rural libraries, a very small number of 204 libraries in the rural areas are taken over by the govt. of Assam. A good number of villages in Assam are not touched by the Library Services. But it is good to notice that some NGO’s and Village development bodies has taken initiative to open rural libraries in different villages of Assam.

Rural Libraries of Kamrup District

Kamrup District is known as the Gateway of North East India and consists of wide plains through which the mighty river Brahmaputra makes its way flowing a steady course from east to west. The district is situated between 25.46° and 26.49° North latitude and between 90.48° and 91.50° East longitude. It is bounded by the foothills of Bhutan and Nalbari District in the north, the State of Meghalaya in the south, Nagaon and Darrang District in the east and Goalpara and Nalbari District in the west. Guwahati is the district headquarters Kamrup has an area of 4,345 sq km, supporting a population of 3 million. The modern Kamrup is confined to mere a district of Assam, which is divided into Kamrup (Rural) and Kamrup (Metro). Kamrup (Rural) is better known as Kamrup District. The geographical area of Kamrup district divided in nine educational block and the present study has confined into 17 rural libraries which have been situated in Hajo and Chaygaon educational block.

A. Chaygaon Educational Block:

In Chaygaon educational block some areas are inundated by flood water in most of the time especially in the northern part of the NH 37. The block shows diverse picture in educational achievements. In the char areas, where minority community dominates, educational backwardness is prominent. The block is divided into 14 Cluster Resource Centres. Moreover in my survey period I have found Nine numbers of rural Libraries and

most of them are supervised by local village development bodies and Youth Committees.

B. Hajo Educational Block

Hajo Educational Block is one of the largest blocks of Kamrup District, Hajo shows diverse educational scenario in the same line with its geographical variations. The areas adjacent with river Brahmaputra are dominated by minorities and they are depended on agriculture. On the other hand, the rest of the block has shown good academic achievements. The block is divided into 17 Cluster Resource Centres. During my survey period I have found only eight numbers of rural libraries which are scattered in different villages in this block.

The following table shows the libraries surveyed under Chaygaon and Hajo Educational Blocks of Kamrup District.

Table-1: Rural libraries in Kamrup district

Sl.No	Educational Block	Name of Library	Year of Establishment	Registration No.
1	Chaygaon	Jeuti Puthi Bharal, Chaygaon	1958	9521/1958
2		Pragoti Puthi Bharal, Ratanpur	1961	314/1961
3		Asomi Puthi Bharal, Chaygaon	1966	NA
4		Pradip Puthi Bharal, Bamunigaon	1971	137/1975
5		Nehru Yubak Puthi Bharal, Nowapara	1977	135/1975
6		Binapani Puthi Bharal, Chaudhurikhat	1979	416/1979

7		Navaratna Puthi Bharal, Pasamtola	1984	3523/1984
8		Bhuyapara Bani Puthi Bharal, Champak Nagar	1989	3534/1989-90
9		Jayshree Puthi Bharal, Dakhin Bankakata	1991	1700/1991
10	Hajo	Sri Sri Sankardev Rajahuwa Puthi Bharal, Suwalkuchi	1924	363/1963
11		Halogaon Sewak, Sangha and Puthi Bharal	1930	70/1960-61
12		Ramdial Puthi Bharal and Samuhik Sanskritik Kendra, Ramdia	1930	180/1974-75
13		Sree Hati Shyamrai Puthi Bharal and Tarun Sangha, Sree Hati	1948	1268/88
14		Bamundi Tarun Sangha aru Puthi Bharal, Bamundi	1948	97/1961-62
18		Sowanchah Abha Puthi Bharal, Khetrihara	1955	89/1980-81
16		Bangsar Pragati Sangha and Puthi Bharal, Bangsar	1963	2898/1988-89
17		Dalibari Samuhik Kendra, Dalibari	1975	61/1975-76

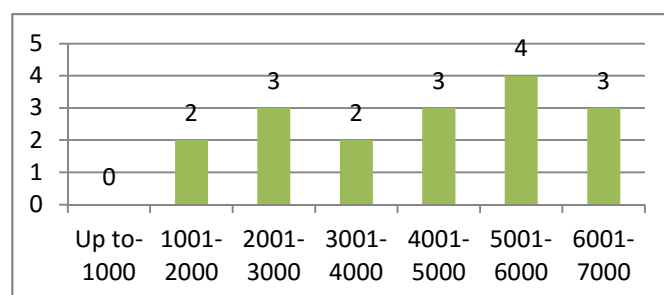
From the above table-1 it is found that in Chaygaon Education Block has nine numbers rural libraries and the Hajo Block has eight numbers rural libraries

Table-2 Book Collection in Rural Libraries:

N=17

SlNo	Book Collection in Rural Libraries	No of Rural Libraries
1	Up to- 1000	0
2	1001- 2000	02
3	2001- 3000	03
4	3001- 4000	02
5	4001- 5000	03
6	5001- 6000	04
7	6001- 7000	03
Total		17

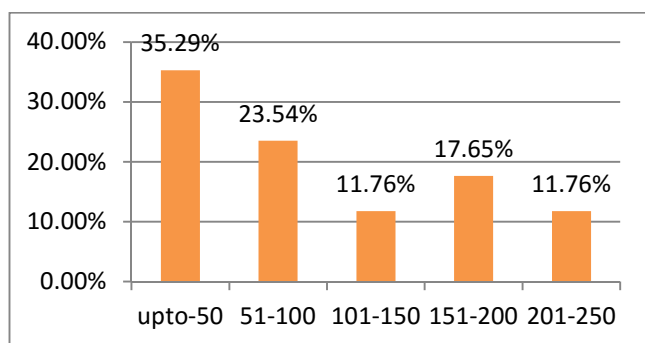
Figure-1 Book Collection in Rural Libraries



The table-2 and figure-1 shows the collection of books in different rural libraries in Chaygaon and Hajo educational block of Kamrup district. The highest collection is credited by 4 libraries whose number of collection can be placed in the range 5001-6000. Three libraries having book collection in the range of books 6001-7000. In the range of book collection 4001-5000 has three libraries. In the range of book collection 3001-4000 has two libraries and another two libraries having book collection in the range 1001-2000. During survey it is observed that the most of the collections are story books, novels and children literature. The majority of collection of books is donated by associate institutions and local people.

Table-3 Library Registered Users: N=17

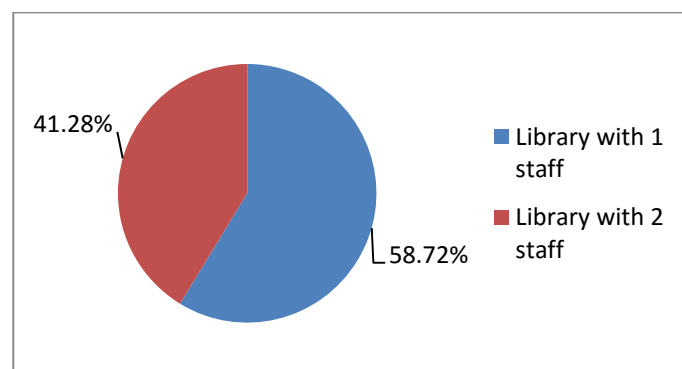
Sl.No.	Registered User	No of Libraries	Percentage
1.	01- 50	06	35.29%
2.	51-100	04	23.54%
3.	101-150	02	11.76%
4.	151-200	03	17.65%
5.	201-250	02	11.76%
		17	100%

Figure-2 Library Registered User

From the above table-3 and figure-2 it is found that 06 (35.29 %) rural libraries in Kamrup district having up to 50 number of registered users, 23.54% rural libraries has 51 to 100 numbers of registered users, 11.76% rural libraries has 101 to 150 numbers of registered user, 17.65% rural libraries has 151 to 200 numbers of registered users and amongst them the Bamundi Tarun Sangha aru Puthi Bharal, Bamundi, Hajo Block has highest 208 numbers of registered users.

Table-4 Staff in Rural Libraries: N=17

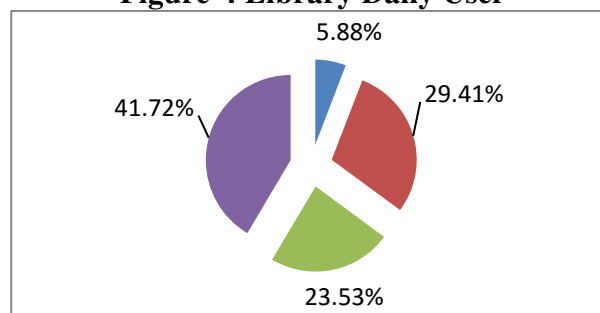
Sl. No.	Library staff	No of Libraries	Percentage
1.	Library with 1 staff	10	58.72 %
2.	Library with 2 staff	07	41.28 %
		17	100%

Figure-3 Staff in Rural Libraries

From the above table-4 and figure-3 it is found that 10 numbers (58.72%) rural libraries have only 01 library in- charge or librarian and 07 numbers (41.28 %) rural libraries have 02 library staff which includes one library bearer also.

Table-5 Library Daily User: N=17

Sl.No.	Library Daily user	No of Libraries	Percentage
1.	0-05	1	5.88%
2.	06- 10	5	29.41%
3.	11-15	4	23.53%
4.	16-20	7	41.72%
		17	100%

Figure-4 Library Daily User

From the above table-5 and figure-4 it is found that 1 number (5.88 %) rural library has 0-5 numbers of daily users among them Sree Hati Shyamrai Puthi Bharal, Hajo Block has only 5 numbers of daily users, 05 numbers (29.41%)

rural libraries have 6-10 numbers of daily users, 04 numbers (23.53%) libraries have 11-15 numbers of daily users and 07 numbers (41.72 %) libraries have 16-20 numbers of daily users. During the survey it is noticed that reading habit is now low due to use of modern entertainment technology and as well as internet facilities. People now are not interested to spend time by studying books but they preferred to spend time with social media and T.V. Therefore to attract these people to the library, rural libraries should develop the infrastructure and resources.

Findings & Suggestions

Following suggestions are forwarded which is based on the study

- There is lack of reading environment in the rural areas. The library services should be create the reading environment and provide reading literature and this may help in retaining the literacy skill.
- Cultivation of reading habits among children should be developed so that even if a child does not complete schooling or further education, still he should be able to form a lifelong habit of reading.
- The library services in villages through rural libraries can be made of functional information centers for the villagers and farmers.
- Public Information Kiosk (PIK) may be established at every Rural Library. This PIK's should be equipped with local Newspapers, Magazine/publicity materials of government departments, information

of various developmental schemes and programmes, information database, Telephone, FAX, TV, photocopier, etc.

- Library legislation must be passed by Govt. of Assam and it must be implemented at the earliest. The Assam Library Association (ALA) should take initiative for that.
- Separate Ministry of Public Library system should be created to make them proper functional libraries. The other departmental libraries of the state government should be brought under this department for better and effective results.
- Network of rural libraries to be linked up with the District library system and state central libraries all over the country
- RRRLF to provide assistance in addition to the state government for providing expansion of library facilities in the rural areas particularly to the growing number of educated people and women and youth

Conclusion

From the study analysis and interpreting the data it can be is concluded that rural population destined to be served by the rural library in spite of various problems like lesser number of staff, very limited fund, lack of physical facilities and such other issues must be made attractive and effective. The basic aim for the fulfillment of the dream of India make Shakshar Bharat (Literate India) and thus reaching 100% literacy can be achieved. Libraries should contain a well-chosen

corpus of books written originally in regional language into that particular regional language. In this case National Book Trust to assist in the production of books needed for rural people on priority basis,

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