

Salient Features of the Report titled
Youth of North-East India: Demographics
and Readership

In correlation with
Youth of Bihar and Maharashtra

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- It has been observed from the survey results (NYRS-2009) that one fourth (25%) of the literate youth at the all India level, read books other than text books. The proportion of leisure readers is higher in urban India (31.2%) compared to rural India (21.3%). This shows that the rural youth is placed at a disadvantage compared to the urban youth - only one fifth of among them are able to read books.
- As compared to all India, the performance of the north-eastern states is much superior. In fact, the north-eastern region has performed much better than Maharashtra, which is the topmost state of the country in terms of economic well-being. The results reveal that the NAGMAMI region is at the top slot with 67 percent (85% urban, 59% rural) readers followed by Assam with 41 percent (55% urban, 38% rural), showing that these NE states are far ahead of Maharashtra with 34 percent (39% urban, 28% rural) readers. The 'rest of the NE states' and the 'rest of the states' are at the bottom of the table with only 24 percent and 23 percent readers respectively in these regions
- The north-eastern states of India, despite their economic backwardness, have a greater proportion of readers among its youth population. The survey results reveal that in the north-eastern states, 43 percent of the youth are readers. While the central states have the largest block (85%) of non-readers, the north-east has the smallest (57%).
- It is noticed that the north-eastern region has the highest proportion of literate youth hailing from rural areas, while in the remaining parts of India, the concentration of literate youth is more towards urban.
- Even though, in the northern, eastern and north-eastern states, the general castes' literate youths dominate, it may be pointed out that the north-east is home to a relatively higher proportion (23%) of the literate youth from Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. Moreover, a relatively higher concentration of Muslim literate youth is noticed in the north-eastern states since about one-third of the literate youth in this region are Muslims, followed by another 18 percent Christians.
- Though Assam is known as the entry point to the north-eastern states with comparatively improved infrastructure and better economic prospects, the proportion of leisure book readers here (39%) is much lower than in Mizoram (62%), Manipur (52%) and Nagaland (47%).
- It is observed that 73 percent of the youth in Bihar and 45-47 percent in NE region, 34 percent in Maharashtra and 41 percent in the rest of the states are fiction readers, the percentages of non-fiction readers being 11, 18, 27 and 25 as against 42 percent fiction readers and 24 percent non-fiction readers in the country as a whole.
- In rural Assam the most liked non-fiction genre is 'biographies' (28%) followed by 'self-help books' (25%) which is preferred only by 8 percent of the non-fiction readers of rural India.
- In urban Assam, 'biographies' (36%) and 'philosophy' (29%) are the two most popular genre of non-fiction books. But in urban areas of other NE States, biographies' (32%) is the most preferred while 'current affairs' and 'religious books' are at the second and third positions with 22 percent and 21 percent readership respectively.

- In both rural and urban areas of Maharashtra, 34-35 percent of the youth prefer 'biographies' and 30-31 percent 'religious books' (Tables 4.14, 4.15). But, in Bihar, the rural percentages of both 'biographies' (45% vs 34%) and 'religious books' (28% vs 24%) are higher. In the rest of the states, 29-30 percent of the non-fiction readers prefer 'biographies' but the readership of 'religious books' is significantly higher in rural areas (37%) compared to urban (28%).
- A stark rural-urban divide in favour of urban has been observed in the cases of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Tripura. But the differences are quite narrow in Manipur and Nagaland.
- At the all India level, there is not much association between size of the household and readership among its members. A similar situation is observed across most of the north-eastern states as well. However, one prominent exception is Nagaland, where it is seen that higher the size of the household, greater is the percentage of people reading leisure books. The situation is completely opposite in Mizoram where a higher percentage of the readers (67%) comes from the households with 1-2 people and the percentage falls to 60 for households with more than five members.
- The percentage of youth who read leisure books in rural areas is the highest in Nagaland (57%) and lowest in Arunachal Pradesh (12%), while in urban areas Mizoram (74%) and Sikkim (15%) have accounted for the highest and lowest percentages.
- In Assam, the highest percentage of rural youth (41%) considers the subject of the book as the most important deciding factor. The other important considerations are 'author profile' and 'price' as viewed by 26 percent and 17 percent youth respectively (Table 4.27). However, in other NE states, price of the book is the most important factor (52%) while purchasing leisure books, followed by subject (16%) and author profile (13%). For rural Maharashtra, subject is the most important weighing factor as viewed by 38 percent youth, the next important factor being price which has only a marginal amount of higher support over the author profile (22% vs 19%). The youth from the 'rest of the states' has expressed a more convincing opinion – that subject (30%) and author profile (27%) are the two most important weighing factors, price can only be the third factor (25%)

About National Youth Readership Survey

Results presented in this book are primarily based on information collected through an all India primary survey called the “*National Youth Readership Survey -2009*” undertaken by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) on behalf of National Book Trust, India under the National Action Plan for the Readership Development among the Youth (NAPRDY) of the Trust to generate reliable information to meet the requirement to answer the objectives of the study. Sample literate youths (13-35 years of age) were selected scientifically by adopting a multi-stage stratified random sampling design from a wide cross-section of youth (age, education, and sex) in the country. In view of India’s diversity in terms of languages and locations, the sample size and selection procedure were designed to generate reliable estimates at state level separately for rural and urban areas. Therefore, sample of literate youths were selected from entire country by covering both rural and urban areas with the objective of enhancing the precision of the estimates.

The sample sizes for both rural and urban areas were independently determined based on available resources and the derived level of precision for key estimates from the survey, taking into account NCAER’s experiences in undertaking such surveys in the past. A total of 38,575 youths (13-35 years of age) were canvassed for collection of the primary data and were distributed over a larger geographical area to increase the precision of the estimates. For instance, in rural areas, the realised sample of 14,058 literate youths out of 102,699 listed was spread over 432 villages in 207 districts covering all States/UTs of India. Similarly, in urban areas, a sample of 24,517 literate youths out of 210,348 listed came from 753 urban wards in 199 towns covering all States/UTs.

To increase accuracy and ensure adequate item response, the survey was conducted by adopting face-to-face interviews of the sample youths using a questionnaire-based approach. Non-response and non-sampling errors were reduced by conducting focus group discussion, proper training of interviewers and supervision.

Detailed information was collected on the demographic profiles of youth and their family members, usage pattern of various information sources, reading habits, preferences and on relevant qualitative indicators related to readership and reading habit of the youth. An exclusive module containing aspects such as the motivational factors influencing reading habits and preferences, purpose and attitude towards reading, aspirations and perceptions of youths were canvassed to all sample literate.

Advisory Panel Members of National Youth Readership Survey Constituted by NBT, India and NCAER

Dr. N S Sastry, Former DG, NSSO & CSO

Prof. Palle Rama Rao ISRO-Dr. Brahm Distinguished Professor, ARCI, Hyderabad

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ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL OF APPLIED ECONOMIC RESEARCH

NCAER was established in 1956 as a registered society. As a premier applied economics research institute in the country, NCAER is committed to enhance public awareness of policy issues in business and economics and to facilitate solutions that will contribute to overall national development. By publishing the findings of its research, and through the active participation of its senior researchers in media and policy, it aims to bring new knowledge to attention of policy makers.

ABOUT NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

Established in 1957, the National Book Trust, India, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India is a highly professional multilingual publishing house working towards the promotion of books and developing reading habit among the masses.

Publishing forms a major activity of the Trust. It publishes a wide variety of reasonably priced quality books ranging from works of fiction to books on Medical Sciences and cutting edge technology for all segments of the society and for all age groups, including a wide variety of illustrated books for children. Over the years, the Trust's determined efforts in developing a strong and inclusive policy towards publishing is also apparent in the variety of books published for visually handicapped and the neo-literates.

The Trust publishes books in 18 major Indian languages, which includes Asamiya, Bangla, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Manipuri, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Odiya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. In addition to this, the Trust has also published books in Bhojpuri, Himachali, Kokborok, Khasi, Garo, Lepcha, Bhutia, Mising Limboo, Mizo, Newari, Bodo, among others.

During the period under review 2314 titles were published by the Trust. These included 148 originals, 168 translations, 1996 reprints and 2 revised edition. Besides, 240 Braille editions were published in Hindi, English, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Gujarati.

Over the years, the Trust's publications have earned a distinctive name both for their content and quality of production. This is reflected in the number of awards and distinctions, which the Trust receives from time to time. This year too, two of its publications were awarded the best in their respective categories at an Award Ceremony for Best Publications organised by the Federation of Indian Publishers at Pragati Maidan. These included *Learning Science – III* in Hindi (Second prize in College Textbooks category) and *Catalogue: Golden Jubilee Anthologies* (Second prize in Price List, Catalogue & Brochure category).

The Trust organises book fairs/exhibitions throughout the country at regional, national and international levels. NBT has so far organised 19 World Book Fairs, 38 National Book Fairs and

The Trust also stepped-up its book promotional activities in the North-east through a number of book fairs, literary activities and special sales drive. During the year under review the Trust organized 5 book fairs and participated actively in 7 book fairs held in the region. Besides, the Trust also organised special exhibits of the Trust's publications at various colleges and universities in the region. Among the significant literary events organised during the period include quiz and sit & draw competitions, meet-the-author programmes, seminar on *Children's*

Literature and Reading Habit at Aizawl and discussions on *Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Essential Elements in the Literature of the North-East* at Itanagar.

In order to promote Indian publishing abroad, the Trust participates in various International books fairs by displaying a cross section of representative Indian publications brought out by various Indian publishers. Since 1970, the Trust has participated in about 317 International book fairs. During the period under review the Trust participated in 7 such International Book Fairs, including the prestigious 14th Nepal Education & Book Fair (6-14 August 2010); Beijing International Book Fair (30 August-3 September 2010); Sharjah International Book Fair (26 October-6 November 2010); Dhaka International Book Fair (1-16 December 2010) Cairo International Book Fair (26 January-6 February 2011); Jerusalem International Book Fair (20-25 February 2011); and Bologna Children's Book Fair (28-31 March 2011).

One of the significant international events, which the Trust organised, was the Presentation of India as the *Country of Honour* at the Beijing International Book Fair, held during 30 August to 3 September 2010 in Beijing. The presentation included a special exhibit of over 3500 titles published by more than 26 publishers, as well as panel discussions and cultural programmes. The special exhibit included books on Buddhism, books on and by Rabindranath Tagore, and books on and by Jawaharlal Nehru. In all, nearly 100 member, strong delegation from India comprising some of the major publishers, eminent creative writers from different Indian languages, authors, editors, publishing professionals etc participated in the special presentation by India at BIBF.

The Trust has been trying to make the books available to the people at their doorsteps through mobile exhibitions. So far it has organised more than 11,000 mobile exhibitions throughout the country including the North-eastern states. During the period under report, the Trust organised mobile book exhibitions at about 1662 places in and around Delhi, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Assam, Rajasthan, Goa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Tripura.

The Trust provides assistance to authors and publishers for the publication of reasonably priced university level text and reference books and for books on Medical Science under its Subsidy Scheme. During the year under review, one title was published under this scheme.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development had entrusted the scheme of Financial Assistance to Voluntary/Private organisations for organising Seminars/Training Courses/Workshops/Annual Conventions/Book Fairs related to the Book Promotional Activities to the Trust. A number of organisations had applied for financial assistance for organising various Book Promotional Activities. Grants were released to 226 organisations during 2010-11 by the Trust to meet 75% of the approved expenditure of such Book Fairs, Seminars, etc.

The Trust organises several book-related activities for the development of the publishing industry of the country. It organises workshops and seminars for those involved in the development, production and distribution of books. It also organises author's meet and other literary activities such as book release functions from time to time. During the period under review, around 50 such activities were organised by the Trust.

The Trust also has a National Centre for Children's Literature (NCCL), which is the nodal agency to monitor, coordinate, plan and aid the publication of Children's Literature in various Indian languages. The NCCL has developed a library-cum-documentation centre of children's literature. It organises workshops, seminars and exhibitions to develop the children's literature of the country. With a view to promote and develop the reading habit of the children at the school level, the NCCL encourages setting up of Reader's Clubs at the schools throughout the country and also conducts surveys and takes up research work relating to Children's Literature. So far, over 35,000 Readers Clubs have been set up across the country. During the period under review, the NCCL established over 1100 Readers Clubs, besides organising Meet-the-Author programmes, story telling sessions, workshops seminars Readers Club Orientation programmes and other children's activities in various parts of the country. In addition, 12 monthly issues of Readers' Club Bulletin, a bilingual magazine for promotion of reading habit among children were also brought out.

Besides the Northern Regional Office at its headquarters, the Trust also has three Regional Offices at Bengaluru, Mumbai and Kolkata. The regional offices are primarily responsible for the marketing and sales of NBT publications. The regional offices also participate in various book fairs organised both by the Trust and other agencies throughout the country. The regional offices also organise NBT book Exhibitions at various places in their respective regions. The regional offices are also responsible for enlisting distributors and agents for the sale of NBT publications. During the period under report, 139 new agents/distributors were enrolled. It also enrolled 3,299 new Book Club members. The Trust also has a book counter each at the HQs, Vasant Kunj, CCIC, Janpath, Darayaganj in New Delhi and at regional offices.

Every year during the National Book Week from 14-20 November, the Trust organises a number of Book promotional activities throughout the country to promote book mindedness among the masses. This year too, a weeklong programme for children was held at the amphitheatre of Nehru Bhawan, NBT. Based on the theme, *My Children My Literature*, the Festival saw participation of a large number of children from various schools and NGOs in and around Delhi. During the Week, children interacted with well known children's authors like Shri Gagan Chandra Adhikari, Smt Surekha Panandiker and Shri Prakash Manu and gave dramatic performances based on stories by renowned authors like Rabindra Nath Tagore and Ruskin Bond. Besides, a number of book promotional activities, which included seminars, book review sessions, meet the author programmes, poet's meet and book release functions were held all over the country.

The Trust also organises short term Training Courses in Book Publishing in various parts of the country with the objective to create a talent pool of trained professionals for the publishing industry. While a four-week Training Course in Book Publishing at Delhi has become an annual feature, it also conducts short-term training courses of one-to-two week duration in other parts of the country. During the period under report, four short-term publishing courses were held in Agartala, Pune, Silchar and Vijayawada.

During the year beginning April 2010 to March 2011, the Trust achieved net sales of ` 2956.70 lakh. The revenue earned during this period was to the tune of ` 2799.76 lakh.