CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical Background:

The history of library is as old as the history and civilization of mankind. It is older than books, paper and print. It extends back to the scrolls papyri and clay tablets library of ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian countries. Buddhist monasteries like Nalanda, Takhasila, Vallavi, Varanasi were the recorded library centres in ancient India. The kings and chieftains of different states had a good library of rich collection of manuscripts and other materials. Tols and Pathsalas which were the centres of Brahmanic education in ancient Assam had a good collection of books in the form of library. The Ahom kings patronised scholars for writing books in different disciplines. They laid more emphasis on writing Buranjies (histories). Besides, history and literature books were written on Ayurved, Botany, Arts and Crafts and even on animal husbandry. The Hastividyaarnava, a famous book written during Ahom rule contains the care and treatment of horses, elephants and other domestic animals. The rich collection of Buranjies (histories) were destroyed by blitzing fire by Kirtichandra Barbaruah which is called "Buronji Daha" burning of history, in the history of library during Ahom reign.
Libraries of different religious sects had been established in centres round the different temples scattered all over Assam. During Vaishnavite movement a new era and light has been focused in the cultural, social, religious and educational life of Assam. A new library system had grown up in centres round the Namgharas and Satras in different places of Assam. Besides private libraries of different scholars and panditas, rich families had a good collection of manuscripts. Writing of books was very troublesome business at that time. The manuscripts were written either in Bhujapatra or in Sashipata in Kaithali scripts. Books were beyond the reach of common people. Libraries were few, collection were limited and confined to a particular section of readers in the society. The copper plates were designed by Hangual and Hytal. Besides copper plate, the stone inscription of different scripts were the recorded history and civilization of different periods during the Ahom rule. Books were regarded as a part of holy thing. Writers were offered special honours in the society, and occupied highest place in the king’s court.

During the British rule, with best effort of Reverend Nathan Brown and A.C. Cuttaw, a new era had been established in the educational history of Assam, after the printing of first Assamese magazine Arunodoi. Libraries were established with limited collection of books in higher educational institutions. The British collected a large number of rare manuscripts of
different disciplines and preserved them in the British Museum, London and enriched their own libraries.

After independence academic libraries have grown up in centres round the present higher educational institution all over the State. Public libraries in the form of State, Central, District and Sub-divisional headquarters of Assam. Village public libraries were set up in the rural areas. Establishment of industrial, research and special type of libraries were set up in the respective technical, educational, institutions, industrial organisations and research centres. Some eminent scholars have built up private libraries. K.K. Handique who had a collection of books of thirteen languages of the value of five lakhs of rupees has been donated to the University of Gauhati.

In Assam 83 per cent of the people live in the rural areas of whom 63 per cent or more live below the poverty line and about 80 per cent are illiterate. Majority of the village population have no idea about library and its various services to the society. The conditions of existing library systems is deplorable. The well educated rape the books and periodicals.

1.2 Significance.

Library forms a vital part of the modern system of communication and education. Best books are the products of best minds. One who reads the best books is in the company of
best minds and develops his personality. The present day
Library System suffers greatly from libraries of the past not
only in kind and services, but also in physical lay out and
atmosphere. In future of libraries may differ from those of
the present day. To day's libraries house many books, maga-
zines, newspapers, pamphlets, paintings, recorders, taps,
films, photographs, micro production, automation and computer-
ised information. Before inventing the printing presses, books
were neither mass media of communication nor education. It was
confined to a limited few scholars and families and preserved
it in the "Dhown Chang" e.i. a particular place above where
the cooking was made. It was preserved that any kind of
insects or other elements cannot destroy the books or it cannot
be damaged in any form either by moisture or by insects. The
circulation of books was very much limited. Due to fear of
destroying books, more emphasis was given for preservation and
not for circulation or use. Besides, books were regarded as
part of holy things. It was a traditional belief that books
can be read and written with purity of mind and soul.

Library is an essential instrument for giving reality
to the potential of books. The enduring function of a library
has been profoundly affected by changes in the technology by
which worlds are embodied in physical form. Before the inven-
tion of printing, manual reproduction of books did not allow
the accumulation of large quantities of materials. Libraries
were few, their circulation was small and users were only handful. Years of continuous efforts by countless librarians have radically changed the narrow role of libraries and have made library system a vital service.

1.3 Nature and Scope.

In the modern society the growth of knowledge is very rapid and educational system must be progressive and dynamic. The object of education is to equalise opportunity of backward and underprivileged classes. Dissemination of knowledge is the main objective of a library. It is an integral part of informal educational system and everybody irrespective of class, creed, community, religion and age can take part in it. Use of library resources depends upon the very success of the library. Modern library is not merely the store house of books but it can be regarded as store house of knowledge and power house of learning. Years of continuous efforts have changed the narrow perspective of the library "books are for use not for preservation". From book sellers shop to the book shelves in the library and to the renders, different processes and techniques are to be adopted and implemented so that the right readers should get the right books at the right time.

1.4 Library Administration.

Library administration co-ordinates the various activities and the components of the library and brings about harmony
between plan and practices and goals. Thus library adminis-
tration minimise waste in both the material and human
resources by filling up gaps, avoiding overlapping, regulation
the work in a systematic manner, integrating the parts in to
the whole and distributing the entire work in the proper
manner. It places the right persons at the right work, in
right manner and in right place and contributes to the effec-
tiveness of the educational programme. It simplifies the
complexities of the work and ensures best results. Library
administration deals with large society, the institutions,
equipments, library aids, convention, rules, regulations and
code. It has to solve innumerable problems regarding staff-
ing, financing, budgeting, charging and discharging, classifi-
cation, cataloguing, technical procedure, documentation
process, automation and computarisation, including teaching,
research guidance, organisation, supervision, maintanance,
preservation and guidance to the community and self education.
It incorporates new thoughts, concepts, and practices.

1.5 Problems.

The libraries in Assam are facing innumerable problems
of diverse nature, due to inefficient and ineffective adminis-
tration. Management and organisation are not proper, and
defective for functional or operational purpose. Planning
both internal and external is not sound. It does not mean to
cope with the present situation but also with the provisions
for future development. Most of the buildings are not as per specification either of the U.G.C. or I.S.I. No strong movement has grown up so as to pressurise the authorities for the enactment of the Assam Public Library Bill into an Act. All most all the Associations are in dying State. Financial help from the Government, or from the authority is neither timely nor sufficient to cope with the present demand. Library rate cannot be imposed for want of library laws. Utilization of different grants are not done properly and grants exclusively meant for the library are diverted for some other purposes, and it leads to defeating the basic objectives of the library. There is no library committee for the proper management and functioning of the libraries. The supervising authority does not supervise properly and does not give importance to physical existence. The status of the librarian has not been determined. Untrained persons are still appointed as Librarian, though well trained personnel with requisite qualifications are necessary for the implementation of the modern techniques and development. Better result can be expected only from the trained and qualified personnel, but traditional practices in respect of performance of duty and the out-dated and unscientific methods are still prevailing due to bureaucratic attitude of the authority. Librarians are engaged in office work rather than in the management of the library. Even qualified librarians are ignored in book selection, staff selection and decision making. Academic libraries are functioning without a reading room, separate building, adequate
furniture and fixture and other working facilities to its staff which have hampered to a great extent in rendering service to the readers. School libraries are only worth the name. No librarian is appointed in school libraries. The overall position of academic libraries is deplorable. There is no scope in curriculum for the study of libraries in elementary, secondary or even in higher stages of education and therefore, teaching and examination system is not library oriented. Co-operation and coordination from teaching community and the authority fails to motivate the students for developing reading habits and develop their library civic sense. Therefore, the library administration in Assam is to be thoroughly investigated and reviewed.

1.6 Aims and Objectives.

Long long in the past there existed no library of the present form. There was no necessity of administrative control. But at present the complexities have arisen and required strict administrative control of the library. The library is to be so organised and controlled so that there cannot be any kind of wastage of property or mismanagement. There are different problems. So an attempt is made to investigate them in this study. Proper measures are suggested so that the existing anomalies of library administration can be weeded out in future.
I was keenly interested to investigate library administration and its associated problems particularly from an administrative point of view. The work is confined only to the State of Assam, so far no one worked on this subject. It is therefore, my aim to study the problems thoroughly and find out ways and means for their solution. I hope, that my attempt to study the topic will add new dimension in the field of education in general and library science in particular.

1.7 **Hypotheses:**

The hypotheses on the topic is based on the following points:

1. **Library Administration is not efficient.**
   1.1 Librarians are not properly trained. 1.2. Modern techniques are not implemented in libraries. 1.3 No library committee for libraries.

2. **Libraries are very poorly organised and managed.**
   2.1 No reading room facilities. 2.2 No separate building provision. 2.3 School libraries are functioning without library facilities. 2.4 Planning is not proper. 2.5 Libraries are not supervised by the authority.

3. **Status of the librarian is not determined.**
   3.1 Appointed unqualified persons. 3.2 Use more office work rather than library service. 3.3 Librarians are ignored in library affairs. 3.4 Librarians needs training.
3.5 No. efforts to improve the working conditions.
3.6 Staff are not provided as per standard norms.

4. **Library movement is not successful.**

4.1 No proper function of A.L.A. 4.2 A.C.L.A. and other associations are inactive.

5. **Library Legislation is not implemented.**

6. **Finance is inadequate.**

6.1 Financial help from the authority is neither timely nor sufficient. 6.2 Library grants diverted to some other purposes. 6.3 Library accounts are not separately maintained. 6.4. Library rate is imposed.

7. **Teaching and examination system is not library oriented.**

7.1 No scope in curriculum for study about library.
7.2 No co-operation and co-ordination from the teaching community and the authority to motivate the students for developing the reading habits and library civic sense.

1.8 **Methodology of Investigation:**

The source materials are collected from printed books, manuscripts, both published and unpublished, journals and other library materials. Field study and methodology of research such as questionnaire, interview, and case study methods was adopted for, for preparation of this work. The historical, analytical and critical methods are also applied.
for performing critical analysis, well acquainted to the historical facts and background in the respective chapter. Behavioural methodology is not adopted, as it is not applicable so far as library administration is concerned. Due to dearth of materials, specially in the case of village public libraries accurate accounts could not be secured. Therefore, the study is based mainly on the original sources collected from the field study and investigation on this particular topic. The Government agencies, industrial organisations and educational institutions have not responded as expected.

1.9 Chapterization:

Now, I would like to give an account of the chapters in this thesis.

The present work has been divided into nine chapters and most of the chapters have a conclusion. Chapter one is an introductory, in which an attempt has been made to give in general the historical background, significance, nature and scope, importance of the topic, problems, aims and objectives of the study, hypothesis and methodology of investigation etc. in brief.

Chapter two contains the Ideological basis and philosophical background, in which an attempt is made to discuss the place of library in connection with educational institutions. It also discusses the philosophy and ethics in
the profession of librarianship.

Chapter three includes library movement in Assam. An attempt has been made to investigate a brief history of library movement, activities of different associations, reports of various seminars etc.

Chapter four deals with classification of libraries. Various investigations have been made from different stand points. An attempt has been made to discuss them from the administrative point of view.

Chapter five contains the planning and organisation of library. Attempt has been made to present the practical difficulties in its functional affairs. Different forms of organisation and function of library planning, its need in the administrative set up are also discussed.

Chapter six, I have discuss financial administration of the library. Attempt has been made to depict actual position regarding finance, budget, maintaining of accounts and audit, method of estimation, control of the expenditure.

Chapter Seven is deals with personnel administration. More emphasis has been given on professionally qualified staff, training facilities, maintainance of rules and regulation and status of the librarian.

Chapter eight tries to discuss the system analysis and applied techniques of library. An attempt has been made
to discuss the present position and how modern techniques can be adopted in libraries.

Chapter nine is the concluding chapter, containing the conclusions arrived at in the previous chapters.