CHAPTER – II
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF LIBRARIES IN MANIPUR
2.1 Introduction

A library is an indispensable centre of civilized society. It is a centre for keeping written records of whatever sort and in whatever form, so that they can be protected, preserved and used when needed. Invention of the Printing Press in the 15th century by Johann Gutenberg became a landmark in the history of library development. Later, in the Seventeenth Century, some of the great national libraries like the Prussian State Library in Berlin (1659), the Kongelige Bibliothek in Copenhagen (1661) and the National Library of Scotland (1682) were founded. Several Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Research Organisations used to set up their own libraries in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

In 1933, Dr. Pierce Butler stated, that the basic elements of librarianship consisted in the accumulation of knowledge by society and its continuous transmission to the living generation so far as these processes are performed through the instrumentality of graphic records. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan defined libraries to be not mere storehouses. They are rich springs of knowledge from where knowledge flows to irrigate the wide fields of education and culture. Further, he formulated five laws of Library Science, which clearly points out the form, nature, purpose, service, ideal and development of libraries. (Kumargoudar and Mestri; 2007; 22)

The developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have revolutionized the information management activities in the academic libraries during the past few years developing the Information Society. The Information Society demands that all the relevant technologies that are involved in access to information, information collection, information
processing, consolidation, repackaging and retrieval be merged so as to evolve an integrated system, capable of providing diversified services.

Advances in computer storage and telecommunication methods, online access to databases, electronic journals, direct document delivery, teletext, teleconferences, bulletin boards, compact discs, networks including internet etc. are revolutionary developments in the last two to three decades that have brought a great change in the collection, communication, storage and management of information. As a result, the organization, structure and functions of the libraries have changed. These lead to change the traditional library term to library automation, electronic library, digital library and now to the Virtual Library or the library without walls.

2.2 Land and People of Manipur

The area of application of this research work is Manipur and the libraries which are going to be discussed here are for the users who are residing here in this state. Therefore it is obvious to know the background of the land and people of Manipur.

2.2.1 Land

Manipur is a state located in northeastern India. Imphal is the capital of the state. Manipur came under British rule as a princely state in 1891. This ended the independent status of the kingdom of Manipur, the last kingdom to be incorporated into the British India. Manipur was a Union Territory of India from 1956 and became a full fledged state from 1972.
The state is bounded by Nagaland in the North, Mizoram in the South, Assam in the west, and by the borders of the country Myanmar in the east as well as in the south. The state lies in between latitude 23.83 ° N to 25.68 ° N and longitude 93.03 ° E to 94.78 ° E. According to the 2001 Census report of India, the total area of Manipur is 22,327sq. Km. Out of this only 2,238 sq. Km. is valley while the remaining areas are hills. The climate of Manipur is moderate. It receives an average rainfall of 1467.5mm, annually. However, the rain distribution varies from 933mm in Imphal valley to 2593mm in Tamenglong hill. The normal rainfall of Manipur enriches the soil and helps in agricultural farming. Agriculture and allied activities is the single largest source of livelihood in the state. Paddy is the main crop grown and the yield is good. Manipur has made some progress in the setting up of small scale industrial units of which some 7700 have been set up. The state symbol or emblem of Manipur is Kanglasha (Nongsaba), the body of which looks like lion and the head looks like dragon. Sangai or brow antlered deer is the state animal, while Nong-in remains as the state bird. Uningthou is regarded as the state tree and the world famous Shiroy Lili (Lilium) is the state flower of Manipur.

2.2.2 People

The state is inhabited by indigenous peoples like Meiteis, Hill tribes, Muslims, Brahmins and migrant from India and abroad. These are the people whose folklore, myths & legends, dances, indigenous games and martial arts, exotic handlooms & handicrafts are infested with the mystique of nature. The wonders have no end in Manipur. The lingua franca of the state is Manipuri. It was recognized as one of India’s national languages in 1992.
English language is also slowly gaining ground as a common language of communication here. Meitei Mayek is a script, commonly referred as Mayek, which is being used from ancient times. Though it was not in vogue for a certain period, its revival in recent past has gained popularity. There are 29 important dialects spoken in Manipur.

According to the Census of India 2001, the population of Manipur is 2,293,896 comprising 1,161,952 males and 1,131,944 females. This population is distributed in 375,095 households living in 2,391 villages and 33 towns. For administrative purpose Manipur is divided into 9 districts and 38 sub-divisions. Male literacy rate is 80.3% and female literacy rate is 60.5%.

2.3 Historical Account of Libraries in Manipur

2.3.1 Development of Library in the Royal Palace

It is very interesting and heartening to know that library movement in Manipur was started from the beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century and there was record of maintaining manuscripts in royal palace from the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. During the kingship of Manipur, astrologers, priest and other scholars used to come to the palace for reading of books and for academic discussion. It resembles the present library. Places of worship and personal premises were also used as libraries. At this point, the following lines from Encyclopedia of Britannica are worth mentioning. “In the early days there was no such difference between a library and a record room and because of which it can be considered that the library was present from since the record room came into existence. The destruction of these records happens not only at the time of
war but also during the replacement of one ruler by another ruler or during the downfall of a ruler”. (Shyamkanhai; 1996; 85) In the history of Manipur, the memorable event of burning of the ancient relics of Manipur (also Known as Puya Mei Thaba) happened in 1729 during the reign of Maharaja Pamheiba. Not only this, many other books were destroyed during the outbreak of the Burmese invasion.

The rulers of Manipur used to maintain records regarding court trials and cases in their custody, which can be called a library. Thus we can say that libraries had been in existence since time immemorial whether these were systematic or not.

It is necessary to look back to the origin of literature for tracing out the origin of library. In ancient times, library being the storehouse of literature grew side by side with human civilization. Literature of any country or state is the shadow of the socio economic conditions, culture and civilization of that particular place. Because of having a rich literary and cultural tradition, most of the Manipuris had a keen historical sense and produced a mass historical literature and began to keep chronicles regularly in the palace from early period.

In Manipur, it is believed that the actual maintenance of the chronicle began in the 5th century after 427 A.D. The historical literature is recorded in the Cheitharol Kumbaba, the state chronicle. But, the kings of Manipur maintained only Royal Library and which can be accessed by some privileged “Maichous (Scholars)”. But the actual date of establishment has not yet been denoted.
Pandit Loisang (Scholar Office) is a very old Palace Library. In this office, books written by scholars, historical literature and books written on Deities as well as past events and Royal chronicles were stored. Scholars had been existing in the palace of Manipur since 1600 AD. Their main role was to record the events related to the royal families. The scholars were placed in different levels or designations. A report submitted to the government about this old palace library in the year 1992 mentioned “The ancient books of the Meiteis are called ‘Puyas’. Some of these books are with the scholars also. There was a separate Pandit Loisang during the reign of other rulers. At that time scholars used to come and keep their books at such a common place. Some of these materials were destroyed after the downfall of the Meitei Empire. Again during the reign of king Churachand, many old Meitei books including the Puyas which were gathered and kept at the Pandit Loisang (Scholar’s office) were burned down by the major fire that broke out in the Loisang (Office). Those books which were left after these incidents, were kept at the state office, later, the books are kept at the royal palace.” (Shyamkanhai; 1996; 85)

2.3.2 Library during the arrival of British

The office of the Political agent in Manipur was established in the year 1835. The agency office started having its own library since its establishment. The existing library and records section at Manipur Secretariat is in continuation of the library of political agency of Manipur. However this is not for public use but only for governmental officers. The yearly administrative report, budget, Gazette and files of government were kept in this library. In the year 1897, according to the administrative report, the library purchased 25
manuscripts at a cost of Rs. 319 and efforts were put to translate them from the old language. A sum of Rs. 126 was sanctioned in the year 1898 for the attempt.

2.3.3 Library Movement

Many unknown facts about libraries have come to light after seeing age old records brought out by the pioneers in the field of library science. The first printed text book for school going children was brought out in 1900. It is called “The Manipur Primer Pt. I” and it was printed at Calcutta in the Baptist Mission Press. Following the trend of the publication of school text a number of books were published before 1920. Then all copies were stocked under an official register of the schools. It can be proved that Library movement in Manipur came into existence as early as 1900. The modern library movement was started by the Manipur Library Association since 24th May 1987.

2.3.4 School Library

The British, during its regime in Manipur tried to improve the education system in the region. Johnstone English School was established in the year 1885 in Manipur. The study of Manipuri language in the schools of Manipur was proposed in the year 1908. And library was established in these schools to do the work for teaching Manipuri language and to distribute the printed books to the students. The first library came up in Johnstone School and Mr. Tonu Singh was appointed as Deputy Inspector of Schools to take charge of this responsibility. According to an available record, a person called Gokul Chand Singh was serving as librarian for a long time till he retired on 31st March 1929. On 20th February 1929, the Royal court decided to set up
and operate a state library in the year 1929. As per this decision, a rule was framed and accordingly all the books in Johnstone School got shifted to the Education Office. From then onwards, it came to be known as Manipur State Library. This finally gets merged to the State Government Press.

Before the advent of writing, education in Manipur was imparted orally and practically. But ancient Manipur was resourceful enough to preserve and diffuse knowledge. Indigenous materials were used for spread of education. From the written records, it can be mentioned that, the seed of new education that is, English Education, was first shown by captain Gordon when he organized a primary education centre in Manipur in the beginning of the 19th century. In the year 1947 there were 278 primary schools, in Manipur with 25,400 students in the enrolment. The number of schools then rose to 3,214 with more than 2,42,610 students in the enrolment in March 1981.

According to the statistical data of “School Education in Manipur at a Glance, 2005-06”, the number of schools, categories under 1) Government, 2) Aided 3) Private-Recognised is shown in Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Aided</th>
<th>Private recognised</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Schools</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source Education – S Government of Manipur*
No library is maintained at all in the schools. Some schools have libraries but only for name’s sake. Johnstone Higher Secondary School, the oldest school in Manipur has its library without functioning properly. It does not have full time librarian. There is no updating of the stock of books. No proper school library atmosphere is available for creation of reading habit among the students. Library fees are collected from students but deposited to the government without utilizing for the improvement of the school library. The condition of libraries of other schools remains the same. Only the difference is that T. G. Higher Secondary School Library has one qualified librarian transferred from Education Directorate science unit along with the post.

The libraries of centrally sponsored schools are far better than other school libraries in Manipur. The schools have full time qualified librarians. There are two different head of accounts for annual purchase and updating of the stock of books according to syllabus and maintenance of the school library. One source of account is from the general school budget and the other source is raised from the school student–fees etc. The libraries also subscribed magazines and newspapers etc. for the students and teachers. The centrally sponsored school libraries organized study circle, sometimes debates and quiz programmes etc. relating to their class room studies and future career. In this way the school children studying in such schools start exposing themselves in the ocean of thoughts of the past and present.

2.3.5 College and University Library

The first ever Government College Library came into being in Manipur in the year 1946 when the first College of the State viz. D. M. College was
instituted with a well furnished library with a number of books. One Md. Reajuddin Choudhury was appointed as its first Librarian in the year 1952. There had been trained persons in Library Science in Manipur from the year 1958 with Md. Reajuddin Choudhury who passed Diploma in Library Science from the Calcutta University. From 1970s many persons had been trained in Library Science.

There are two universities in Manipur viz. Manipur University and Central Agricultural University. The Manipur University was established in 1980 along with its library. The library has a very good collection and it is the biggest library in the state having all the amenities of a university library. Under Manipur University, there are 73 colleges. Out of these 73 colleges, 59 are general and 14 are special which are specialized in a subject such as agriculture, arts, engineering, medicine etc. All these colleges have their own libraries. Those libraries of the colleges of general category are said to be academic library and the libraries of the colleges of special are categorized as special library. All these colleges have their own libraries.

2.3.6 Development of Special Libraries in Manipur

The development of special libraries in Manipur was very late and started only from the second half of the 20th Century. The main reason was that western and technical education in the state was imparted only after the 2nd world war. Most of these libraries are not well organized and well run and they are extensively used by the teachers, staff, research scholars, artists, and students etc. who are associated with the organization. It is estimated that more than 30 special libraries are in the state. Mention may be made of the libraries of : Manipur State Kala Academy, All India Radio Imphal, Institute
of Bioresources and Sustainable Development, Central Institute of Plastic Engineering and Technology, Manipur Secretariat, District and Session Court Manipur West and so on.

2.3.7 Development of Public Libraries

In the administrative report of Manipur 1904, it is mentioned that some books are kept in Ukhrul at the office of Reverent Pettigrew. Except this there was no place of reading books by the public. Till 1911, Manipur could not get entry in the public library census of India. However a report mentioned that 150 handwritten books kept in the palace of the king was submitted to the Indian Government. In the year 1919, due to the non-existence of a public library in the region Manipur could not get the opportunity of lending and borrowing (inter library loan) books and journals among the libraries located in different parts of the country.

The Historical development of public libraries in Manipur can be traced back to early 1920s with the establishment of Manipur Club. The club was running a library called Manipur Club Library which later came to be known as Juvabati Memorial Library. The public library movement was started in the state with the help of voluntary organisations. The historical development of libraries beginning with the said club library in the state is being discussed in the following sections.

2.3.7.1 Juvabati Memorial Library

The establishment of the Manipur Club in 1927 under the leadership of Dr. Huirongbam Atulchandra Singh alias Tolchou at Kakwa Naorem
Leikai, Imphal West was the beginning of the library movement in Manipur. The name of the library was earlier known as Manipur Book Club /Manipur Club Library. But in 1933 the name of the library was changed to Juvabati Memorial Library. Most of the collections of the library were developed through donations/gifts. Many intellectuals of the state namely late Gopal Singh, DIG, Major Tailor, IMS, Anandamohon Singh, R.K. Shitaljit Singh, etc. donated books to the library. After the Second World War the books of the library were shifted to the Polytechnic High School at Naorem Leikai presently Canchipur High School, Canchipur. The Manipur Foundation has taken over the charge to develop the library fully.

2.3.7.2 Imphal Reading Club

After an investigation of Mr. N. Shyamkanhai Singh, an ex-secretary of MALA, it came to be known that the “Imphal Reading Club” was established at Moirangkhom in 1930. Kavi Ratna Shree Hijam Angahal Singh was the founder secretary of the club. It is reported that Jananeta Hijam Irawat Singh, founder of CPI, Manipur donated two almirahs with full of books to the library.

2.3.7.3 Chitrangada Library

Mr. Kangjam Chaoba Singh, the founder secretary of the present MALA said that there was the Chitrangada Library at Imphal sometimes in 1934. He further added that an organisation called ‘Maiba Shengao’ donated a sum of Rs. 300 for the management of the library.
2.3.7.4 Imphal Public Library

The establishment of the Imphal Public Library in 1940 was one of the developments in the field. The library was earlier known as ‘Khwai Public Library’. At first the library was housed in a temporary shed of three rooms in the compound of the then Tombisana English School, Imphal. As a General Secretary of the library Shree Nongmeikappam Gopal Singh of Uripok Tourangbam Leikai applied to the Manipur State Darbar for allotment of a site for the construction of the library building. The Darbar vide its resolution no. 5 of the 12th June 1940 allotted a plot of land measuring an area of 2250 sq. ft. in favour of the public library. During the 2nd world war which was fought in Manipur from 1942-45 devastated the ‘Khwai Public Library’. On 1st February 1947 the library was reorganised and changed its name to ‘Imphal Public Library’. The government of Manipur requisitioned the plot and demolished the library building on 6th April 2004 in connection with the expansion of Imphal city.

2.3.7.5 Proposal for a Public Library

After the Second World War there was a proposal to establish a public library at Imphal. The same was reflected in the leaflets distributed to the public library by the then President, Manipur State Darbar Shri E.F. Leedon on May 11, 1946. There was an aim to establish the same by donating a sum of Rs. 1000 each by the State Darbar, His highness the Maharaja of Manipur and twenty rich enthusiastic citizens of Manipur. However, the proposal was not translated into reality.
2.3.7.6 Manipur Public Library

Another landmark in the history of library movement in Manipur was the establishment of the ‘Manipur Public Library’ in 1950 near Gandhi Memorial Hall at B.T. Road, Imphal. The building of the library was donated by Shree Balchand Patni a well known Marwari trader in loving memory of his late father Shree Premsukh Patni. But now the library is under a management committee who are alien to library ethics and not functional.

2.3.7.7 Government Public Libraries

The library movement in Manipur from government side was very late. It was only on 16th October 1958 that one District Library and one Children’s Library Cum - Museum were established at Imphal. During the third five year plan period the District Library was upgraded to the status of State Central Library and Children’s Library Cum - Museum was amalgamated with the State Central Library on 26th August 1970 and since then it has become a section of the library.

The present scenario of Government public libraries in Manipur is given at Table 2.2 below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Library</th>
<th>Estd. Year</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rural / Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>State Central Library</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Imphal West</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Netaji Memorial Library (Moirang)</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>District Library (Churachandpur)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>District Library</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>District Library</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>District Library</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>District Library</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>State Central Library (Branch)</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>District Library</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Imphal East (Sawombung)</td>
<td>19/12/06</td>
<td>Imphal East</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Imphal West (Takyelpat)</td>
<td>19/12/06</td>
<td>Imphal West</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Central Library Imphal

2.3.7.7.1 State Central Library

The State Central Library, Imphal was once one of the leading public libraries in the North Eastern Region. The library had a good collection of about 1,50,000 books. It had started library automation and was hosting a node of Community Information Centre (CIC). But unluckily in an agitation the activist of MEELAL (Meetei Erol Eyek Loinasinlon Apunba Lup) ablazed the library on 13th April 2005 at 4:30 p.m. Now the government, the library lovers and the general public are trying their best for revival of the library. Construction of a new building is about to complete.
2.3.7.7.2 District Libraries

In 1974 the Government of Manipur established four district libraries one each at Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. The District Library of Chandel was established in 1977. As a stopgap arrangement, a branch of State Central Library was opened at Ningthoukhong of Bishnupur District on 11th October 1991. On 14th July 2002 the Thoubal District library was opened by the then Hon’ble Minister Art and Culture, Government of Manipur, Dr. M. Nara Singh at the premises of Manipur Sahitya Samiti, Thoubal. The construction of its own building near Ananda Purna High School is now completed. The Imphal West District Library and Imphal East District Library were also opened by the then Hon’ble Minister of Art and Culture, Shree Ph. Parijat Singh on 19th December 2006. So, now all the Districts of Manipur have their own district libraries.

2.3.7.7.3 Netaji Library

Netaji Library is also an important public library of Manipur. The library was established on 21st October 1968. Till 22nd January 1985 the library was under the INA Martyrs’ Memorial Committee. From the 23rd January 1985 the management of the INA Museum - Cum - Library has been undertaken by the Government of Manipur.

2.3.7.8 Club Libraries

As an important component of the public library system there are about 300 (three hundred) club libraries in Manipur. These libraries are run by the voluntary organizations/NGOs. Most of them are located at the four valley
districts. Out of these 300 libraries 130 (one hundred and thirty) have been getting the benefits of Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkata. In the hill areas most of the organisations do not know the importance of libraries and they do not have enough funds to organise library.

2.3.7.9 Role of RRRLF, Manipur University, MALA and Voluntary Organisations in Promoting the Library Movement

The Library movement in a state can be successful only when the governments (both centre and state), institutions, library associations, clubs/voluntary organisations and the public shoulder their responsibilities. In this regard, we may discuss some of the roles played by such organisations.

2.3.7.9.1 RRRLF

The Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) was established in 1972 by the department of Culture, Government of India. The main objectives of the foundation are to promote and support public library movement in the country by providing adequate library services and developing reading habits all over the country. This objective is proposed to be achieved with the active co-operation of the state government and of voluntary organisations operating in the field of library services, literacy campaigns, adult education and the like.

In order to improve library facilities in the country the foundation has adopted certain schemes of matching and non-matching assistance. To avail matching assistance the state government has to contribute 10% of the assistance. Non-matching assistance is usually given to State Central Library
and District Libraries to augment the reading materials and to develop children’s section in the libraries. Assistance is also rendered under different schemes for library building, furniture, equipment and audio-visual materials. In order to extend the library facilities to the disadvantage sections of the people, a scheme of assistance towards the development of mobile library service and rural book deposit centres have been introduced. Besides, the foundation also gives financial assistance for organisation of seminars, workshops, training courses (orientation/ refresher) and book exhibitions. In Manipur the above schemes are availing by the State Central Library, District Libraries, Netaji Library of INA, Manipur Library Association and 130 club and NGO libraries. In addition to the normal financial assistance the foundation is also pleased to sanction some special grants for reconstruction of the State Central Library.

2.3.7.9.2 Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University

The Department of Library and Information Science of MU was opened in 1986. It plays a great role in the library movement of Manipur. Most of the resource persons of the seminars, workshops, symposia, orientation courses, etc. organised in the state are teachers and students of this University. The teachers of the Department played a crucial role in the framing of the Manipur Public Libraries Act, 1988. Earlier the department ran only the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS). But since 2005 the Department has also opened the Masters in Library and Information Science Course. The Department also conducts the Ph. D. programme since 1987.
2.3.7.9.3 Manipur Library Association (MALA)

The Manipur Library Association which was earlier formed in 1975 had a short life. The present Manipur Library Association (MALA) was established on 24th May 1987. The present MALA has been taking sole responsibility for the overall development and movement of the library in the state. The main objectives of the association are to create a congenial library atmosphere throughout the state and to encourage the library movement for achieving the goal. Since its inception in 1987, MALA has been involving in a number of activities related to the library movement and promotion in Manipur. Some of them are listed below:

- Drafting and passing of Manipur Public Libraries Bill 1988 (Bill was passed on 1st August 1988);
- Publishing of a Quarterly Journal entitled Librarygee Eehou (Library Movement) since April-June 1988. But this journal cannot be published regularly;
- Imparting of Library Training Course to the public mainly to the youths of the voluntary organisations;
- Holding Annual Conferences and Seminars under the sponsorship of RRRLF, Kolkata;
- Celebrating Library Day, National Library Weeks etc.;
- Organising symposia, essay competitions, debating competitions, book exhibitions, mass rallies for the cause of the library movement;
Organising Library Awareness Programmes from time to time, etc.

2.3.9.7.4 Voluntary Organisations

The role of voluntary organisations in the library movement of Manipur cannot be ignored. In fact the movement was first started by the voluntary organisations. Most of the clubs and voluntary organisations today feel proud when they have a wing of the Public Library. Such libraries are located in different parts of the state. There is keen competition amongst these libraries and they are developing themselves with only some assistance received from limited sources. With the assistance received from the RRRLF and the advice from MALA many library orientation programmes, library days, library weeks, symposia, debates, group discussions, library programmes, etc. are being organised by them. As a result in all the nooks and corners of Manipur, people have become conscious of the usefulness of public libraries. In Manipur at present there are about 300 libraries run by the voluntary organisations/NGOs. Out of these only 130 club libraries are being selected for assistance under the RRRLF programme.

2.4 Information Communication Technology in Libraries

Information Communication Technology (ICT) involves collection, storage, processing and distribution of information in the libraries of the modern world. ICT is the complete system of technologies. It comprises with two strong technologies, one is information technology which actually deals with the hardware and software elements that allow us to access, store, organise and manipulate the information by electronic means. The second is communication technology, which deals with equipment, infrastructure and
software through which information can be received, accessed and disseminates, for example phones, faxes, modems, networks, etc. ICT has been defined as electronic technologies for collecting, storing, processing and communicating information. ICT infrastructure is usually considered with respect to its main areas like: computer hardware and software, telecommunication and information education.

ALA Glossary defines ICT as “The application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organisation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information” (Venkataramana and Chandrasekhar; 1998; 185).

The first and foremost ICT component which can be adopted in the libraries is the computer for library automation and to have an in-house database of library holdings in electronic form. As many primary journals are being published in CD-form, it becomes necessary to equip the libraries to optimise the use of information. E-mail, online retrieval networking, multimedia and Internet are the other important technologies, which can be used for faster access to information. The innovation in the area of e-journals and e-books and mounting popularity of internet gave birth to the concept of digital library and virtual library.

ICT enables the library user:

a) To capture, store, manipulate, and distribute information;

b) To introduce and provide new services, revitalise the existing services by providing faster access to the resources, by overcoming the space and time barriers;
c) To provide need-based, browsing and retrospective search services to the users;
d) To have large number of databases in CDs;
e) To avoid routine and redundant activities;
f) To utilise the staff for providing better information services;
g) To develop/upgrade the abilities of professionals;
h) To encourage networking and resource sharing at local level;
i) To have access to a number of national and international journals which are being published only in machine readable form;
j) To digitize the documents for preservation and for space saving;
k) To support library functions such as circulation, serials control, acquisition control, stock maintenance and other routine office works and developing in-house database;
l) To retrieve and disseminate the information in user-defined format;
m) To access library catalogues databases of other libraries through library networks;
n) To improve the efficiency of library functions; and
o) To improve the cost effectiveness of library operations.
Thus the adoption of ICT should not be considered as a luxury, but as an added tool to provide the information services, effectively to fulfil the complex needs of the users.

2.4.1 In the Context of Manipur

With the rapid use of ICT, libraries in Manipur face a period of transition. Every organisation, big or small, try to adopt a computer system in their work set up and in libraries. But, only such organisations/libraries that can effectively manage to computerise their library and information activities seem to have properly adopted ICT. The application of ICT in libraries in the state is at the minimal stage.

For the purpose of library automation, the libraries in Manipur can be grouped into three heads, they are:

i) Libraries under State Governments

ii) Libraries under Central Government Organisations and

iii) Libraries of Non-Government Organisations.

One may ask the distinction between two types of libraries at different government level in terms of application of Information Communication Technology. Here it may be mentioned that state government and central government have clear distinction on the above three attributes. The central government organisations have adequate funding provision for procurement of computer hardware and software, databases and other computer peripherals, and for providing training for their professional, whereas, the
state government organisations do not have sufficient fund and interest for the application of ICT in their libraries.

Adequate flow of fund for the library gives ample opportunity for adoption of ICT which is sufficiently available in libraries of central government institution, whereas, not a single library under state government can enjoy the equal status in terms of ICT application to that of the former. In the state government organisations, the financial position is not sound so as to encourage the authority to spend such a huge amount for library automation. As a result, the libraries under the state government suffer from the problem of inadequate finance to cope up with the task of adopting ICT in their libraries.

Libraries are primarily built upon the contribution and dedication of library professionals. Hence professional manpower requirement is a basic need in which real growth and development of library occurs. In respect of library professionals having adequate training in ICT, there is no scope and opportunity for such professionals to work in the state government libraries. The library authorities in the state do not evolve any policy, considering the importance of technical know-how and technical manpower development.

The scenario of library management and the application of ICT in NGO sector are quite different. There are a few such organisations in Manipur which have libraries up to mark and they have somehow applied ICT in their libraries. Most of the NGOs do not have formal libraries of their own so as to provide library services.
There are two Universities in Manipur viz Manipur University and Central Agriculture University. Under Manipur University, there are 73 colleges. Of these 73 colleges, 33 are government colleges, 8 are affiliated government aided colleges, 24 are affiliated private colleges and 8 are permitted private colleges. All these higher institutions have their libraries. In addition to this, there are 11 government public libraries, many special libraries and high and higher secondary school libraries. But most of the libraries function in the traditional way with conventional printed books and journals. However the following libraries like Manipur University Library, RIMS Library, DOEACC Library, Modern College Library, S.Kula Women’s College Library, R.K. Sanatombi Teacher’s Training College library etc. have the modern ICT facilities.

In 1986 the North Eastern Council (NEC) initiated library automation in the Universities of N.E. Region including Manipur University. But the programme was not successful. In April 1988, the University Grants Commission (UGC) constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Yash Pal to work the feasibilities of INFLIBNET. The report of this working group was published in December 1988. But after taking sufficient time in planning and proper budgetary allocation, the programme was implemented by the UGC with effect from 1st April 1991.

 Soon after, INFLIBNET started collection of data from the University libraries of India. By the mean time, the UGC in 1992 under the scheme called as CDC, a programme for up gradation of Computer system in the Manipur University sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1,45,000/- specifically for the Manipur University library and purchased a) an AT 486 computer b) a Dot
matrix printer c) a Servo Voltage Stabilizer. The programme was commissioned in the library in October 1993. So far INFLIBNET has given computer training to 3 staff members of the University. Besides the library has sufficient number of qualified staff. Some of the above factors might be the justification for selection of this University as the first node of INFLIBNET from the North East.

The application of ICT in a few libraries of Manipur is in the initial stage. Participation in the HELLIS (Health Literature Library and Information Services) programmes of the Health Science Libraries in the South East Asian Region by the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Manipur in 1992 and INFLIBNET programme of UGC by the Manipur University Library in 1993 may be considered as important steps taken up for automating their respective libraries. Most of the libraries in Manipur developed their collection in the form of printed material and the quality of collections, facilities, services and staffs are very poor. Some of the libraries have started automation using software packages like SOUL, SMART LIBRARY, Window XT, CDS/ISIS and some of the libraries are under the process of automation and majority of the libraries have not yet automated because of lack of infrastructure like computer hardware, software and qualified and trained staff thereby facing lot of difficulties to switch over to modernisation of libraries. And most of the libraries can not provide internet facilities to their users. Regarding school and higher secondary school libraries, majority of them are not able to provide even the facilities of a traditional library.

The Manipur University Library, which was one of the INFLIBNET centres in the first batch get the opportunity of implementing the UGC-
INFONET program of UGC since 2003 with the expectation that the different groups of the users of the library access to the Union database of INFLIBNET as well as the internet access to more than 7000 foreign journals through UGC-Infonet. From time to time, the Manipur University library organises training and workshop programmes about the use of Information Communication Technologies in the library at the national and regional levels. The Manipur University Library was declared as one of the INFLIBNET nodes in the year 1993. The university has been actively participating in all the programmes which were arranged by the INFLIBNET from time to time. The UGC has released required sanctions to meet the expenditure for the automation of the Library. The University has also procured most of the items as per configurations prescribed by the INFLIBNET.

Inspite of some limitations, the INFLIBNET section has been providing commendable services to the library users. The libraries are now able to:

- connect to other libraries of the country;
- utilize information-resources of the Manipur University Library by creating databases for books, journals and theses /dissertations;
- check duplicate purchasing in the library;
- provide reliable access to the Online Union Catalogue of documents created by other university libraries which have joined INFLIBNET programme;
provide e-mail facilities for the scientists, researchers, faculty, staff and students;

provide OPAC to different departments through campus network over the web; and

offer the facilities for downloading e-papers from different places (print/non-print media).

On 20\textsuperscript{th} February 2007 the Manipur University made a proposal to INFLIBNET for giving INFLIBNET services to near about 50 colleges affiliated to Manipur University. The INFLIBNET had accepted the proposal and suggested to go in a phased manner of 10 each at a time.

The Regional Institute of Medical Sciences Library, Manipur has also internet facility. In 1999, the NEC provided a VSAT FTDMA (Very Small Aperture Terminal Frequency Time Division Multiplex Access) having a capacity of 64 Kbps to the RIMS Library. Again in the year, 2004, it has been upgraded to DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) 2mbps. Library has installed another 15 computer terminals for complete automation and it has a plan of a Local Area Networking (LAN) which will facilitate to all the departments to access the database of the Library. Effort for automation of the library has started from 1992 after up-gradation of RIMS Library as one of the six Regional Medical Libraries of India. Since 01.04.2007, when Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) Library was taken over by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India, there is a proposal for complete digitisation of RIMS Library.
2.5 Conclusion

Though in ancient Manipur there was the process of preservation of books under the royal patronage but there were only for the scholarly persons, not for the common people. The true modern library system in Manipur started from the beginning of the 20th century. Library activities can be performed with sophistication using Information Communication Technology (ICT). Use of ICT enhances the service standards and enables to introduce new services in libraries.
References


