

Library Services, Library Legislation and Library Association in Mizoram

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Abstract – The establishment of the first Sub-divisional Library at Aizawl in the year 1969, Public libraries services are put under the supervision and control of the Department of Art & Culture, Public Library Act 1993 which had been passed in Mizoram is not implement. In spite of efforts made by the library association the library services are not developing. Staff and financial allocation for public library services are inadequate. Most of the library staffs are non professional. The professional association in Mizoram is very active in promoting library services and aware the needs and importance of library to general public.

Keywords: Library service, Public library. Mizoram Library Association, YMA, Library Act. Library seminars, library training.

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INTRODUCTION

Library Services had came into existed in Mizoram with the establishment of the first Sub-divisional Library at Aizawl in the year 1969. In 1972, State Library at Aizawl and two district Libraries are established at Saiha and Lunglei, another two district libraries are established at Charnphai and Kolasib. Presently most of the government recognized libraries are run by the voluntary Young Mizo Association, the largest NGO body in Mizoram onvoluntary basis. In Mizoram, public libraries services are put under the supervision and control of the Department of Art & Culture through its administration wing of State Library Services. State Government and Mizoram Library Association (established on 23rd October 1987 at Aizawl) directly or indirectly associated and assist village/rural libraries with financial assistance from RRRLF in different ways. The Association renders lots of services for development, promotion and improvement of the library services. The government is not implementing the Public Library Act 1793, which is the foundation for planning, development, establishment and budgeting for public library services.

LIBRARY SERVICES:

1. **Staffing:** A Public Library Services in Mizoram is managed by inadequate staff and non- professionals. Even the State Library is run by 12 staff and most of the staffs are non professionals. As well, each of the 5 district libraries is run by very less than 5 staffs.

Village libraries are run by YMA, and the staffs are keeping changing year to year. Those staffs are enjoying lower pay. There is no uniformity in their qualification, status and pay structures.

2. **Financial Assistance:** Financial assistance for public libraries (in lakh), sanction accorded by government of Mizoram from 2010-2020 is Rs.646.45 lakhs (Rupees Six hundred forty six and 45 thousand) only
3. **Library visitors:** Library visitor of public library in Mizoram upto 2010 may be highlighted as Follows.

Total No. of people who visited Libraries: - 28,992

Total percentage of persons who visit Libraries: - 30.64%

4. **No of libraries in Mizoram:** The public library services in Mizoram is very backward there is no automated public library till date, for which initiative had been taken in the State Library.

State Library- 1, District Library-5, Village/Recognized Library - 424. Total- **430 Nos**

The Mizoram Public Libraries Act, 1993.

To provide for the establishment, maintenance and development of comprehensive public libraries

system, Government of Mizoram had passed Public Libraries Bill on 6th January 1993 by legislation, and it became an Act on 25th February 1993, but till now it is not fully implemented. The Act shall extend to the whole of the State of Mizoram. Various components or features of this Act are

A. The State Library Council: The State Council consisting of the following ex-officio members-

1. The Minister / Secretary of Education & Human Resources.
2. The Director of Art & Culture / School Edu / H&TE SCERT / I&PR / AIR / Public Libraries.
3. The State Librarian / University Librarian, MZU, Mizoram, Aizawl
4. Other member of NGOs such as- One member from MLA/MAL/YMA/MCL/MPB

B. Department of Public Libraries:

According to this Act, there shall be Department of Public Libraries with a Director at its head, assisted by the Joint Director, the Deputy Director, and other necessary supporting staff. The existing Library staff for the purpose of absorption shall have to obtain necessary qualification within a limit of time as may be prescribed.

C. Categories of Public Libraries: In accordance with the Act, Libraries shall be divided into four categories as follows:-

1. **State Library-1**, function as Library as well as reservoir of books.
2. **District Library-1** for each district, at its headquarters
3. **Sub-Divisional Library-1** for each sub divisions
4. **Village Library-1** for each village. Provided that if the village is as may found and considered deserving and suitable by the Government from time to time.

D. The Library Sections: The State Library shall consist of the following sections:

1. Bureau of copy right, / State Library for the blind, / Inter Library Loan
2. State Bibliographical Bureau
3. Technical Service / Mobile Service

E. Financial Assistance: For maintenance of library, salaries, allowances, other financial benefits and grants to village libraries may be sanctioned with matching grant from RRRLF

F. State Library Association: As per the provisions of the Act, the Library Council would recognize the state library association and the Director shall consult that association on important library service matters.

Mizoram Library Association:

Mizoram Library Association was established on the 23rd October 1987 (Friday). And publicized and brought to the notice of the Government. As well the 'Mizoram Library Association' was registered the under Registration No. was No.SR.27 of 1987 on 19th November 1987.

Aims and objectives: The Mizoram Library Association was established and set out with the following aims and objectives:

1. To improve the standard of library services, and status of the library professionals.
2. To encourage the establishment, development and uses of libraries in Mizoram.
3. To encourage professional Education and Training for librarianship.

Membership: The Mizoram Library Association have open membership to employees of all libraries in Mizoram and Library Science students who are bonafide residents of Mizoram.

Organization: In its organization, Mizoram Library Association has the term of office for two years commencing on the date of election or till next election was held, besides, there is an executive committee member, advisers and patrons. At present MLA have no branch, all of its member libraries are directly link with Headquarters. General Meeting of Association is another important aspects of organization, it is the highest policy making authority convened once in two years.

Relation with RRRLF: The Mizoram Library Association has a good relation with RRRLF, Kolkata, With the approval of Department of Art & Culture the foundation sanctioned financial assistances for organization of library training and seminars. Therefore, Association maintains close relation with the foundation in its activities.

Relation with Art & Culture Department Govt. of Mizoram: The Art & Culture Department Govt. of Mizoram and the Mizoram Library Association maintain good relationship in their functioning and various activities, like, Library Seminar and training, observation of Book Week etc. Whenever programme related to public library services, the department seeks help and advises from the association. On the other hand, the association also took help and financial assistance from the department.

Activities of Mizoram Library Association: The Association actively involves in the works of promoting and developing library services in Mizoram. It always organized state level programme with a view to improving library management and its services. Those Activities of the Association are mainly in the field of library training, seminars, conferences and other important activities relating to improvement and development of library services. Those activities may be presented as the following:-

Library Training: The Association understood that the existing working librarians as well as library professionals in various libraries are in need of training. And in general, the public should also be trained and made aware of the importance of library services. For which the Association pay serious attention to train the library professionals in particular and the public in general. During 1989-2008, 14 trainings had been conducted on Library for Integration, technical management, circulation/Accessioning and Classification etc. As per the request made by various libraries four special training had also been conducted.

Conferences: The Mizoram Library Association held conference in every two years, for its member with a purpose of awareness of library development and its importance. These conferences always discuss problems and prospect of libraries in Mizoram. Here, various resolutions were passed regarding actions to be taken by the association as well as pressurized the government to implement Public Libraries Act.

Library Seminars: Organizing Seminar was other important activities of Mizoram Library Association with a view to developed Library Services and its awareness, as well as its importance for development; the Association organized various library seminars. In these seminars different topic were studied and discussed thoroughly, these helps the library professional as well as the public in their consciousness about the importance of library services for development.

Participation in RRRLF seminars: RRRLF organized seminars, like, Silver Jubilee Celebration Seminar on 23rd- 24th April, 1998 at Guwahati. And "Role" of Public Libraries in India: on 16th February 2001 at Delhi, 'Reading habits: New challenges'.

RRRLF Seminar on 11th February 2003 at Delhi, of the role of 'Public Libraries in addressing new challenges: Confronting the changing pattern of the society'. One delegate was sent to represent in Mizoram Library Association in these besides, two Association Members participated in Lunglei District Library Silver Jubilee seminar.

Library Visit: Visiting various Libraries in the village as well as within Aizawl was another important Association activity; such visit with a specific purpose greatly develops library services. The Association had visited 82 member libraries and inspected their management and give suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of libraries.

Best library selection: Among its member libraries, the Mizoram Library Association selects top five libraries as well as the best libraries in 2003. To select the best, Association has sent questionnaire containing 39 queries to 415 member libraries out of which 272 questionnaire responses are received.

Submission of best library: RRRLF entrusted Mizoram Library Association to submit five best rural libraries for selection of 'Best Rural Library' for which the Association inspected village libraries and submit 5 best libraries to RRRLF for final selection on 28.4.2005.

Publications: The Mizoram Library Association felt that the importance of publication and distributing the seminars papers and training topic for further references as well as to educate the public, and for consultation library professional. Association published the following:

Library Education Booklet since 1990. Seminar papers and training topics

Library Guide' topics on management, organization and technical works in Library was published in 1997.

Public awareness: To educate the public as well as library professional, Mizoram Library Association performed the following:

- T.V: Discussion on the importance and uses of Library.
- Radio talk on the importance of Library for development of the nation
- Essay Competition on the topic of "Library Services for Nation development" for awareness of Library importance was also conducted in 1999.

- Press Conference on the implementation of Mizoram Public Libraries Act 1993 and its problems and prospects

Other Activities:

Certificate Course in Library Science: The Association organized Certificate Course in Library Science in collaboration with Art & Culture, Govt. of Mizoram. The course was recognized and approved by NEHU Academic Council Vide No. AC.34/88.5:02(B). Certificate course was conducted during Aug - Dec. 1997 and 24 students enrolled.

Observation of National Book Week: Mizoram Library Association always actively took part and co-operated the Govt. in observation of National Book week, Book exhibition and book display.

Distribution of Accession Register: To improve systematic management of Library and to record books in the Library Mizoram Library Association procured fifty copies of accession register from Mehra & Co. Delhi and the same was distributed to selected Libraries.

Library Recognition: Being a member of State Library Planning Board, the Association always recommended and suggested rural Libraries for Government recognitions and financial assistance. For which the association visits various rural libraries and trained technical management of library to be conform to standards of library management.

Observation of Librarian's Day: The Association in collaboration with the Art & Culture Department observes Librarians Day i.e 12th August, every year with the propagation of the importance of library services and reading habits. In the programme, the award of best library user was distributed among the members of the State Library.

Activities for library services, Act implementation etc.

- Mizoram Library Association actively involved in service matter for each member. Recommendation and suggestion, representation are submitted for the full implementation of UGC norms and Recommendation regarding Pay & Post in college Libraries.
- Strong request had been put up to the Govt. for immediate construction of Library building.
- Recommendation and suggestion are submitted to the Govt. for staff recruitment rules and pay up gradation and submitted proposal to establish H/S and HSS Library.

- Meeting and press conference was held with Political Parties, officials with a view to implement Public Library Act 1993.

CONCLUSION:

Implementation of Public Library Act is needed to ensure effective administration and financial support to all public libraries so that they can serve the people needs of information. It is, so much required for better library services, development and efficiency with minimum standard to satisfy user's need. The government, officials, public and library professional should feel the need of enactment of library legislation to provide better library facilities directly from the state levels to the village level under the Directorate of Library services or State Central Library.

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