

Chapter 3***SPECIAL LIBRARY AND ITS PRESENT STATUS: A BRIEF STUDY***

3.1 What is Library?

Library is a building in which collection of books, tapes, newspapers, etc. are kept for people to read study or borrow. It can be personal collection of books, CDs, etc. A library can be rental library, i.e. a commercial establishment which is lending books for a fixed charge. It has a collection of manuscripts, publications and other materials for reading, study or reference. The main function of the library is collection, preservation and dissemination of knowledge to all. For this purpose a librarian is appointed. He or she is the one who is trained in library science and in enjoyed in library service. He or she is an officer in-charge of library. Then next step is of issuing a card by a circulating library to individuals entitling them to borrow books and sometimes containing a record of the dates that a book was borrowed and returned.

A well-equipped and well managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. The importance of library in education can be appreciated properly and precisely only if we try to understand the changing concepts of education of today. Education bereft of library service is like a body without soul, a vehicle without an engine an edifice merely a collection of bricks without cement. Education and library are twin sisters and one can't live apart from the other.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, as early as 1374, the term "library" was employed in English to refer to a place where books were kept for "reading, study or reference". By the 19th century a library was also regarded as "a building, room, or set of rooms containing a collection of books for the use of the public or some portion of it, or the member of a society; a public institution or organization or establishment charged with the care of a collection. The role of the human being, who matters in its use, is missing from it".

ALA glossary of library and information science has described library as “a collection of materials organized to provide physical, bibliographic and intellectual access to a target group, with a staff that is trained to provide services and programs related to the information needs of the target groups.”

UNESCO defined library as “any organized collection of printed books and periodical or any other graphic or audio-visual materials with a staff to provide and facilitate the use of such materials as are required to meet the informational research, educational and recreational needs of users.”

According to S. R. Ranganathan “a library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of books, the duty of making them accessible those who requires the use of them.”

Harrods Librarian’s glossary and reference book defined library as “a collection of books and other literary material kept for reading, study and consultation”; “a place, building, rooms, set apart for the keeping and use of a collection of books, etc.”

Libraries have played an important part in the social, political, economic and cultural development of the society. These had a significant role in the preservation and advancement of culture; formal and self-education; and reading for leisure. A library is a provider; it has a great importance of its own. A library plays a very important role in upgrading the development of knowledge. Libraries are generously a place to read books and journals. Libraries also accommodate various advanced electronic resources, including the internet, digital library collections and remote access to wide range of data and information through advanced technology. Mostly library focuses on the following activity inside it:

- User services; connecting users to the information they required.
- Technical services; ordering, cataloguing and preparing materials.
- Computer services; maintaining the library databases, software programming, web page design, etc. and

- Administrative services; managing the library and its services, arrange the contract with vendors, controlling and managing the library staffs and preparing budget.

3.2 Types of Library

For several centuries the principal types of libraries have remained changed. What makes these libraries different is the nature of their users. So, according to the nature of users and types of services provided to the library users; libraries are divided into four major types. These are:

Academic Libraries serve colleges and universities.

Public Libraries serve cities and town of all types.

National Libraries serve the whole nation, its nook and corner. And

Special Libraries are in specialized environment, such as hospitals, museum, corporation, the military, private business and the government.

Modern libraries are growingly being readdressed as a place from where unlimited information can be access in many formats and from many sources. These are meant as expanding beyond the four walls of library building by including material easily accessible by various electronic sources and by providing guidance of libraries in handling and defining large amounts of knowledge with a variation of digital instruments. Thus we find Digital library, Virtual library, Hybrid library, etc. on repot of the nature of collections, library services and areas for operations. The services of library are available around the world differ from country to country and a classified list of different types of libraries are not possible to present.

3.3 Special Library

The term **Special Library** defines the library which serves a specialized and limited clientele, and delivers specialized service to that clientele. These can be studied under following headings:

3.3.1 Concept and definition of Special Library

A special library is a term for a library that is neither an academic, school, public nor national library. Special libraries are those libraries which included medical libraries, law libraries, museum libraries, news libraries corporate libraries and non-profit libraries. These libraries are not usually open to the general public, though many are available to specific elements of the public or scheduled appointments. Special libraries are also sometimes known as information centers. Generally the staff of the special library consists with the librarian only, though the librarians of special library remain specialist in library science field than generally trained, and there doesn't have any requirements for advanced degrees especially in library science field due to the specific requirements and users of the library. Usually the users of special library become specific in category rather than libraries in traditional form and public. These libraries are developed to support the mission of their parent organization and their collections and services which are more targeted and specific to the needs of their users. Given the highly individual nature of special libraries, visitors to a special library are often advised to check what services and restrictions apply at that particular library.

The libraries that are run by private businesses and public organizations, including hospitals, museums, research laboratories, law firms and many government department and agencies, fall into this category.

The special library is concerned with the literature of a particular subject or group of subjects. According to R. A. Stall, "Special libraries serve a special clientele, located within a single establishment group, and all engaged in working towards one common purpose". The Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureau (ASLIB) defined Special Library as "a department/faculty responsible for the acquisition, indexing and distribution (dissemination) of recorded knowledge directly concerned with the work of a specialized organization or special group of users".

In a simple way, a Special library subsists as a service provider unit with an institution or organization having non-library objectives. Special libraries may be labeled in different way such as Scientific library, technical library etc. it may also be labeled by subject as agriculture library, medical library, etc. in relation to its parent institution as research organization, government agency and similar others.

It is increasingly felt that a library of general one cannot offer adequate information and appropriate services for specific needs and their concept was the main ideology of emerging this type of libraries in the 1st decade of the 20th century in U.S.A. A group of American Librarians met on July 2, 1904, at Hampshire to discuss about the specialized libraries. They gave the name of "Special Library" to such libraries. Since then different librarians and experts have defined, but a clear distinct and generally accepted definition has not yet been found 5 universally accepted.

John Cotton Dana, founder of the Special Library Association (SLA) stated in 1910 that these special collections of books, reports and other printed materials are so varied in their characters and in the use made of them that no definition will any longer satisfactorily include them all. SLA and its members have defined special library since 1910 to 1976.

A.G.S. Josephson in 1912 wrote that "a special library is a library that covers a single definite subjects or a definite group of related subjects".

In 1925, Ridley a charter member of ASLIB considered a Special library to be "a collection of information covering a specific field, which may be administered by a special staff and for the service of limited clientele". The proposal of 1943 was the conception of a special collection versus a special library. According to this proposal, a special collection of materials of certain form on a certain subject of a certain period or gathered together for some particular reason. They defined special collection to distinguish it from the special library.

Echelmann presented a suggestion synthesizing earlier definition in 1976 that a special library is the mission of acquiring, organizing and providing access to information and

Knowledge to spread the goals of its parent body, assembling a physical collection limited to a single subject or group of subjects and administered by a librarian or specialist in the subject covered.

I.E Wright has defined the special library as a library which is concerned almost exclusively with the literature of a particular subject or a group of subjects. A special library, according to S. R. Ranganathan, is a specialist library. He stressed on clientele, but not collection. He was aware that simply collection or discipline based definition might lead to confusion.

In the glossary of library and information sciences of ALA, 1983 it is defined that special library is a library established, supported and administered by a business firm, private corporation, association, government agency or other special interest group or agency to meet the information needs of its members or staff in pursuing the goals of the organization. Scope of collections and services is limited to the subject interest of the host or parent organization.

K.G.B. Bakewell in Manual of library economy, 1977 has defined that a special library is one which serves a particular group of people, such as the employees of a firm of government department or the staff and members of a professional or research organization. Such a library deals essentially in information.

From the above definitions, it is clear that the term "Special" is used to denote this type of library. Special means particular field of interest or individual or distinct characteristic or not common, usual or general. So the special library is a collection of particular field of interest for limited users with distinct characteristics. But collection is not treated in all cases as a special factor of the special library. Because the special collection of the academic library or the public library or the national library does not make that library as special library. They are used for individual interest, but the special library is set up for common purposes with definite scope of the parent body in a particular subject or group of subjects. Special libraries also assume different names

like technical library, business information centers, research information services, department libraries etc.

The objectives of Special library usually formed by those parent organizations under which the libraries have been established. Mainly, it is “putting knowledge to work” and it exists to serve its parent organization. So the aim of the Special library is to meet the targets of its parent body by means of the following:

- Provides information service, which empowered the members of the institution or organization to supervise the important developments in the field of interest.
- Librarian should searches literature pin-pointedly and brings it to the notice of the institution or organization;
- Provides information and charged users through fair collections and good services.

3.3.2 Types of Special Library

A special library is usually a small library catering to a small group of persons. Generally, such a library specializes in a particular subject or group of subjects. A special library acquires and organizes information in anticipation of demand. As a result information can be made available when required. Branches of a large academic or research libraries dealing with particular subjects are also usually called “Special Libraries”: they are generally associated with one or more academic departments.

Special libraries may be classified according to the nature of founding organization: government departmental libraries, libraries of government undertakings, libraries of autonomous research organizations, libraries of private learned societies and research institutions. Special libraries may also classify according to their broad subject specialization and these may again be sub-divided into specific subject fields.

We may recognize the following types of Special libraries:

- Government
- Societies and institutions

- Industrial & commercial organization
- Academic institutions.

These may again be sub-divided into specific subject fields.

Usually the special libraries are part of research organization of several areas of science and technology or social science. Their objectives, collections and even users become separate from one type special libraries to other types of special libraries depending upon different study areas; these special libraries serve their users as well.

3.3.3 Features and Functions

A special library files information contained in documents. On the other hand, a general library is concerned with documents. A general library is organized to serve the users who are normally expected to locate information on their own. A special library is expected to provide specific information on request from their users. The library user is often a highly paid researcher or manager, whose time is expensive. His time must be saved. A special library acquires and organizes information in anticipation of demand. As a result information can be made available when required.

The basic features of any special library are based on account of its various aspects of special librarianship. The features are as follows:

- It exists as a service unit within an organization.
- It is concerned with the single definite subject field.
- It is limited but specialized collection of documents.
- It mainly satisfies the information needs of its users only.
- The users of special libraries are the specialist in their own field and serve their parent organizations.
- The librarian of the special libraries transforms himself as an active member of research group and becomes the partner of the same.

Special Library is a library, which collects updated and comprehensive information on the subject concerned with the parent organization and disseminates this information

promptly to the people associated with the organization on demand and in anticipation. Besides this, one other factor is that a special library develops its major collection on some special subject or field. The functions of a special library are based on the objectives set-forth by the organization with which it is attached. Of course, the main function of acquisition, organization, and dissemination of materials and information remain the same in special libraries as in other libraries. But there is difference in approach, performance and techniques as well as materials collected.

A Special library performs primarily the following functions:

- It selects and procures documents and other sources of relevant information;
- It processes the procured information or documents with the help of classification, cataloguing, shelf arrangements etc. to make them easily available for the users;
- It subscribes to a good number of journals related to its area;
- It provides indexing and abstracting services to the users to save their time;
- It provides reference services to the users by telephone, by post or by email;
- It gives current awareness service (CAS) regarding new arrivals and latest services to the users;
- It provides Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services to the users as per their subject interest and requirement;
- It also gives document delivery service to its users;
- It brings out library bulletins weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly to keep the users up to date with latest information;
- It gives translation services to provide the desired information to the users in their convenient language;
- It also provides internet as well as internet facility to the users in order to access the library collection and catalogue at their desktop;
- It responds to the reference queries and make retrospective search of literature as per users demand;

- It compiles bibliographies, union catalogues, documentation lists, newspaper-clippings, accession lists etc. to save the time of its users; and
- It provides inter library loan facility to the users.

3.3.4 Services of Special Library

Special libraries serve their clientele with the help of various types of services, such activities and services performed by a special library for specialist readers in the form of information storage and retrieval, and documentation services. In a special library the time of users is valuable and must be saved. Therefore, in a special library, very often the users have to be helped to the maximum. More often, information has to be provided in a ready form. It is required and also expected.

A special library should prepare a list of purposes and objectives of the parent body. From this list he should develop objectives of the library. Next he should prepare a list of services to be under taken to support the mission of parent organization. It is important to determine which services need not be under taken that would divert from services of greater priority. In ultimate analysis, library would be judged by what it does to support the objectives and purposes of the large body.

Special libraries in all over the world today fulfill a variety of different services at a wide range of locations. This diversified spectrum of activities is by no means, a recent development. At the time that the special library association (SLA) was founded at the 1909 conference of the American Library Association (ALA), special libraries already had little to do with traditional task. The services performed by special libraries in the early 20th century could be regarded as documentation.

The future of library services must be considered against the background of a new self-conception of libraries and their definition and of a changing information society. In future, traditional library services will no longer be sufficient to ensure the survival of libraries. They will be required as a basic routine, but the proactively of the library

and its contribution to the overall enterprise or institution will be defined by a wide range of new activities still to be established.

A special library exist to serve its parent body and the specialist clientele are generally limited the quality of services has a profound influence on the staffs. In other words, the success of achieving its objectives can be helped by high quality of service provided. The query may involve long searches and it is not unusual to spend days on obtaining information but information must be provided irrespective of and from place. Very often the emphasis is on micro document like periodicals, articles, specialized reports and librarian will be expected to provide information efficiently and thus he may be required to work under pressure (Krishan Kumar: 1993:17).

He may be required to provide information both on demand and to provide information both on demand and in anticipation and this is a special feature of a special library. Thus many libraries use manual or computerized SDI and CAS service for their users. Reference service is also getting good attention and in this respect these have done quite well. There are many special libraries that involve in providing reference service to their parent organization.

Special libraries serve their clientele with the help of various types of services, such activities and services performed by a special library for specialist readers in the form of information storage and retrieval, and documentation services. As special libraries play a significant role in the information system in broadest term it should provide the following services to its readers.

Abstracting Service: An abstract is a brief and minute portrayal of the concept of document, in a way similar to that of the original document. Abstracts are a vital aid in document selection and information gathering, and help to avoid duplication and delay in work in progress. Since 19th century the abstracting services have become available and are accepted by information seekers in almost every discipline and specialization. An abstract may be used by two categories of reader:

- specialists in the subject, and
- Others who have 'fringe' interest in the subject of the document. To satisfy both the categories of readers an abstract contains enough information which would help the subject specialist to decide whether he should read the paper it's full.

Indexing Services: An index is a systematic list of documents on a subject or by an author. It ensures systematic organization of information about documents for their easy and quick retrieval. An index is an orderly guide to the intellectual context and physical location of knowledge records. It is only a pointer and as such it does not generally supply the desired information itself, but instead it employs a set of chosen descriptors, subheadings and their modification, or the word derived which earmark the source of information for which the user is searching. The user is directed by the index to the subjects and the ideas expressed by the authors in the knowledge records. However, indexing and abstracting are of paramount importance in special library.

Bibliographical Services: Bibliographies are the most important source of information for the special and research libraries because they give information about what has been published on a particular subject, author, period, etc. These are very useful for research scholars in the search for material on a particular subject or field. They include any published material irrespective of the fact whether they are available in a particular library or not. Therefore, compilation, of bibliographies of special libraries will be of immense use to scholar and all other concerned with information on specified field.

Current Awareness Service (CAS): CAS is recent vocabulary. It is defined as “a system and often a publication for notifying current documents to users of libraries and information services”. Not in the field of science and technology, but also in the field of art and humanities, there is a need to provide latest information to the users of the library.

Special libraries have developed a wide range of activities to keep their clientele informed of new and current developments. Routing of current periodicals is one of the most common functions of the special library. The library periodically survey its clientele as to which periodicals they wish to see on a regular basis, then circulates them to readers as they arrive. Acquisition bulletins are another common service. The bulletin may be a simple list of new material received or may include annotations or abstracts. Subject-oriented abstract bulletin that pull together information from various sources books, articles, pamphlets, reports and news, summaries and digests are other CAS used by special library. Some libraries prepare indexes to covers non-indexed periodicals which may be used within the library or may be published to serve as a combination bulletins and order forms for readers.

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Service: In the words of H. Peter Luhn who first gave us the concept of SDI as that service within an organization which concern itself with the channeling's of new items of information, from whatever source, to those points within the organization where the probability of usefulness, in connection with current work or interest is high.

In this service profiles of individual scholars are matched against the new additions made in the information base of library and pertinent information communicated to the respective scholars. However, SDI as a more sophisticated CAS is geared towards the individual readers. Each user receives a unique set of document notifications which is coinciding with his special field of interest.

Translation Services: Most of the abstracting, indexing, CAS, etc. are constantly bringing to the attention of scientists that there are many more relevant documents available but they are presented in large unfamiliar to one group or other.³¹ Information literature is being generated in the world at a very large scale. It is estimated that the volume of this literature doubles almost every decade. In order to provide comprehensive information on any topic from such a vast

Ocean of literature, it is necessary to access it into entirely. And translation is a process of transferring precisely the information content of the text in one language into another language.

Therefore many special libraries find this service an indispensable one to help their specialist readers to gain access to require information (irrespective of language) generated worldwide.

Reprographic Services: The provision for reprographic service in a library or information Centre is very essential. Modern reprographic equipments and accessories should be procured and this unit may be fully developed in all respect for the benefit of all interested consultants and clientele. Apart from Xerox or similar type of plain paper copier machines, Gestetner Electro stenciling machines, microfilm and microfiche cameras and readers, printers, etc. quite useful for the reprographic unit. Today, the reprographic services have become one of the pertinent activities of special libraries.

Resource Sharing: Traditionally our libraries have been aiming at acquiring all the resources needed to meet the requirements of their clientele in any specific field or fields. However the total fast growing inflationary trends and the ever-increasing literary output, Coupled with adequate budgets indicate the dire need to reassess and of self- sufficiently which has become quite unattainable. Sharing of resources have become an inescapable necessity and the only realistic means of providing a full-range of library and information services. Therefore, special libraries should embark on resource-sharing on a local basis and if possible, on a regional basis.

Information/Documentation Service: Information is an information resource and as such it has to provide speedily and emphasis is to make available all materials related to the search and making it accessible to them. Documentation service is the process

of reproducing any available materials and making it accessible to those who need it and at a time when they need it.

In special libraries emphasis is on finding information rather than directing them or teaching them as to how to use library resources. Provision of information in anticipation aims to keep the well informed and up to date in their field of specialization and also in the related subjects is called Current Awareness Service which is certainly a special feature of special libraries.

Reference Service: From simple to complex problem, reference services have profound influences upon the users. Expertise is built into the special library staff. The reference services depend upon the nature of the parent body. Document supply or demand, reading room assistance, searching help, retrospective searches are some illustrations of reference service. Personal attachment to the users is common to all special libraries.

3.4 Special Libraries in India

Many landmarks in the history of Indian library movement date from ancient times when temple and monasteries had their own libraries. The mediaeval period saw the rise of several libraries. However, the only mediaeval library still in existence is the Saraswati Mahal library at Tanjore founded in 1523 and is regarded as the oldest special library in India. During the Nineteenth century, a number of special libraries were established. Special libraries first began to appear in the United States (US) in the early decades of the 20th century. They were a new form of library, quite different from other types of libraries in their functions and purpose and in their new methods of collecting and organizing material. In the later decades of the century, organizations increased in number, size and complexity, as business and industry began to grow rapidly.

Advancement and progress of special libraries in India has also been on the model of the Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Library established by Maratha king, Royal Archives established in medieval Assam may be termed as special libraries. During the British time, research activities were in the hands of European officers and missionaries. These people soon felt the need for libraries which resulted information of literacy

society in 1812. In Madras during the second half of the 19th century, research activities centered round Government Museum which established a library in 1890 and known as Commerce Republic Library.

Most of the special libraries in this country are attached either to the government department or to technical research units. The Geological Survey of India Library is the oldest of its kind. Actual development of special libraries in India can be traced from the half century during which India has rapid studies in the field of science resulting in the formation of several scientific institutions and associations each publishing its own journals and proceedings. Each such organization is building up a library suitable to its needs. The progress of science in Indian universities has resulted in the creating of number of research institutions for post graduate research and advanced studies. School of research like Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore has developed a number of special collections with each of its sections resulting in of nucleus of special libraries. TATA Institute of Nuclear Physics, Bose Research Institute is examples to quote a few. Likewise, industrial research is the most important branch of applied research. In 1934, the Indian Industrial Research Bureau came into existence. Industrial research was brought to the forefront due to World War-II with the birth of the council of Scientific and Industrial research.

Industries started interact in scientific research in Allahabad. The textile industry formed an association called ATIRA (Ahmadabad Textile Industries Research Association) and a highly specialized library was attached to it. There is several government organizations charged with the collection of factures data about the natural resources of the country like "Survey of India". Botanical Survey, Zoological Survey, etc. which are having excellent collection of books and journals.

Special libraries as a rule started coming into being and the need for proper handling and timely supply of the latest information on every scientific and technical matter was by the time, being felt more and more.

The year 1950 will be written in golden letters in the history of special libraries in India. The national chemical laboratory was opened by the Prime Minister having an up to date library rich in the entire chemical subject on 3rd January 1950. The opening of the National physical Laboratory followed on 21st January. The National Fuel Research Institute, Central Glass and ceramic Research Institute, National Metallurgical Laboratory was all declared open in 1950.

On 17th February 1971, the Central Drug Research Institute having workshop and museum was opened. On the year of the opening ceremony of the Central Road Research Institute 16th July 1952 INSDOC was started functioning as a joint project of the government of India and the UNESCO. It is being maintained as National Repository for reports of scientific work and carried out in the country. Its main purpose is to provide documentation facilities to scientist and technical research. Its function is to receive and retain all scientific periodical which may be of use to the country.

In Indian Council of Agricultural Research which now functioning through 23 national or Scientific Institutions and 19 Agricultural University, besides some semipublic institutions has many libraries under its control. Similarly under the control council of Medical Research Institutions and some other units are functioning and most of them have their own library. The DRDO (Defence Research Development Organizations) started in 1958 has control over 34 research organizations development establishments and laboratories engaged in arms and other matters connected with military science and other matters connected with military science and defense, the defense science information and Documentation Centre of Delhi, which publishes many bibliographical and other published like SDI. In recent times Atomic Energy Commission department of Space, Small Enterprises National Documentation Centre, (SENDOC), also have started which have represented the growth of special libraries.

Recently in eight five year plan Central Government have undertaken few programs in the field of library networks. It is mentioned that INFLIBNET i.e. information and library network sponsored by UGC in order to pool and share resources and facilities and services of libraries in the university system R & D institutions. Besides there are National Information System of Science and Technology (NISSAT) National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), Defence Science Documentation Centre (DESIDOC) etc. having working to provide documentation and information services in their respective fields.

However, by and large the condition of special libraries is much better than other type of libraries. By far, special libraries in our country are among the best organized and administered. But there is a lot more to be done to co-ordinate the efforts for optimum utilization of resources and services. The problems, however, can be tackled if proper planning for the development of information network in different sectors taken place.

3.5 Status of Special Libraries in Assam

Libraries which came to an existence in ancient and medieval period were built up in a disordered way though they hold very huge and rich collection of royal reports, letters, manuscripts, etc. this culture is maintained in Namgharas, Satras and some other sacred institution or organizations of Assam, but in few number. So the British paved the structure of the special libraries in Assam in the 2nd decade of the 20th century on the basis of western model.

Meanwhile the British administration in Assam has created departments among which the P.W.D. came first in 1868. Creation of Local Board (1880) was another contribution of the British in their administration. Gradually they introduced the western education in Assam. In this respect the Christian Missionaries took the leading part in the spreading of western education in Assam. The American Baptist-Missionary established at least 14 schools at Sivasagar in 1844 and created a revolutionary age of "Arunoday" by publishing a weekly paper in Assamese the first of its kind. In the beginning of the 20th century, the establishment of the cotton college

(1901), the Earl Law College and the Barie white Medical school were the significant venture in the line. The students educated from these institutions felt the need of libraries. So, the “Assam Student Association” established in 1916 came forward to set up some rural libraries in the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 20th century which later on evolved the public libraries during 1950-60’s. Along with the growth of educational institutions in different parts of these institutions had to be established on the recommendation of Radha Krishnan education Commission (1948) and Kothari Commission (1966). The needs were not confined to these libraries but emphasized on Special libraries due to the growth of tea industries, new land revenue policies, cultural preservation, administrative policies and other diverse fields of research activities. The needs were not confined to these libraries but to the growth of tea industries, new land revenue policies, cultural preservation, administrative policies and other diverse fields of research activities. Consequently the Tocklai research Centre (1911), the Assam research society (1912), the Assam survey and settlement training Centre (1913), the Assam legislative council (1926), the Department of historical and antiquarian studies in Assam (1928) had set up libraries to cater to the needs of the users. The demands became more effective after the World War I and II.

The world wars I and II had disturbed the commercial policies in Assam. Yet the war accelerated the process of the industrial development backed by the scientific and technological researches especially in the tea-industries, oil and natural gas commission, transport communications and military activities with administrative units. Though the growth and development of the special libraries were very slow during this period, yet this process helped the organizations to set up more special libraries after independence. With the development of different institutions, organizations, departments, learned bodies/associations etc. the special libraries in Assam have occupied an important position in the dissemination of knowledge and information. Just after independence, the establishment of Gauhati University (1948), the Guwahati high court (1948), the All India Radio (1948), the Engineering College at Guwahati, the Medical College at Dibrugarh etc. had increased the necessity of these libraries in their relevant fields. Gradually the necessity was expanded to other fields with the plan and program of 1952. Consequently Small Industries Service institute (1959), Ramie research station (1960), Regional research/laboratory (1961), Assam

Productivity Council U 9 6 2) , Assam industrial development corporation Ltd. (1965), Defense research laboratory (1965), Oil and Natural Gas Commission (1968) and Forensic science laboratory (1969) set up libraries before the beginning of the seventh decade of the present century. This growth has impacts on different research institutes, revenue boards, financial corporations, ASIDC, NISIET (NOWIIE), Associated industries, Lalit Kala Academy, geology, archives etc. till the last decade of the present century. Moreover the introduction of library science to the Guwahati University in 1966 is the main agency to realize the position and need based demand.

3.6 Conclusion

Special library is established, supported and administered by a business firm, private corporation, association, government agency, or other special-interest group or agency to meet the information needs of its members or staff in pursuing the goals of the organization. Depending on the particular institution or organization, Special libraries may or may not be available to each and every kind of users. Generalization about the history of special libraries and librarianship are almost as difficult as the task of arriving at a suitable definition of the profession. The main reason for our lack of knowledge of special library history is that the special library has no history of its own, because it nearly always existed as a part of a permanent organization. Though some attributes of a special library could be traced in some of the libraries of the nineteenth century, those were, in fact general libraries because they lacked the basic characteristics of specialized service or the element of active dissemination. However, by and large the conditions of special libraries are much better than other type of libraries. By far, special libraries in our country are among the best organized and administered. But there is a lot more to be done to co-ordinate the efforts for optimum utilization of resources and services. The problems, however, can be tackled if proper planning for the development of information network in different sectors taken place. Special library collects updated and expansive data or information on the particular subject concerned with its parent organization and disseminates the information on right time at the right place to the people related to the organization on demand and expectation. The role of the Librarian is a pivotal part in Special library. The librarian must be a document oriented person, an information expert, a good administrator and a well-trained techno person so that he/she can handle all the technical issues of the library. The task of the Special librarian may appear to be simple one but he/she uses

complex as well as varied techniques to achieve the objectives. The techniques to be chosen will depend upon the local situation and needs of the users. In order to be successful a special librarian should be scholar and good manager. He/she should be aware of management techniques to enable him to hold his/her own with managers of other division in the parent body. So the librarian who works under the special library should have some basic aptitude to survive in the modern world.