



## SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN ASSAM: PROBLEM AND PROSPECTS [A CASE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAMRUP (RURAL) DISTRICT]

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### ABSTRACT

The school education which is considered to be the basic infrastructure of the whole education system in a country should consist of all the necessary ingredients for its successful functioning. The library is an essential part of school education without which it is not possible to have an effective learning environment. In Assam what we have noticed, is that, almost all the Govt. run schools are not having proper library facility. At the age of growing competition with the privately run schools, it becomes very essential to mitigate the problems of Govt. run schools where majority of the students enrolled are belonging to poor and middle income group of people. Considering the significance of library services in the school education we have tried to study the present scenario of library services in the Govt. schools of Assam. For this a survey based on questionnaire was done and some major findings from it have been recorded. Some suggestions for solution of different problems have also been tried to prescribe here.

**KEYWORDS:** Library services, School Education, Library Infrastructure.

### INTRODUCTION

Library which is a very important and inseparable part of any educational institution play significant role in disseminating knowledge among the students (specially) and all the associated members of the institution. The schools are regarded as the basic infrastructure of educational system of any country. Therefore, it is felt that proper education or education in right direction can be proceeded only with the implementation of appropriate school education. Without proper library services in school we cannot think about a complete education for the students of the school and at the same time the teaching process also does not run swiftly due to lack of sufficient resources. Ignorance of the students about use of library services in school life may create hesitation among themselves to use valuable service of library in higher educational institution in future. Therefore, the studies of school libraries have been gaining its importance with the gradual development of technologies to be used in library services for the upliftment of student's quality and ultimately the quality of education in a country.

Objective of the study:

It is a well established fact that without proper objectives a study cannot pass through a right or systematic way of observations and analysis. The present study has also its basic objectives for the attainment of which it has given its utmost concentration. The main objectives of the study are presented as follows

1. To have an actual picture of school libraries of Assam.
2. To find out the problems which have been facing by the school libraries.
3. To derive some suggestive measures for the solution of those problems.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The present study is basically aiming at to study the problems of school libraries in Assam. The core problem which the researcher thinks to be important is that, "Whether libraries exist in all the schools of Assam and if exist, are they running according to the basic norms which a minimum standard library should follow?"

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The scope of such type of study is very extensive because within this topic we may enquire into different aspects of school libraries, all of which are not possible to cover under the present study. Therefore we have confined our study only to the basic activities of school libraries (lending, borrowing, availability of related materials infrastructures etc). Furthermore we have limited the scope of the study to a particular Development Block 'Rangia' of District Kamrup (Rural) and depending on the findings from this District, an overview of present status and future prospects of school libraries in Assam will be tried to frame out. Under this study we shall also enquire into some educational measures and schemes taken by Govt of Assam which may have their direct effect on school libraries of Assam. Another point regarding the scope of the study is that the study would cover only the Govt sector schools of the study area, because the Govt sector schools have been confronting with major challenges with the growing numbers of private sector schools in Assam.

Since, there are many levels of schools such as lower primary (from class I to V), ME (VI to VIII), High (IX to X) and higher secondary (including classes XI to XII), therefore, it will be difficult to cover all categories of school and hence only high schools and ME amalgamated high schools and higher secondary schools will be included within the purview of our study.

**METHODOLOGY:**

In every research a particular methodology is applied for the systematic completion of the study. The methodology which is going to be applied for a particular research should be formulated at the preliminary stage of the study. In our study we shall apply survey method for collecting primary data on the particular issues of our study. Since there are so many numbers of high schools and higher secondary schools in the Block therefore we have drawn a sample of schools, by selecting 25 schools from the development block. Although the present study would depend mostly on primary data, yet for the reference of different related study we may furnish some secondary data collected from different sources such as, published or unpublished. To have a clear picture of present status of school libraries of Assam we may take the help of secondary data published by the responsible departments of Govt and non governmental organization. We should also take the help of research publication on this particular issue in this regard.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

This study is assumed to be very significant from different angles. All the sincere citizens of any country can imagine the necessity of a library in the school for the proper execution of teaching learning process. But what is happening in Assam is that in the school education system the library gets little importance or no importance. In some school there may not be any set up in the name of a library whereas in some others there may be only an almirah with a few numbers of books. Therefore it becomes very important for us to structure a proper investigation on the present status of the school libraries of Assam and problems from which the school education system has been suffering in the process of setting up a desirable structure of school library. The Govt of Assam has recently executed 'Gunotsav' (The project for upgrading the school education system on the basis of both internal and external evaluation covering both curricular and co-curricular aspects and also role of community) where the question of existence and operation of school libraries have been incorporated.

This type of study will certainly derive its significance by defeating different loopholes that are prevailing in the school system of education due to which we are lagging behind in respect of having a good

library system in the schools of Assam. The research on this particular issue may help us in deriving different measures for the up-gradation of school libraries to a desired state.

### MAJOR FINDINGS

The primary data were collected from the schools surveyed on the basis of filled up questionnaire collected from collected from them. All the school returned the questionnaire with a very good response. We have gathered many valuable information regarding the condition of school libraries which are tabulated and analyzed in the following manner.

In the following table (table 1) we have listed the name of the school surveyed and their year of establishment, which will be important for us to know the status of the school libraries in those schools after completion of a certain age in the process of teaching and learning.

### LIST OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED:

Table 1

SL No.	Name	Address	Year of Establishment
1	Arimatta Higher Secondary School	Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1964
2	Banshidhar Choudhury Bodo High School	Barmish Nagar, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam 781354	1980
3	Haradutta Viradutta High School	Sundhia, P.O. Rangia Dist. Kamrup, Assam Pin 781354	1981
4	Hindi High School	Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1961
5	Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya	Jamtola, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam 781354	2001
6	Jawarjyoti Higher Secondary School	Puthimari, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam 781380	1964
7	Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School	Puthimari, Rangia, Kamrup 781380	1962
8	Jogeswar Vidyapith	Gopalpur, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam 781354	1967
9	Kachari Mahal Higher Secondary School	Madhukuchi, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1963
10	Kaniha Uchattar Madhamik Bidyalaya	Kaniha, Kamrup, Assam, 781380	1942
11	Kendriya Vidyalaya NF RLY Rangia	Station Road, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	2010
12	Madhya Panduri Higher Secondary School	Jamtola, Rangia Kamrup 781354	1965
13	Maranjana Anchalik High Madrasa	Maranjana, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1987
14	Milon Mandir High School	Pitambar haat bajali, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1983
15	Padum Kuwari Collegiate High School	Boangoan, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1983

16	Pitambar Adarshya High School	Pitambar Haat bajali, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1964
17	Puthimari Higher Secondary School	Soneswar, Puthimari, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781380	1926
18	Premada Siva Nath bidyapith	Chepti, Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, 781354	1979
19	Pub Rangia High School	Kekenikuchi, Rangia, kamrup, Assam, 781354	1979
20	Puthimari High School	Puthimari, Rangia, Assam, 781380	1984
21	Rangia Girls Higher Secondary. School	Rangia, Kamrup, 781354	1952
22	Rangia Higher.Secondary School	Rangia, Kamrup, 781354	1936
23	Rangia High Madrasa School	Rangia, Kamrup, 781354	1936
24	Siddhi Nath Vidya Mandir High School	Nakul, Rangia, Kamrup, 781354	1969
25	Tulshibari Bahumukhi Higher Secondary School	Tulshibari, Rangia, 781354	1969

Source –field survey:

This is a very simple but important study where it was given most importance to know whether a separate setup of library exists in the school or not and if exists are they functioning well? Some major findings of the study are presented below.

**Table 2**

**Library Infrastructure:**

SL NO	Name of the School	Status of Infrastructure	
		Stock room	Reading room
1	Arimatta Higher Secondary School	No	No
2	Banshidhar Choudhury Bodo High School	No	No
3	Haradutta Viradutta High School	No	No
4	Hindi High School	No	No
5	Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya	Yes	Yes
6	Jawarjyoti Higher Secondary School	No	No
7	Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School	Yes	Yes
8	Jogeswar Vidyapith	No	No
9	Kachari Mahal Higher Secondary School	Yes	Yes
10	Kaniha Uchattar Madhamik Bidyalaya	No	No
11	Kendriya Vidyalaya NF RLY Rangia	No	No
12	Madhya Panduri Higher Secondary School	No	No
13	Maranjana Anchalik High Madrasa	No	No
14	Milon Mandir High School	No	No
15	Padum Kuwari Collegiate High School	yes	yes
16	Pitambar Adarshya High School	No	No
17	Puthimari Higher Secondary School	No	No
18	Premada Siva Nath Bidyapith	No	No
19	Pub Rangia High School	No	No

20	Puthimari High School	No	No
21	Rangia Girls Higher Secondary School	Yes	Yes
22	Rangia Higher Secondary School	Yes	Yes
23	Rangia High Madrasa School	No	No
24	Siddhi Nath Vidya Mandir High School	No	No
25	Tulshibari Bahumukhi Higher Secondary School	No	No

Source- Field survey:

The table above shows that except 6 schools out of 25 schools surveyed there is no facility of library stack room. In the name of the library there are either small almiraah or a very simple open stack in the teacher's common room or in the room of headmaster's/Principal's office. In those schools the lending or borrowing of books may be done, if necessary, only on Saturday. Normally these schools rarely have to operate this type of transactions. In Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya there is separate stack room and reading room where the normal functions of library services have been running well. But in other 5 schools although it is found that there are stock rooms and reading room but the cases are to some extent different from the Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya. There are separate stack rooms within which a facility of reading space has been arranged for the students and teachers. That is there is no separate infrastructure for reading room. Furthermore, a teacher in charge have been deputed who take the responsibility of lending and borrowing books for a certain span of time within the working day according to his/her convenience. Here, we can appraise the teacher of these particular schools for their responsible effort and also the managements of these schools are very active in this particular regard.

**Table 3 Average daily issue of books**

SL No	Name of the school	Average No. of daily issue books			
		Text Book	Reference Book	Magazine	Story Book
1	Arimatta Higher Secondary School	0	16	0	5
2	Banshidhar Choudhury Bodo High School	0	0	0	2
3	Haradutta viradutta high school	0	0	0	1
4	Hindi High School	0	0	0	3
5	Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya	0	43	14	14
6	Jawarjyoti Higher secondary school	0	11	1	6
7	Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary school	0	8	1	8
8	Jogeswar Vidyapith	0	0	0	3
9	Kachari mahal Higher secondary school	0	25	0	10
10	Kaniha Ucchattar MadhamikBidyalya	0	28	0	9
11	Kendriya Vidyala NF RLY Rangia	0	42	1	11
12	Madhya Panduri Higher secondary school	0	17	0	7
13	Maranjana Anchalik High Madrasa	0	0	0	2
14	Milon Mandir ME school	0	0	0	4
15	Padum Kuwari Collegiate High school	0	0	0	2
16	Pitambar Adarshya High school	0	0	0	6
17	Puthimari Higher Secondary School	0	24	0	18
18	Premada Siva Nath bidyapith	0	0	0	11
19	Pub Rangia High School	0	0	0	5

20	Puthimari High School	0	0	0	4
21	Rangia Girls H.S. School	0	35	0	14
22	Rangia H.S.School	0	42	0	6
23	Rangia High madrasa School	0	0	0	4
24	Siddhi Nath Vidya Mandir High School	0	0	0	6
25	Tulshibari bahumukhi higher secondary school	0	9	0	4

Source- Field survey

The table shows us that the frequency of borrowing and lending of books in the libraries are either very low or nil. It indicates that the library services in the schools are not functioning well. The poor frequency of borrowing and lending is not due to lake of interest of the students to use library materials but due to insufficient facility for the students to avail the service of library.

Table 4

## Stock of Books, Magazines till 2018

SL No.	Name of the school library	Stock of books	Magazines	News Papers
		(Text books & reference books)		
1	Arimatta Higher Secondary School	655	1	1
2	Banshidhar Choudhury Bodo High School	267	Nil	Nil
3	Haradutta Viradutta High School	210	1	1
4	Hindi High School	598	1	4
5	Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya	15,500	22	6
6	Jawarjyoti Higher Secondary School	1080	1	1
7	Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School	865	1	1
8	Jogeswar Vidyapith	465	1	1
9	Kachari Mahal Higher Secondary School	1052	2	2
10	Kaniha Ucchattar Madhamik Bidyalaya	370	1	1
11	Kendriya Vidyalaya NF RLY Rangia	2000	1	4
12	Madhya Panduri Higher Secondary School	728	1	1
13	Maranjana Anchalik High Madrasa	391	Nil	Nil
14	Milon Mandir High School	412	Nil	Nil
15	Padum Kuwari Collegiate High School	389	Nil	1
16	Pitambar Adarshya High School	547	1	1
17	Puthimari Higher Secondary School	1318	1	1
18	Premada Siva Nath Bidyapith	980	1	1
19	Pub Rangia High School	456	Nil	Nil
20	Puthimari High School	410	Nil	1
21	Rangia Girls Higher Secondary School	6500	1	2
22	Rangia Higher Secondary School	2010	1	2
23	Rangia High Madrasa School	332	1	1
24	Siddhi Nath Vidya Mandir High School	978	1	1
25	Tulshibari Bahumukhi Higher Secondary School	865	1	1

Source- Field survey



The Figure Shows the number of books, Journal/ Magazines available in the library are very poor in almost all the library except Jawahar Novodoya Vidyalaya. Although Govt run school Rangia Girls Higher Secondary School library is having a stock of books to the extent of 6500, still it is not considered as significant amount from the point of view of the age of the school. Some of the school has some collection of books dumped in closed deteriorated wooden almirahs which is nothing but a show case in the room of the head master or principal. Those who have separate library rooms are inadequate, insufficient and unattractive. That room is generally used as a store room of books and other unwanted materials of the school. A teacher or a clerk is entrusted with the responsibility of library. But he/she cannot spare time for library works regularly due to busy schedules of regular works. Even he/she does not get any remuneration for the extra work. This is also one of the causes that the concern person in charge of the library is not interested towards the library works. The library in charge opens the library when he is free from his busy routine. The books are usually old and outdated and usually selected without considering the students interest and taste. Sometimes books are supplied by govt, without caring to know whether they will serve the interests of the users. Even a single set of dictionaries or encyclopedia is not seen in any of this library except few.

**Table-5**  
**FORMS OF STUDENTS DEMAND FOR LIBRARY RESOURCES**

SL. NO	NAME OF THE SCHOOL	DEMAND FOR				
		TEXT BOOKS	REFERENCE BOOKS	MAGAZINES/ PERIODICALS	STORY BOOKS/ BIOGRAPHY	NEWS PAPERS
1	Arimatta Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Banshidhar Choudhury Bodo High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Haradutta Viradutta High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Hindi High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Jawahar Novodaya Vidyalaya	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Jawarjyoti Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Jawaharlal Nehru Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Jogeswar Vidyapith	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Kachari Mahal Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Kaniha Ucchattar Madhamik Bidyalaya	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Kendriya Vidyalaya NF RLY Rangia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Madhya Panduri Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Maranjana Anchalik High Madrasa	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Milon Mandir High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Padum Kuwari Collegiate High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Pitambar Adarshya High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Puthimari Higher Secondary School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Premada Siva Nath Vidyapith	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Pub Rangia High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Puthimari High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Rangia Girls H.S. School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Rangia H.S.School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

23	Rangia High Madrasa School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Siddhi Nath Vidya Mandir High School	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Tulshibari Bahumukhi Higher Secondary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source- Field survey

The above table shows us that, in all the schools there are no demand for text book to be borrowed from the library because the text book to be borrowed from the library because the text books are supplied by the Govt freely to the students. Students of class Xi and Xii in the higher secondary schools demand reference book for their study material. There is demand for magazines, periodicals, biography, newspaper etc in all the schools as repeated by the school authority. But the problem is that, in almost all the schools there are limited number of magazines, periodicals, newspapers etc and only with a single copy of each. Therefore it is very difficult to fulfill the need of the students who are willing to go through them. The availability of biography of famous personality is also very poor and thus it is not possible to meet the need of the student who are willing to study those types of books.

### PROBLEMS OBSERVED

In the study it was found that the schools faced many problems in the process of rendering library service to the students. Most of the problems are common to almost all the schools under the survey. Some of them are mentioned as follows, -----

- i. Problems of infrastructure: This is a common problem to all the schools surveyed in this study. There is no separate physical infrastructure for the library in the schools.
- ii. Problem of library staff: The schools are not having any library professional staff to return efficient library services to the users.
- iii. Lack of valuable and suitable books: The schools libraries are not equipped with valuable and suitable books for the students of different levels. The students do not find them resourceful for their respective course of study.
- iv. Lack of Govt initiative : Although govt of Assam has given importance to primary and secondary education in the state by organizing "GUNOTSAV"(an accreditation programme of schools), when the existing facility of library services in the schools has got significant place, still special grant for establishment of library infrastructure has not been sanctioned.
- v. No facility of E-learning: In almost all the schools we have not found any scope of digital learning or learning through e-resources, because the schools are not having any internet connections and computer technology which is considered to be most important in improved learning process.

### SUGGESTIVE REMARKS:

Since, school education is the basis of educational structure in any state, on which the social standard of living depends to a significant extent; therefore it is too essential to upgrade the system of school education. Library as already mentioned, is an important part of school education, should got preference in the process of upgradation of school education. The following are some of the suggestive remarks for the improvement of standard of school education through library services, -----

- i. Proper infrastructure for library: In the school premises proper library infrastructure should be established and govt. should give as much importance to school library as it is given to higher educational institution library.
- ii. Appointment of library professional: The library service should be managed through qualified library professional, not through the existing staff of teachers and office assistant. Hence professional staff should be appointed for proper execution of the service.



- iii. Supply of appropriate books: Books which are considered to be appropriate for different levels of school students should be made available. Utmost care should be taken in selecting the books, Magazine etc to be purchased for the school library.
- iv. Government role: Govt. should take proper measure through Department of Elementary and Secondary Education under different projects by granting separate fund for establishment and development of school libraries.
- v. Implementation of concept of modern library: Students are to be equipped with the use of digital library and e-learning process through introduction of computerized library services with internet facilities.

### CONCLUSION:

In the concluding remarks it can be viewed that teaching-learning process in any educational setup cannot be completed without the facility of good library services. Therefore for better and improved standard of school education we must concentrate on the status of library in the schools of Assam which is found to be very poor in this study. Therefore, it is the urgent need of the time to think about good system of school education, to lead our youths so that they can keep pace with their counter parts in other countries of the World.

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