

## VT- AWIC YOUTH LIBRARY NETWORK, LOHIT

Coordinators: Vivekananda Trust (HQ: Mysore)

<http://vivekanandatrust.webs.com/> <http://www.facebook.com/vtmysore>

### *Spreading the joy of reading across dawn lit mountains-* **The Youth Library Movement in Lohit in Himalayan India**

The Lohit Youth Library Movement 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, since May 2007. Set up as 'the VT-AWIC Youth Library Network', jointly by the Association of Writers & Illustrators for Children (AWIC), New Delhi, the Vivekananda Trust, (HQ: Mysore) and the Lohit District Admn, it is run by 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 of 13 mini-libraries is coordinated by Vivekananda Trust, a public charitable trust involved in reading campaigns in the region since 2002. It has a collection of 8000 excellent reader-friendly books for children, youth, teachers and parents, most of it, a gift from the Omprakash Foundation, USA & The Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata. 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 the other libraries open as per local convenience. The unique feature of the Movement is the voluntary participation of the community at each location. All the libraries run in premises provided rent-free by local patrons and volunteers run them as a social service, with no monetary incentives.

The highlight of the Libraries is the Reading campaign the young 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 & Vacation Mini-libraries in remote villages are two unique extension programmes. Many of the 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.

The Network receives support from local organizations, govt. agencies like 48 BRTF & govt depts, as well as patrons from around the globe. 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 Movement through workshops for students & teachers. 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 spirited reader-activists, promoting reading habits in their own neighbourhood circles.

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

In 2012, the AWIC, New Delhi conferred the Librarian of the Year 2012 Award on Sri Etalo Mega, Library I/c of the Network, for his committed and selfless contribution to reading promotion. This was followed by the *TimesNow TV* honouring the Lohit Youth libraries in Dec 2012 in their series, '*Amazing Indians*'. National newspapers like The Hindu Sunday Magazine (Nov 27, 2011) have also published features on the Lohit Youth Library Movement.

The Lohit Youth Library Movement is coordinated by the Vivekananda Trust (HQ: Mysore). A profile of the Trust is attached separately

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**Links:**

1. Times Now video film “Spreading the joy of Reading”  
<http://www.timesnow.tv/videoshow/4417812.cms>
- 2.. 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>
3. A video film “Spreading the joy of reading across Dawn Lit Mountains” by Vivekananda Trust Mysore (2011) <http://youtu.be/QRubr7fB28E>
4. American Library Association e-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 book ‘Anthology of papers on English Language Teacher Education & Development’ (British Council, Chennai, 2011)  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WnkAcdmEmTftCG1vEyhxYg6N2IHbaf0DpUpKXGbymw/edit?usp=sharing>

**Future Plans & Needs**

1. Setting up Permanent Buildings to house the main Libraries at Tezu & Wakro
2. Spreading the Reading Campaign to more localities on a regular basis.