

Lohit Youth Library Network

HQ: Bamboosa Library, Tezu -792001, Lohit Dist, Arunachal Pradesh

Spreading the joy of reading across dawn lit mountains -

The Youth Library Movement in Lohit in Himalayan India : 2007-2016

www.lohit-libraries.org e-mail: lohit.libraries@gmail.com

The Lohit Youth Library Network is a unique youth initiative in Arunachal Pradesh in North-eastern Himalayan India, reaching out to readers across a span of 300 kms. in the remote Lohit and Dibang Valley regions, offering free reading & learning opportunities to a better life. It was set up jointly by the Association of Writers & Illustrators for Children (AWIC), New Delhi, the Vivekananda Trust, (HQ: Mysore) and the Lohit District Admn in May 2007. Today the 13 library units across Lohit, Anjaw, Namsai & Lower Dibang Valley districts are run by independent NGOs and volunteers, contributing their time and energy for spreading the joy of reading among the reading-deprived. The Movement has set a new trend in public-library services in the state, with innovative reading promotion activities for the all round educational development of the rural Arunachali tribal youth, winning the hearty appreciation of the elite and the common people.

The Network has about 10,000 excellent reader-friendly books for youth, teachers and parents, a major part gifted by the Omprakash Foundation, USA, the Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata & the Directorate of Public Libraries, Arunachal Pradesh. About 20 magazines for youth and grown-ups are contributed by patrons from all over India. The Bamboosa Library and the APNE Library, Wakro, open 7 days a week in the evenings, while other libraries open as per local timings. Library services are wholly free. The Network has, as its coordinator, an educationist with more than 3 decades of close association with the youth of Arunachal, rendering his services wholly in an honorary capacity.

READING CAMPAIGNS: The highlight of the libraries is a unique reading campaign the reader-activists and volunteers have been conducting in the region with story-telling & reading sessions, book-contests, recitations and skits in English, Hindi and Arunachali tribal languages. Book exhibitions in remote villages are another major attraction. Many young readers have also been getting articles published in various youth magazines. Such peer-group learning has brought the youth in rural areas, where no library exists, closer to discovering the Joy of reading.

PATRONS: The Campaign receives support from organizations like ASSET, Wakro, ViTAES, an alumni organization of Tezu, 48 BRTF, Surajmal Jalan Charitable Trust, Dibrugarh, PAWSO, Yatong & the govt. agencies. Many state legislators, IAS officers, Arunachali elite and book-lovers have also emerged patrons of the Movement. Adult volunteers from rest of India have been participating regularly in the reading campaign, through workshops for teachers & students on book-reading, Theatre in Education and creative Writing. In 2010, 2 university students from England acted as volunteers for a month. Frequent visit of guests to the libraries have added to the personality traits of the readers. The Movement has thus led to the emergence of a group of young reader-activists, voluntarily promoting reading habits in their own neighbourhood circles.

The library activities are supported by contributions from individuals from across India, on a year to year basis. Patrons from abroad have also been gifting book-packets regularly. The Libraries have also a small free audio-visual section, with CDs of general knowledge & talks by renowned personalities.

CONFERENCES: The Network has participated in the International Conference on Children's Libraries, New Delhi, in 2010 & 2014, the British Council Conferences on Eng Lang Teaching & Development at Hyderabad (2011 to 2013) and the NBT National Conference on Reading Habits, Aizawl, 2011, winning several friends in India & abroad.

HONOURS: In Sept 2016, the Civil Society Magazine, New Delhi has conferred “the Hall of Fame 2016” award on the Library Network and its Coordinator S. Mundayoor. In Dec 2012, the *Times Now TV* honoured the Lohit Youth libraries in their series, ‘*Amazing Indians*’. Sri Etalo Mega, Library I/c of Bamboosa Library, Tezu has been conferred the Librarian of the Year 2012 Award by the AWIC, New Delhi, for his committed contribution to reading promotion.

AWARDS set up for youth Activists: From 2014, the Library Network has initiated “The Bhajan Award” for the most outstanding Library reader-activist, consisting of Rs.9000/- cash prize and a citation. “The Ranganatha Award” of Rs.5000/- & a citation, in honour of Prof S.R. Ranganathan, father of Indian Library Movement, is awarded annually to a committed library volunteer. In 2017, Sister Nivedita Award of Rs.9000/- for dedicated library services in Lohit has been instituted.

But we have a long way to go to reach out to many more isolated villages and areas in Eastern Arunachal. This calls for your participation and patronage to the movement, with resources and manpower. Lohit Youth Libraries cordially invite you to join hands with us.

It could change the life of an Arunachali tribal youth permanently!

Contacts:

Sathyanarayanan Mundayoor
Coordinator
Lohit Youth Library Network, Tezu 792001
cell: 943622-8613 <lohit.libraries@gmail.com>

Ms. Bapenlu Kri, Administrator,
Bamboosa Library, Tezu 792001
9436049014 kribapenlu@rediffmail.com

References:

1. Civil Society, New Delhi, Sept 2016, featuring Hall of Fame Award: “Life Coach in the library”
2. Times Now TV video film “Spreading the joy of Reading” <http://www.timesnow.tv/videoshow/4417812.cms>
- 3.. An article on the Lohit Youth Libraries in the Hindu Sunday Magazine dt Nov 27, 2011
<http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/kids/article2662652.ece> and
4. The Hindu Sunday Magazine dt Feb 2, 2014, “Turning the page”
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/turning-the-page/article5642951.ece?css=print>
5. A You tube film by VT Mysore “Visiting the Seven sisters –part 10 on APNE Library:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XUTpF92WOk>
6. A video film “Spreading the joy of reading across Dawn Lit Mountains” by Vivekananda Trust Mysore (2011)
<http://youtu.be/QRubr7fB28E>
5. Articles in the American Library Association Newsletter ‘I Love Libraries.org’ dt Aug 2011 and Jan 6, 2012
<http://www.ilovelibraries.org> & <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/how-library-changed-my-life%E2%80%A6>
6. An article “Could reading be such fun?” in the ‘Anthology of papers on English Language Teacher Education & Development’ (British Council, Chennai, 2011)
7. A Hilly Trail of Books - by Nabanita Deshmukh on 10 years of the Lohit Youth Library Movement in "Teacher Plus" monthly, Hyderabad, Nov 2017. <http://www.teacherplus.org/profile/a-hilly-trail-of-books>
8. Joy of Learning - A docu-film by P.N. Ramchandra, Mumbai (2017) <https://youtu.be/6SQAKEI-1vM>