

## **Chapter 2**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN COLONIAL BENGAL**

There is no evidence of East India Company's interest in the education of Bengal till the end of the eighteenth century. We have not found any distinct picture of mass education in England prior to 1780, and the question to show interest to spread mass education in Bengal was beyond the thought of company till end of eighteenth century as it was general perception that it could be spread without state intervention. The Directors of the East India Company were interested mainly in the expansion of trade, commerce and political influence in India. They did not bother about the intellectual and moral upliftment of the general people of the country. So, the question of mass education in Bengal did not receive any serious consideration from the East India Company in its early years.

The expansion of primary education ought to have been the primary responsibility of the government of the country. But unfortunately, the government policy in this regard was not bold and adequate up to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which was precondition to set up public libraries. The rate of growth of literacy in Bengal during the period in table below show the progress was too slow and halting.

## LITERACY IN BENGAL

The rate of growth of literacy in Bengal during 1881 to 1911 in table below shows the progress was too slow and halting.

Table 2.1: Growth of literacy in districts of Bengal<sup>1</sup>

Name of the District	Percentage of literates			
	1881	1891	1901	1911
Bankura	5.23	6.45	9.28	9.43
Birbhum	4.44	6.28	7.74	8.79
Burdwan	4.54	5.92	8.50	9.98
Calcutta	21.23	26.64	26.00	32.12
Cooch Behar	2.74	4.71	5.90	7.41
Darjeeling	3.84	6.52	7.00	9.95
Hooghly	6.74	8.85	10.64	11.14
Howrah	7.38	8.87	11.52	14.21
Jalpaiguri	2.10	3.90	3.91	5.57
Malda	2.16	2.64	3.74	4.57
Midnapore	5.66	7.09	13.80	9.01
Murshidabad	2.75	3.56	5.51	5.79
Nadia	2.78	3.62	5.59	5.62
24-Parganas	6.27	8.08	11.19	12.36
Dinajpur	2.96	4.53	5.33	5.87
Jessore	3.58	4.67	5.79	6.97
Khulna	3.61	4.72	6.88	8.44
RajShahi	2.34	2.65	4.25	4.64
Rangpur	2.43	2.82	3.42	4.14
Bogura	3.68	4.21	5.03	5.89
Pabna	2.59	3.53	4.75	5.53
Dacca	3.25	4.68	6.54	7.48
Faridpur	3.00	4.18	5.15	6.16
Bakherganj	4.27	6.26	7.97	8.56
Mymensingh	2.23	3.20	3.76	4.64
Chittagong	4.00	4.81	5.78	6.08
Noakhali	4.00	4.45	5.40	6.16
Tiperah	4.31	4.23	6.43	7.10
Chittagong Hill Tract	-	-	4.46	6.38
Hill Tiperah	-	-	2.27	4.03

At present we have elaborated population statistics as well as educational statistics of Bengal before to precede role of public libraries to spread mass education and cultural awareness. There are 19,801,400 males and 19,295,623 females out of total population 39,097,023 in 1891 in Bengal. It increased to 23,369,152 males and 22,548,413 females out of 45,491,056 total populations in 1911. A further increase

of population has observed in 1931. It is found that 26,557,860 males and 24,529,478 females are found out of total 51,087,338 populations in 1931. In comparison to previous years a speedy growth has found in 1941. 31,747,395 males and 28,559,130 out of total 60,306,525 total population in 1941.<sup>2</sup>

We have received literacy rate of the province out of total population in 1931. 40,78,774 males and 6,64,507 females are found literate and 22,479,086 males and 23,864,9671 females are also found as illiterate in 1931.<sup>3</sup>

A gradual increase in the rate of literacy is found to keep balance in the increase of population in 1941. It is found 46,659 persons are literate and 1,81,763 persons are also found illiterate out of total population 2,28,422 in the age group of 20,630 in 1941.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, progress is noticeable in the education of girls, the ratio of female literates rising from 4 per mile in 1881 to 9 in 1891 and to 14 in 1901. The educational returns also show that the number of girl's school represented 6.2 per cent of the number of girls of school-going age in 1908-09 as against 4.4 per cent in 1893-94.

Removal of illiteracy could be affected completely only through the reform and reorganization of the village life. Establishment of adult education centres side by side with expansion of primary education in the villages and setting up public libraries would go a long way to solve the problem of mass ignorance.

The establishment of the Calcutta Public Library in 1836 and the enactment of the first Public Library Law in the world in the United Kingdom in the year 1850 had an effect among the enlightened people of the nineteenth century Bengal. As a result, under their leadership quite a good number of public libraries were established in different districts of Bengal by the end of the nineteenth century.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

Table 2.2: Chronological statement of public libraries in nineteenth century  
Bengal<sup>5</sup>

Sl. No.	Name of the Library	Year of Establishment
1	Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar, Midnapore	1851
2	Hooghly Public Library, Hooghly	1854
3	Jessore Public Library	1854
4	Bagura Woodburn Public Library	1854
5	Rangpur Public Library	1854
6	Barisal Public Library	1854
7	Krishnanagar Public Library, Nadia	1856
8	Konnagar Public Library, Hooghly	1858
9	Uttarpara Public Library, Hooghly	1859
10	Bandhab Library, 24 Parganas	1869
11	Ariadaha Association Library, 24 Parganas	1870
12	Sreerampore Public Library, Hooghly	1871
13	Barasat Association Library, 24 Parganas	1871
14	Boral Priyanath Library, 24 Parganas	1871
15	Ambica Sadharan Pathagar, Burdwan	1872
16	United Reading Club Library, Calcutta	1872
17	Chandannagar Pustakagar, Hooghly	1873
18	Basanta Library, Bankura	1873
19	Shibpur Public Library, Howrah	1874
20	Baranagore Peoples Library, 24 Parganas	1876
21	Indian Association Library, Calcutta	1876
22	Shahipada Institute, 24 Parganas	1876
23	Mudiali Public Library, Calcutta	1876
24	Rajpur Public Library, 24 Paragans	1877
25	Ramkrishna Library & Reading Club, 24 Parganas	1879
26	Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Library, Calcutta	1879
27	Taltala Public Library, Calcutta	1882
28	North Brook Hall Library, Dacca	1882
29	Sirajganj Public Library, Sirajganj	1882
30	Bagbazar Reading Library, Calcutta	1883
31	Rashpur Peoples Library, Howrah	1883
32	Pragati Pathagar, Midnapore	1883
33	Bantra Public Library, Howrah	1884
34	Kumartuli Institute Library, Calcutta	1884
35	Ranaghat Public Library, Nadia	1884
36	RajShahi Public Library, Miyapara	1884
37	Coomilya Public Library	1885
38	Bally Sadharan Pathagar, Howrah	1885
39	Makardaha Saraswat Library, Howrah	1885
40	Mohiary Public Library, Howrah	1886

41	Mug-Kalyan Pally Bharati Granthagar, Howrah	1888
42	Suburban Reading Club, Calcutta	1888
43	Chaitanya Library, Calcutta	1889
44	Kalighat Library and Free Reading Room, Calcutta	1889
45	Sporting Club Library, Howrah	1889
46	Pabna Annadagobinda Public Library	1890
47	Bharati Club Library, Howrah	1890
48	Shah Makdum Institute and Public Library, RajShahi	1891
49	Bansberia Public Library, Hooghly	1891
50	University Institute Library, Calcutta	1891
51	Kalyan Smriti Library, Hooghly	1891
52	Surhid Library, Calcutta	1891
53	Agarpara Pathagar, 24 Parganas	1891
54	Mohabodhi Society Library, Calcutta	1892
55	Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library, Calcutta	1893
56	Jamgram Nandi Sadharan Pathagar, Hooghly	1894
57	Mondalai Public Library, Hooghly	1894
58	Belur Public Library, Howrah	1895
59	Y.M.C.A. Library, Calcutta	1895
60	Umesh Chandra Public Library, Khulna	1897
61	Baniapukur Library and Reading Club, Calcutta	1897
62	Ramkrishna Mission Library, Murshidabad	1897
63	Saraswati Institute, Calcutta	1898
64	Kamala Library, 24 Parganas	1898
65	Friend's Union Library, Howrah	1898
66	Kakatia Public Library, Bankura	1899

Throughout Bengal, especially in the districts where English education spread first the need of libraries was felt, and all those who had received English education became subscriber to those public libraries. District- wise growth and development reveals slow and uneven development of public libraries during the period 1850-1899.

Table 2.3: District- wise growth of public libraries during 1850-1899<sup>6</sup>

Districts	Number of Libraries
Calcutta	18
Howrah	10
24 Parganas	10
Hooghly	09
Midnapore	02
RajShahi	02
Nadia	02
Bankura	02
Burdwan	01
Murshidabad	01
Jessore	01
Rangpur	01
Bagura	01
Barisal	01
Dacca	01
Sirajganj	01
Coomilya	01
Pabna	01
Khulna	01
Birbhum	-
Coach-Behar	-
Darjeeling	-
Jalpaiguri	-
Malda	-
Purulia	-
West Dinajpur	-
Total	66

The educational policy of the Company's government neglected mass education and indigenous village schools which imparted elementary education, however limited and crude to the people. A medium scale educational work was organized in Bengal by the missionaries, the Education Department of the Government and progressive Indians. Among these three agencies, Indian private enterprise had the largest share in the spread of education in 1901-02.<sup>7</sup>

At least 66 Public Libraries established in Bengal under the patronage of enlightened and influential persons of the locality during the period. It is discussed earlier that Reverend Long, a famous missionary had tried in manyways to establish 'Bangiya Pustakalaya'. It is mentioned by quoting reporting of the 'Sambad Pravakar' dated 1851 that, he reported public libraries had established in ten places and discharged services under the librarianship of Europeans.

## DECADAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The spread of English education gave new light to the enlightened people of Bengal and they began to think for themselves. The resulting thrust and hunger for knowledge led to the establishment of libraries, though on a small scale in different areas of Bengal. The wider use of printing press to publish books right in Bengal itself shows that the volume of demand for printed books increased to a degree. These presses added variety to publications. Books coming out from these printing presses went straight either to the individual readers who spent money for their own consumption or went to shelves of the libraries waiting for readers to turn over their pages.

District- wise decadal development of public libraries during 1901 to 1940 shows that social and political circumstances played vital role to the development of public libraries in Bengal.

Table 2.4: Decadal development of public libraries in Bengal<sup>8</sup>

Districts	1901-10	1911-1920	1921-30	1931-40	Total Number
Kolkata	20	34	86	87	227
Coochbehar	-	7	-	1	8
Khulna	3	5	2	18	28
Chittagong	3	3	6	14	26
Jalpaiguri	2	2	7	4	15
Dacca	1	0	1	4	6
Darjeeling	-	2	3	5	10
Dinajpur	3	5	7	31	46
Nadia	2	8	8	6	24
Noakhali	-	1	1	6	8
Pabna	-	6	9	16	31
Faridpur	-	1	6	4	11
Bagura	-	0	3	10	13
Burdwan	3	9	19	36	67
Bankura	3	3	8	24	38
Bakharganj	1	2	1	43	47
Birbhum	3	3	5	27	38
Mymensingh	-	3	9	19	31
Malda	-	3	5	25	33
Murshidabad	1	6	4	16	27
Midnapore	-	5	7	34	46
Jessore	1	5	1	4	11
Tripura	2	5	5	26	38
Rangpur	4	1	2	15	22
RajShahi	3	2	2	6	13
Howrah	4	17	21	24	66

Hooghly	9	28	25	42	104
24 Parganas	13	18	15	24	70
				Grand Total	1104

The period between 1901 and 1921 was a period of political unrest of the Bengal partition movement, Morley- Minto reforms, World War I, the Home Rule and Non-Co-operation movements. It was a period of the great national awakening of the Indian people, of their rising political consciousness and increasing critical attitude to the measures of the British government, in the spheres of politics, economics and education. Imbibed by the nationalism, Bengali youths were busy to introduce compulsory elementary education for the masses. There had been a phenomenal growth and development of public libraries is found up to 1921. During the period, Public Libraries were established to fulfil quantitative expansion of education.

There was a steady expansion of education between 1921 and 1937 as the department of education was transferred to the control of Indian ministers in 1921. Public libraries were opened to spread education.

The period after 1937 was marked by three outstanding events: i) the introduction of provincial autonomy in 1937, ii) the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and iii) the political storm which broke out in August 1942, in India and the subsequent developments which had a great effect on the life of the Indian people. The necessity of mass education for national progress was categorically pointed out. Since then, increasing effort in that direction was made by all progressive Indians. Campaigns to liquidate illiteracy were organized. Student groups spent summer months in trips to villages to spread literacy among the villages. Night classes for workers were organized in cities for the same purpose. Comply with the circumstances 133 public libraries are found established during 1941- 47.<sup>9</sup>



## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Source of finance was an important factor to the development of public libraries in the Colonial period as common men were economically wretched within British rule. In spite of that Public libraries were established out of financial arrangement of common people. During the period under study, financial arrangement of public libraries used to maintain from following sources, such as,

- i) The subscription received from the users;
- ii) The donation from Kings, Landlords and sympathetic rich people of locality;
- iii) Grant-in -aid from the local bodies, like, Municipalities, Union Boards, Calcutta Corporation etc.
- iv) Grant-in –aid from provincial government.

A calculation made on the basis of the available data and records of the libraries to show its sources of finance in 1930s.

Table 2.5: Sources of finance of public libraries<sup>10</sup>

Districts	Subscriptions and Donations	Grant-in-aid from local bodies	Grant-in-aid from the Government
Bankura	93.0	5.0	2.0
Birbhum	92.0	5.0	3.0
Burdwan	92.0	5.0	3.0
Calcutta	65.0	35.0	0.0
Darjeeling	98.0	2.0	0.0
Hooghly	65.0	30.0	5.0
Howrah	68.0	32.0	0.0
Jalpaiguri	90.0	10.0	0.0
Malda	92.0	5.0	3.0
Midnapore	92.0	5.0	3.0
Murshidabad	80.0	15.0	5.0
Nadia	90.0	5.0	5.0
24-Parganas	75.0	20.0	5.0
Dinajpur	60.0	30.0	10.0
RajShahi	68.0	30.0	2.0
Barisal	65.0	30.0	5.0
Dacca	70.0	25.0	5.0
Bagura	75.0	20.0	5.0
Noakhali	90.0	5.0	5.0

Rangpur	92.0	5.0	3.0
Jessore	80.0	15.0	5.0
Mymensingh	93.0	5.0	2.0
Bakharganj	98.0	2.0	0.0
Faridpur	90.0	10.0	0.0
Pabna	65.0	30.0	5.0
Chitaganj	90.0	5.0	5.0
Khulna	70.0	25.0	5.0

(Sources and their respective share in % (approx.))

As a whole, the respective share of sources of finance for public libraries during 1930s on an average were as following, such as,

1. Subscription and donation : 82%
2. Grant-in-aid : 15%
3. Grant-in-aid from Government: 3%

## **GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Gradual developments of public libraries in Bengal have been provided in this section to represent endeavour of common people in this programme.

### **Public Libraries in Hooghly**

This humble presentation started with the history of Public library development of Hooghly district first. Hooghly District is known as the holy place of sagacity. In Hooghly district, 19.72 per cent male and 1.49 female were found as literate out of total 10.64 per cent literate persons in 1901 followed by 22.78 per cent literate male and 4.00 per cent literate female in 1931.<sup>11</sup>

The people of the district were intelligent and foresighted to accept English education first. As regards knowledge of English, the ratio in the case of males is the highest in the province outside Calcutta and Howrah, where conditions are exceptional owing to the numbers to the Europeans resident in that cities.<sup>12</sup>

The district had not only set up libraries, it had performed a leading role to organize library association in the state. On 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March 1925, the first Hooghly library conference was held at Bansberia in Hooghly under the initiation of

Bansberia public library and it was the first library conference in undivided Bengal. Bengal Library Association was formed as per the proposal of Hooghly Library Association.

In 1927, Nripati Kumar Ghosh of Bansberia went as the representative of India at the International Library Conference held in London. In 1935, Munindra Deb Roy, King of Bansberia was the only representative from India in the international Library Conference in Spain. His contribution was not confined to Hooghly alone; he heralded the library movement in Bengal. He raised a private library bill in the then Legislative Assembly. He also prepared a draft library act but did not present it to the Legislative Assembly due to want of permission of government.

History of national movement in Hooghly district will be incomplete if it is omitted with the contribution of Joy Krishna Mukhopadhyay. Joykrishna was foresighted and intelligent Zamindar with sharp memory. He was the well-wisher of Bengal Peasants. In 1871, he announced a prize of rupees 750 to present a painful picture of oppression of Bengal Peasants. Reverend Lal Behari De won the prize to write his 'Gobinda Samanta' or 'Bengal Past and Peasant Life'.

Leaders like Jaykrishna were utilitarian in principle, attaching importance to law and legislation. Their conviction found expression in a pathetic belief in the efficiency of the law courts and the police. With the end of the Company's rule and the emergence of new leaders, symbolized by the foundation of the Indian Association in 1876, leaders like Jaykrishna lost some of their influence. But we cannot deny Jaykrishna's importance as a leader even in the new era of political agitation. In his persona he was a synthesis of many of the trends of the century. Caught between the currents of his time, he became actively associated with the National Conference of 1885 and joined the Congress movement while retaining his loyalties to, and sympathy for, an old order, i.e. paternalism.

Criticized by many as an incurable conservative, Jaykrishna helped the democratization of knowledge by founding, with some other educationists, the Vernacular Literature Society and Public Library in Uttarpara out of his nationalistic wisdom. He was also an early leader of the library movement in India. If any one action symbolized the character of his educational endeavours, it was the foundation of the Uttarpara Public Library in 1859. Unlike many English-educated

men of his time, he was fully aware of our rich cultural heritage and supported Sanskrit education by offering scholarships and assisting oriental seminaries.<sup>13</sup>

We may recollect contribution of Bagala Prasad Bhattacharya in the nationalist movement in Mahesh in connection with the deliberation of Mahesh Public Library in national movement. Mahesh High School played a role of National School to some extent. The school first started with 54 students in Mahesh Public Library in 1923. Uncompromising attitude of Bagala Prasad towards British rule manifested in various incidents. The library is fortunate enough to found such a patriot. Mr. Indra Narayan Das reminisced that they had hidden many banned books during national movement and returned after independence. It is also found from the reminiscence of the aged persons of the locality that the library holds 1500 books up to 1935. It had also subscribed Jugantar, Anandabazar, Basumati, Manasi, Marmabani etc. The library used to distribute clothes to the poor and destitute persons during Puja festival. Village women would also look the famous chariot during Ratha festival.<sup>14</sup>

Janai a prosperous village in Hooghly district of West Bengal. Once Zamindar Mukhopadhyay family of the village had a pleasant day. A small library established at the small room of the outskirts of their building under the initiative of Zamindar Kaliprasad Mukhopadhyay and his brothers in 1860. Trend of education was in vogue in Zamindar family. In 1858, Zamindar Purna Chandra Mukhopadhyay arranged acting of 'Shakuntala' at their own stage in 1858. They realized the need of library to spread education to the village and to meet reading taste of educated person.

Anurup Chandra Mukhopadhyay, son-in-law of Kaliprasad Mukhopadhyay was assiduous to the development of the library. Membership and book strength were increased duly. But interest to manage library from Zamindar family was decreased in due course. So, the organizer was not found in spite of books and library room. The library was closed by 1899. Collected books were lost and damaged.

Educated villagers were progressive to take the charge to organize the library from that time. In 1901, People Association was established. In its Annual Conference in next year, a proposal was accepted to revive the old library and as a result, Janai People Association was established in new form in the house of Dr. Kishori Lal

Mukhopadhyay in 1903. For the time being, the library was shifted to the house of Ramchandra Mukhopadhyay and another house also. The name of the library was changed to Janai People's Library which is now Janai Public Library. The library used to open in every morning. Free Reading Room was also arranged. Subscription system was also introduced in lending of books.

The library had been running within up and downs, dictatorship of Zamindars, stealing of books, village groupism and natural disasters etc. In 1903, books strength of the library was 3000, according another view, it was 4000. After four years, in 1907, it had increased to 8000. By 1914, the library reorganized by the great enthusiasm of a band of youth. New books arrived. Books were purchased in place of stolen or damaged books. The library was managed somehow but the administrative reluctance was severe. Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyay took the charge of library with only 196 books and Gurupada, Bhutanath, Nirapada Mukhopadhyay, Jaharlal Bandopadhyay and others lent their hand of assistance to the work. In 1915-16, Janai Peoples Library renamed as Janai Public Library. In his outside of residence Bhutanath Mukhopadhyay gave place to the library from 1916-40. The then library shifted to 'Kacharibari' (Court and office of Zamindars). The library was named as 'Janai Sadharan Pathagar' in an annual meeting of the library under the chairmanship of famous litterateur Sajanikanta Das in 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1942. Famous literateur, S. Wajed Ali too served the library as president of executive council in that period. It used to open in evening from his tenure and Janai Suhrid Sangha bore the expense to buy kerosine oil. The library was registered in 1914.<sup>15</sup>

Sripur-Balagar, Tentulia and Chandra areas in Hooghly district were culturally prosperous from old days. Chandra Saraswati Pathagar originally situated in the Tentulia village to spread education and it was established in 1901. Roybahadur Dwijendra Nath Maitra, assistant secretary to the government of India was active to organize the library by his own collection of books. Later, he donated land to the library.<sup>16</sup>

Boinchee Kashipati Smriti Sadharan Pathagar in Hooghly district was established in 1907. It was opened in the house of Dulal Sen and later, the library was established by the inspiration of freedom fighter Nakul Chandra De. Abdul Fajul

Karim Mandal donated 1.50-acre land and money to construct building of the library. Other organizer members were Keshav Chowdhury, Narayan Chandra Dutta, Srikanta Bhattacharya, Shiv Prasad Banerjee, Debi Prasad Bhattacharya, Kashi Nath Banerjee etc.<sup>17</sup>

Baidyabati Municipality was formed with two villages, Baidyabati and Shewrafuli in Hooghly. Baidyabati was advance village in respect of education and culture. So, the village was not lagging in nationalism in British India. Hrishikesh Kanjilal, a high school teacher in this area was arrested during class hour in suspect of the Alipur Bomb case. 37 youths of the locality established a library and society to eradicate illiteracy, to create health awareness and to boost nationalism in 1908. Not only Nirmal Chandra Ghosh, from king family of Shewrafuli, Kumud Bandhab Mukherjee from zamindar family of Champadani, Munindra Nath Mukherjee from zamindar family of Shewrafuli, youths from different professions, like, doctors, engineers, businessmen, teachers, government employees were also attached themselves to organize the library in the locality. Haridas Gangully also played leading role to organize the library and the library started in the drawing room of Sarada Prasad Gangopadhyay with 120 volumes which increased to 2,052 in 1911.<sup>18</sup>

Tarakeshwar Yuba Sangha Town Library in Hooghly district first organized in the local Congress Office in 1910. Later it shifted to Union Club. Organisers were Haradhan Purakait, Robin Sanyal, Samar Mukherjee, Rabi Kanta Goswami and Sukhadeb Purakait. Freedom fighters, like, Kanai Lal Ta, Nityagopal Pal, Kalipada Mukherjee, Dighapati Bhattacharya had actively participated to organize the library.<sup>19</sup>

Garal Gacha public library in Hooghly district was established in 1913. With a view to eradicating illiteracy and spread national consciousness among people, energetic youths of the locality, Jitendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Sitapati Bandopadhyay, Susthir Bandopadhyay Nanimohan Gangopadhyay, Ramkali Lala, Phanibhusan Bidyabinod and others actively participated to organize the library. First it was opened in the drawing room of Pasupati Bandopadhyay. Dr. Sashibhusan Mukhopadhyay was president of the Garal Gacha public library at that time. He used to organize seminar on patriotic literature and popular science to educate

common man of the locality. In 1945, grandson of Asutosh Mukhopadhyay donated his ancestral home including 14 decimal lands to library to solve housing problem of the library.<sup>20</sup>

During First World War, in 1915, 'Merry Friends' Library' or 'Sadananda Bandhab Pathagar' was established in Hooghly by Nagendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Gourhari Som and Bhupati Majumder to boost nationalism and to create educational as well as cultural awareness among the people. Terms, like, 'Merry' or 'Sadananda' omitted from the title of the library within very short time as authorities of the library found no joy in the society in that war period. Hence, it was only termed as 'The Friends Library', Hooghly from that period. Early years of the library had spent in the house of Ambika Charan Mitra and later in the rented tin shed house of Jogindra Charan Mondal. Present library buildings were set up on the donated land of Sarat Chandra Pal at Raybahadur Satish Mukherjee Road under Hooghly Chinsura Municipality. In pre- independence period, police confiscated 'Patherdabi' of Sarat Chandra Chattapadhyay and 'My Struggle for independence' of Subhas Chandra Bose from the library.<sup>21</sup>

Debanandapur is one of the villages of Saptagram, capital of ancient Bengal. In comparison to another advance village in Hooghly district, Debanandapur is a remote village. Though, it holds historical glory in the attachment of Bharat Chandra Roy Gunakar, a Bengali poet of the eighteenth century and Sarat Chandra Chattapadhyay, famous novelist of Bengali literature. Sarat Chandra Smriti Pathagar established in 1920 at this village on the donated land of nationalist Pramatha Chatterjee. It was started as 'Sarat Chandra Pathagar' in a mud house and renamed as Sarat Chandra Smriti Mandir in 1956.<sup>22</sup>

In 1924 Congress activities in the Hooghly district took an interesting turn when an agitation was launched to end long-standing evils associated with the management of the famous Savaite centre at Tarakeswar. Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das took a leading part in it and some of the Congress leaders of Sreerampore and other places joined the Satyagraha movement. As a result, the mohanta (chief priest) was replaced by a 'Receiver' to supervise the temple properties. In 1925 Mahatma Gandhi visited the Hooghly Vidyamandir and the khadi centre at Sreerampore. In 1928, there were numerous processions and meetings throughout the district

advocating the boycott of the Simon Commission. Next year a big political conference was organized at Hooghly, which was presided over by Deshpriya Jatindra Mohan Sengupta.<sup>23</sup>

In these political situation of the district, Haripal Kailash Chandra Sadharan Pathagar in Hooghly established in 1925 on the donated land of Haripada Bhar, a rich and cultured person of the locality. Bechulal Bandopadhyay, Kalipada Shil, Kartik Chandra De, Baidya Nath De, Shibu Ghosh, Dharanath Bhattacharya, a freedom fighter was energetic to organize library with the help and participation of the villagers to eradicate illiteracy among common men of the locality.<sup>24</sup>

Intensity of the civil disobedience movement was abated to some extent with the signing of the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact', a new development within the district kept the political scene tense. About 1,500 active workers were thrown into prison. Between 1930-31 and 1933-34, many Congressmen, especially from the Sreerampore area, came and joined the Arambagh movement. Social welfare work also progressed during this period and the services rendered at the time of the extensive floods of the Damodar in 1935 deserve special mention.<sup>25</sup>

In 1935 Congress candidates from the district were returned with huge majorities to the Bengal Legislative Assembly and in 1937-38 to the different Union Boards and municipalities. After the outbreak of the Second World War, a campaign was started in the district against all war efforts culminating in the 'Quit India' movement of 1942. The Government took into custody all active sponsors of the movement and closed the Sakti Press at Calcutta. But the struggle continued till the end of the war. On the eve of Independence, a resolution was adopted at the Jatiya Banga Sammelan (Bengal National Conference) held at Sreerampore proposing that a new State of West Bengal be formed as an integral part of the Union of India.<sup>26</sup>

Kotrang Sadharan Pathagar started within such political turmoil at the drawing room of Satish Charan Ghosh in 5th January 1936. After few years, the library shifted to the big room of Baidyanath Pal. Last of all, the library settled at Dharma Mandir in Kotrang Dharmatala Lane in the month of June 1966. Out of their nationalistic views, the library was established by the active effort of some



educated, progressive and common men of the locality apart from the initiation of the land lord or rich people of the locality.<sup>27</sup>

Inspiration and initiation to organise Keshabpur Public Library was mainly depending on Keshabpur Binapani Library, a small library organized by the Nagendra Nath Ghosh, School teacher and follower of Gandhi of the Keshabpur Madhya Engraji Vidyalaya. In 1938, the library started with active initiation of national activist Satish Chandra Basu and full co-operation of villagers. The library first started in a house of Keshabpur Mahendra Institution. Villagers donated books for the library. Shail Dhar bought two almirahs and few books and Jiban Krishna Sarkar too brought some books for the library of the time of its initiation.<sup>28</sup>

Raja Rammohan Roy library at Arambag in Hooghly was established in 1943 on the donated land of the eminent lawyer Fakir Chandra Pal. The library was famous due to the attachment of the Gandhi followers as a member. Prafulla Sen, Atulya Ghosh, B.K. Roy, Manik Pulodhi and many others were the member of the library during its organizing period. Earlier it was popular as the name, Raja Rammohan Roy memorial Hall. It is reported that police of British India were suspicious to the activities the members of the library.<sup>29</sup>

Ramkrishna Tarun Sangha Public Library in Kamarpukur, Hooghly established in 1947 with 170 books and 30 users in a mud house. National activists, such as, Sankar Chanda, Shyamsundar De, Bholanath Kundu, Niranjana Mardane, Bijoy Krishna Laha, Hanseswar Sen, Tushar Kanti Sen, Lakshmi Narayan Sen, Kashi Nath Mukherjee, Kanailal Mardana, Radhashyam Nandi and many others were the organizer of the library. Manuscripts, general books were collected in the library. Specially, books on Ramkrishna and Sarada were the rare collection of the library.<sup>30</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Howrah**

Peoples of Howrah participated in every stages of freedom movement. Let me allow narrating a brief account of these nationalist activities as background to set up libraries. During 1881-1919 'Swadeshi Bhandar' and 'Anushilan Samity' were set up in Shibpur. Famous 'the Howrah Gang case' and contribution Siris Mitra to loot arms from the Go down of the Rhoda Company were too the incidents of that time. Nanibala Devi, a widow, daughter of Bali earned glory as first state prisoner in India. Howrah was also strong centre of National Congress. Peoples of Howrah

devoted themselves in famous non-Co-operation movement (1920) and Civil Disobedience movement (1930) with courage.

Sarat Chandra Chattapadhyay was the president of Howrah District Congress in 1921. He was also the president of 'Swaraj Party' in 1923. Many students leaved schools and colleges. They also disagree to seat in examination. Looms were set up as a part of strike of foreign goods. Non-government schools of the town were closed for six months in support of Civil Disobedience movement. Students participated in Salt agitation in large scale. Many camps were set up in the district to collect volunteers for the movement. Participants were arrested to the offence of Picketing in the opium, 'Ganja' and wine shop. Youth volunteers of Howrah town, Shibpur, Belur, Bali, Shyampur, Panchla, Bagnan area actively participated in the 'Quit India' movement. Congress, Socialist Party, RCPI participated in the movement in large scale. A meeting was held in Howrah under the leadership of Shibnath Banerjee. A large number of leader and workers were arrested and sentenced to jail participating this movement.<sup>31</sup>

In 1891 only 17.9 per cent of the male population was returned as literate, while only 7 per cent of the female out of total 8.87 per cent of literate population could read and write. Similar evidence of progress is afforded by the returns prepared by the Education Department. The number of public educational institutions rose from 859 in 1892-93 to 894 in 1907-08, and of pupils from 33,535, while the percentage of boys to the male population of school-going age advanced from 56.8 per cent to 59.4 per cent. The number of Musalman pupils in schools of all classes increased from 3,674 to 5,333, of whom 5.7 per cent in maktab.<sup>32</sup>

Madhab Smriti Pathagar is the oldest library at Shalkia area in Howrah district. It was established in memory of businessman, late Madhabchandra who was a resident of Kagdanri in Ghatal subdivision. In an early age, Madhab Chandra joined in the business of boat repairing and achieved prosperity. Out of their patriotism, his son Khirad Chandra and grandson Sarat Chandra donated two storied building and 2000 books to keep memory of Madhab Chandra. In 1937, Dr. Sarvapalli Radha Krishnan took the chair of the annual function of the library.<sup>33</sup>

Dafarpur Ramkrishna Library in Howrah established on the donated land of Iswar Mahadev Pandit, a votary of God Dharma Thakur. Enthusiastic persons of the

locality, like, Panchanan Bandhopadhyay, Bamapada Ghosh, Ananda Prasad Ghosh, Kshetra Mohan Ghosh, Narendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Satya Charan Ghosh, Harendra Nath Chattapadhyay, Krishna prasad Ghosh, Akshya Kumar Ghosh, Krishna Mohan Chowdhury, Bharat Chandra Sur, Lakshmi Kanta Bandopadhyay, Satya Charan Pal, and Jogendra Nath Ghosh etc. cordially co-operated to set up the library to boost nationalism.<sup>34</sup>

Makardah village in Howrah is famous due to goddess Makarchandi. The village had acquired separate status not only for religious factor but also to spread education. As a result, schools and library was established in the village. It was 1885; 'Saraswati Pustakalaya' was established in a big house in Srimanipara. Later it transferred to the house of Haladhar Srimani. Welfare of poor and social functions was performed regularly in the library in addition to the lending of books. But the library closed after few years. After 34 years, in 1919, Saraswat library was founded with new name and energy in forthcoming Non-Co-operation movement.<sup>35</sup>

The library which established as 'Sadhana Public Library' in 1924, that was renamed as Howrah Sangha Pathagar in 1925. This name was given by Professor Benimadhab Barua as it was merge of Bandhab Shakti Mandir, Anath Bandhu Samity, Adarsha Balika Vidyalaya and Sunrise dramatic Club. First it was set up in Panchanantala Road and finally it was set up in its own building in Nilmani Mallick Lane in 1946. Eminent nationalists, like, Manindra Mohan Chakraborty, Debi Charan Khan, Amitava Mukhopadhyay, Manindra nath Mukhopadhyay, Tarun Bandopadhyay, Apurba Kumar Bandopadhyay attached to this institution. Dr. Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay reported that he had completed the translation of 18 original 'Puranas' to sit in the library.<sup>36</sup>

Deulpur Public Library in Howrah established in 1920. As a nationalistic programme, Panchanan Bhattacharya, Bibhuti Bhusan Mukhopadhyay, Bhupendra Nath Ghorai, Atal Chandra Basu, Jibandhan De, Madhusudan Bhattacharya, Gobardhan Sarkar had organized the library. The library started first in the house of Bibhuti Bhusan Mukhopadhyay. Later, it shifted to the house of Krishnadhan Chattopadhyay, house of Loknath Mitra and in the house of Manmatha Nath Biswas in 1931, 1939, and 1947 respectively.<sup>37</sup>

Pero in Howrah district is famous as the birth place of famous poet of Eighteenth Century, Ray Gunakar Bharat Chandra. Ray Gunakar Bharat Chandra Smriti Sahitya Mandir Rural Library was established in the village in 1931 to retain the memory of poet, Bharat Chandra. Bidhu Bhusan Roy, Binoy Bhusan Roy, Harimohan Chattapadhyay, Pannalal Roy, Durga Prasanna Bandopadhyay and Rabindra Nath Roy and other nationalists of the locality were votaries of the Goddess Joy Durga and Lakshmi Narayan Jiu and patron of library. Besides lending of books, the library used to organize mass mobilizing programme by arranging adult education, book reading, debate, recitation and dramatic performances.<sup>38</sup>

Burikhali Public Library in Howrah district established on the donated 8 decimal land of Khirad Bala Ghosh in 1932. With a view to perform nationalistic activities, Tulsi Charan Ghosh, Balaram Ghosh, Bankim Chandra Hazra, Paresh Nath Ghosh, Kripasindhu Ghosh, Kali Charan Ghosh, and Mukundalal Ghosh had motivated Khirad Bala to donate the land.<sup>39</sup>

Library of Howrah Assembly established for all round development of the child. In 1925, the youths of Kali Kundu Lane, Kali Banerjee Lane, Chowdhury Bagan in Khurut established younger's club, 'Little Association' in Kali Kundu Lane under the leadership of jitendra Nath Hazra. In due course, it was renamed as Howrah Assembly in 1933. Nilmani Chottopadhyay, the rich, cultured and aged member of the assembly donated his almirahs including books to the assembly. Band Party of the assembly won fame at that time. Young numbers showed excellent performance in military band. In the foundation ceremony of the Mahajati Sadan, the Band party invited and showed their performance. Subhas Chandra used to invite the party to different conference of the Congress. The library of the assembly created reading habit to the locality. Not only novel or short stories, serious thoughts provoking literature and classics were also included in the collection of libraries. Writings on political information were collected in the library.<sup>40</sup>

Garh Bhawanipur R.P. Institute, Old Boys (Rural) Library in Howrah established during Second World War. Ex- Students of Ram Prasanna Vidyaniketan realized the utility of library to spread education. Pioneer five students, Ghanashyam Maji, Lalit Mohan Chakraborty, Jaladhar Bag, Jiban Krishna Bag and Gopi Krishna Karati founded 'Ram Prasanna Vidyaniketan Praktan Chatra Samity' and Sadharan

Pathagar in a house of God Moninath Jiu Trust in 1939. Mass mobilizing programmes, like, Lectures, debates, social functions were regularly performed in Garh Bhawanipur R.P. Institute, Old Boys (Rural) Library.<sup>41</sup>

It was 1942, both Second World War and Quit India Movement created great excitement among the people of India. Kulgachia in Howrah was too ready to accept the political excitement. Naba Panre, Bibhuti Nandi, Baranasi Sarkar, Bibhuti Dutta, Sailen Ghosh, Bibhuti Kar, Saroj Ghosh founded the library in a hut. Later, the library shifted to a house of Basanta Bhandari as the hut was destroyed in the deadly cyclone. Famine relief camp was opened in library during the famine. Freedom fighter Dr. Brindaban Basu used to come to the library. The library shifted several places due to financial and space problem. Last of all, it had established on the purchase land. It is reported that social functions, dramatic performances, child development programmes were performed annually on behalf of the library.<sup>42</sup>

Dipshikha Library in Howrah established by the active effort of nationalistic organisation Kasthosongra Milan Sangha. Poet Dinesh Das organized the library on the donated land of Mahadev Roy, Joydev Roy and Basudev Roy. Other organizers were Abani Doloi, Sudarshan Doloi, Monmohan Koley, Ram Pada Deyasi, Ganesh Doloi, Bepad Bhajan Dhara, Pancharan Seth etc.<sup>43</sup>

Domjur in Howrah had played glorious role in Indian freedom movement. In Khantore village of Domjur, a meeting was convened with Surendra Nath Banerjee in protest of partition of Bengal. Amarchand Mukherjee and Nanilal Mukherjee of Parbatipur village and Meghnad Ghosh of Khasmara were set up loom as a part of non-Co-operation movement. Basanta Dhenkiwas arrested due to revolutionary activities. Fatik Bhattacharya and Paresh Chandra Banerjee were sent to prison first due to picketing in the opium and wine shop in 1930. In this background Domjur Sadharan Pathagar was established in 1943 on the donated land of five businessman, Haridas ghosh, Tarapada ghosh, Nirapada ghosh, kalipada ghosh and Manmotha Nath ghosh. Finally main organizer was Sudhir Chandra ghosh and Co-organiser was Fatik Chandra ghosh.<sup>44</sup>

Sabuj Granthagar was established in the village Nijbalia under the Police Station Jagatballavpur, Howrah in 1945. Out of his nationalistic view, Bhatnagar awardee scientist Dr. Asit Kumar Maity inspired villagers to set up library on his donated

land. Others enthusiastic persons were Bibhuti Bhusan Manna, Panchanan Sinha, Prasad Khanra, Nirmalendu Manna etc. Both literacy and health awareness programme used to perform from the library.<sup>45</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Midnapore**

O' Malley in his Gazetteer narrated the progress of education in Midnapore since 1871-72. In 1871-72, 2,004 schools had established in the district with enrolled students 28, 144 followed by 3,966 schools and 74,791 students in 1880-81. In 1900-01, 4,919 schools had established with 118,399 students in the district followed by 4,392 schools with 124,734 students in 1908-09. It was further added in the statement that, in 1908-09 no less than 53.8 percent of the boys of school going age were under instruction and 5.4 percent of the female population of school going age. It is evident from the statement that progress of education in the district was slow and uneven.<sup>46</sup>

We want to introduce Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar in Midnapur, West Bengal first as it is first public library in Bengal as well in India in its actual sense. Midnapore was the forerunner of Indian freedom struggle. Its nature of movement was separate in comparison to the other districts of Bengal because 'Mahishya' community though inferior to the Brahmin and 'Kayastha' to some extent in caste relation, they were powerful in number and socio- economic and political status. They tried to control the political power in the national movement. Raj Narayan Basu was the centre of nationalist activities in Midnapore. One of the four secret-societies was established in Midnapore in 1902. Raj Narayan Basu (1826-99), the headmaster of Midnapore Zilla School indoctrinated the youths of Midnapore in nationalism. This Derozian appointed as second teacher in English in the Sanskrit college at Calcutta in 1849. Later, in 1851, he transferred as headmaster in the Zilla School in Midnapore. In nineteenth century, like another districts of Bengal, education boosted people of Midnapore towards nationalism. It is known from the census report of 1901 that the rate of primary education in the district is higher than another district of Bengal except Howrah. 13.80 percent people are found as literate and 10, 753 people were able to read and write in English. Muslims of the district were backward than Hindus. Primary education was introduced among the

tribes through 59 primary schools. European Missionaries' were also interested to spread education by providing financial assistance.

From the early part of the twentieth century, Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar had to face several obstacles. The library was in evil eye of government in Swadeshi Period. Many meetings used to hold in the library premise at that time. Anti-Partition movement in Midnapore was started from the meeting of Belly Hall as it was commenced at the Town Hall in Calcutta in 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1905. It is worthy to mention one of them. In April, 1907, one Congress exhibition was held in Midnapore. Congress organization was then confined to handful of educated persons without relation with common people. In 1907, Deshpran Birendra Nath Sasmal and Zamindar Nageswar Prasad Mitra had tried to turn Zilla Congress into public Institution. Then, conflict was arising among modern and old. It was decided that a meeting would be held in this Public Library in 21st April 1907. Before the schedule time of the meeting, K.B. Dutta, leader of the old group transmitted a message that he will not attend the meeting if Debdas Karan, leader of the modern group would attend the meeting. Uproar was raised. Last of all Surendra Nath came from Calcutta and said that a session of district volunteers would be held for this purpose in coming 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1907 under the chairmanship of K.B. Dutta. Surendra Nath Banerjee, Sister Nivedita, Mrs. Anni Besant, Bipin Chandra Pal and so on eminent personalities used to come here at that time. On the other hand, user strength of library had begun to decrease at that time. The library had survived somehow till the eve of independence. But after independence, library development and extension work had continued with new inspiration. Educationists, active readers, scholars and other learned men of the different part of the country used to visit the old library of India to consult rare books, manuscripts, journals, and maps as they were not available elsewhere.<sup>47</sup>

Mirzapur Satsahitya Sammilani library established by the active effort of the famous litterateur and nationalist Mr. Manindra Nath Mandal, village Kasharia, under Khejuri police station area and active effort of the local people in 1918. Local youths collected books after the foundation of the library in a large muddy house. Enlightened with nationalism, Mr. Avijit Kumar Bandopadhyay, headmaster of the Basantia Uchya Engraji Bidyalaya and Swarendra Nath Adak attached themselves to the library to run it smoothly.<sup>48</sup>

Anandapur village attacked several times during Chuar rebellion in 1799. The village was wealthy by business though literacy rate was not high. Anandapur Public Library was established in 7th May 1936 in the donated land of Karali Guin, son-in-law of Zamindar Ananta Chandra Bag and initiation of nationalist leaders, such as Anil Hazra, Basudev Goswami, Shyam Charan Sarkar and Dr. Ras Behari Sen to spread education as well as nationalism in that locality.<sup>49</sup>

Dariberia Bapuji Pathagar in Midnapur established in active co-operation of freedom fighter Tarani Pramanik in 1936. Puri Madhab Pramanik son of Tarini Pramanik was the martyr of the village. Women of the village chased British cops in the Balapara of the village. In this background, the library was established to inspire freedom movement.<sup>50</sup>

‘Quit India’, ‘Bharat Charo’, this simple but powerful slogan launched the legendary struggle which also became famous by the name of the ‘August Revolution’. In this struggle, the common people of the country demonstrated an unparalleled heroism and militancy. Moreover, the repression that they faced was the most brutal that had ever been used against the national movement. The circumstances in which the resistance was offered were also the most adverse faced by the national movement until then- using the justification of the war effort, the Government had armed itself with draconian measures, and suppressed even basic civil liberties. Virtually any political activity, however peaceful and legal, was at this time an illegal and revolutionary activity.<sup>51</sup>

In Tamruk, the Jatiya Sarkar came into existence on 17 December 1942 and lasted till September 1944. Tamruk was an area where Gandhian constructive work had made considerable headway and it was also the scene of earlier mass struggles. The Jatiya Sarkar undertook cyclone relief work, gave grants to schools, organized libraries and armed Vidyut Vahini. It also set up arbitration courts and distributed the surplus paddy of the well-to-do to the poor. Being in a relatively remote area, it could continue its activities with comparative ease.

Madhyahingli Tarun Sangha Pathagar established in 1942 in the active effort of Utpal Mitra, a bachelor headmaster of Madhyahingli High School. He was the follower of Sushil Dhara, leader of Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar. Mass mobilising



activities, such as, newspaper reading, study circle and gymnastic activities were regularly performed in the library.<sup>52</sup>

The administration was totally collapse in Dantan including Mohanpur, Narayangarh in Sadar Sub-division during the proclamation to stop Governments rent and water tax in 1930. Sautiya Kishori Ranjan Smriti Pathagar established at Sautiya in modern Midnapore under the police station at undivided Dantan in 1942. Kishori Ranjan, a village Zamindar was the first graduate of Dantan and founder of 'Kishore Pathagar'. He was man of liberal national attitude and enthusiastic to spread education in the locality. That Kishore Pathagar later known as Kishori Ranjan Smriti Pathagar. Common man used to assemble to the library to participate newspaper and book reading programme in evening.<sup>53</sup>

Kharagpur Milan Mandir Pathagar in Paschim Medinipur was truly a reconciliation place of moderate nationalists in 1944. Two hand written journal, 'Sandhya' and 'Tridhara' bearing patriotic contents published from the library. Besides daily lending, library organized debate, recitation, drawing competition etc. to spread literacy and to train neo-literate of the locality.<sup>54</sup>

Narayangarh was badly affected at the time of 'Chuar Rebellion'. Civil Disobedience movement related to oppose government rent organized at Narayangarh in large scale. Ullaskar Dutta of this area was an active member of the Secret-society. Narayangarh Sadharan Pathagar was established by the initiation of the Brajen Chakraborty, Amulya Ratan De and Timir Baran Chakraborty, freedom fighters of Midnapore district and full co-operation of the villagers of Narayangarh police station area in 1943. Mass- mobilizing activities, such as moral and physical training, philanthropic work, propagation of Swadeshi message, organization of Swadeshi craft, education used to perform under the organization of library.<sup>55</sup>

Kalagachia, under Khejuri police station had played envious role in education, culture and freedom movement. In 1944, Pragati Parishad Club and library was founded in this village. Nikunja Maity and many other erudite nationalist personalities was patron of the library. Library used to organize study circle, recitation, drama and sports for neo-literates.<sup>56</sup>

Despran Pathagar had established in 15th August 1947 in the Radhanagar village under Garbeta. To restrain the pleasurable memory of the independence, educated

persons of the locality inaugurated the library in that day. Haripada Chandra follower of Gandhi donated a valuable almirah to shelving books which is still decorous to the readers. The library was the regular subscriber of the Basumati, Jugantar, and Hindustan Standard. The library was cultural and educational centre of the locality as common people used to attend its reading circle, seminars, debate and cultural events.<sup>57</sup>

Basudevpur Gram Panchayat Bharati Pathagar was established in 1947. The village had played pioneer role to spread education and culture for long time as a library named Deshsebi Granthager was set up to manifest villagers' patriotic desire before Bharati Pathagar but that was not last for long time. At the initiation period, some enthusiastic youth of the Basudevpur village inaugurated the library under the leadership of late patriot Nut Behari Chattapadhyay in a muddy hut of satyaswari Dasi in middle of the village Bazar Para. From the very beginning library had its own flag. 'Bharati' a hand written monthly was published regularly from the library. At the evening of every Sunday literary discussion, debate etc. were performed regularly.<sup>58</sup>

Dhanga Gyaner Alo Granthagar had established in 1947 on the donated 72 decimal land of Kirti Chandra Pattanayak, a nationalist Zamindar of the locality. The library maintained its cost from the financial assistance of local brick farm and donation of the local people. Book and newspaper reading and cultural events used to hold in the library.<sup>59</sup>

Basudevpur Sabuj Sangha Pathagar established on the donated 18 decimal land of late Zemindar Taraprasanna Roy in 1947. Mr. Joygobinda Patra, freedom fighter and Arabinda Roy, Hrisikesh Das, Samaresh Das etc. actively co-operated to set up library in the village. Besides lending of books, library had used to organize indoor and outdoor games and sports, study circle, debate and many cultural events.<sup>60</sup>

Freedom fighters had selected Chaitanyapur village under Sutahata Police station set up a library to spread education and strengthen freedom movement. In remembrance of the martyrs of the freedom movement the library named as 'Sahid Pathagar' and established on the donated 18 decimal land of Panchanan Maity and Rajbala Hazra in 9<sup>th</sup> August 1947. The library was successfully participating mobilizing efforts, such as, moral and physical training by means of organizing

book and newspaper reading, organizing sports and gymnastic activities. The library obtained status of rural library in 1957.<sup>61</sup>

Rajanikanta Pathagar Jukhia was famous for 'Khadi' centre. Rajanikanta Pathagar was established in the name of freedom fighter Rajanikanta Bera at Village Jukhia under Bhagabanpur Police station in modern Midnapore in 1947. On the donated four Decimal plots of the freedom fighter, villagers established the Library to spread education in the locality. Besides daily lending of books, library had used to organized book reading, debates, seminars, exhibitions, drama, sports etc.<sup>62</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Burdwan**

At the time of Adam's survey of the districts of Bengal and Bihar to ascertain the state of education, the aggregate average of literacy was 7.25 per cent ,the highest 16 per cent being in the Bardhaman district. A little over half a century later, in 1891, the Census Report showed that 19 per cent of males over 15 years of age in the district and 5 women in a thousand were literate. In 1901, the corresponding figures were 20 per cent of males and 1 per cent of females.<sup>63</sup>

Giving an overall picture of the state of literacy in the district Peterson said that Burdwan is no longer the best educated district in Bengal it compares very favourably in this respect with the rest of the province.<sup>64</sup>

Burdwan was always straight-forward to religious movement, social reformation, spread of education and patriotism. In 1899, Indian National Conference was held in Bardhaman town. Ambika Charan Majumdar was the president of the conference and Nalinaksha Basu was the chairman of reception committee. In 1904, another National conference was held in Bardhaman under the chairmanship of Asutosh Chowdhury. In 1876, three branches of Indian Association, namely, Bardhaman Indian Association, Kalna Indian Association and Purbasthali Hitakari Sabha were established in Bardhaman district before the birth of National Conference. National movement was spread from Kalna to Katwa. An anti- partition agitation meeting was held at Mahismardinitala under initiatives of Upendranath Hazra, Debendranath Saha and Upendra Nath Sen. Surendra Nath Bandopadhyay and Abul Kasem, leader of Bardwan delivered lecture in that meeting.<sup>65</sup>

Karma Mandir Pathagar was established in 1929 and its organizers were Kamal Bhattacharya, Annada Bhattacharya, Purnendu Mukherjee and others. 'Bangabani Banitirtha Granthagar was established at Arabinda Sarani in Pratapnagar in 1932. Now it is working as government area library and re-named as Bangabani Area Library. By the active effort of Kalidas Bhattacharya, Pratul Bandopadhyay, Amiya Sanyal, Pranabesh Bandopadhyay, Ananda Parishad was established at Badrapara in 1935. It had received a grant of Rs. 65/- from the municipality in 1968. In 1942, Pragati Parishad, a library was established at the house of Mukhoti of Radhabazar by the patronage of Chandidas Mukhoti, Gurudas Roy and Gurudas Bandopadhyay. Pragati Parishad had played an important role in both library and drama movement in Nabadwip. Bidyut Smriti Pathagar was established by Biswanath Chattapadhyay, Gourikishore Ghosh and Bhabani Ghosh in 1945 had merged with Pragati Parishad.

In 1952-53, Pragati Parishad had shifted to the present place in Radhabazar after shifting several places. In 1945, Biswendra Narayan Roy, Nabendu Dhar, Mihir Dey had set up Bandhab Library at Poramathtala with the assistance of the common people. Cartoonist Chandi Lahiri had attached with this library. In remembrance of the Congress worker Ramani Goswami, Ramani Smriti Pathagar was established in 1946. It was survived till 1962. Pressure of population was gradually increasing after independence. In 1911, number of populations was 30,583 in Nabadwip municipality area which had increased to 56,258 in 1951 after separation. Schools and libraries had established to spread education. Municipality used to assist financial help to the libraries at that time. It is noted in the municipality records that 16, 20 and 23 libraries had received financial assistance in 1962, 1965 and 1968 respectively.<sup>66</sup>

The people of Bardhaman responded to the call of the country during the Quit India movement of 1942. Movement on increase of canal tax had achieved mass support. On 17 August processions were taken out in the town of Bardhaman. It converged before the court buildings and began picketing. The police dispersed the procession and picketers by a vigorous lathi charge. On 13 September, a hartal was observed in the town of Kalna in protest the arrest of local leaders. The post office of Kashiara was burnt as also the railway station of Kalna. On 16 September, the national flag was hoisted over the court building at Kalna. Political agitation in different forms

continued till the eve of Independence. Rabindra nath Roy, Ajit Kumar Roy, Ambuja Basu, Narayan Chowdhury, Bijoy Bhattacharya and others had arrested due to their participation in Quit India movement.

Hat Gobindapur Bani Mandir Pathagar in Burdwan was established to create nationalism among people of the locality by means of spreading education and providing information. During 1930, political incidents created great excitement among the youths of the locality. Binoy Chowdhury and Saroj Mukherjee came to the area after the movement against Simon Commission in 1928. From 1929-33 mass-education and mass-consciousness started with the help of lantern- lecture. Youths of the locality demonstrated the fact of British oppression and exploitation with the help of lecture. In this background, Peripatetic library or mobile local study circle and 'Swadeshi Bhandar' were organised in 1930. History of freedom movement and freedom fighters, like, Shivaji, Mazzini, and Garibaldi etc. were discussed in that study circle. Srigopal Bandopadhyay of the village Palsheet and Hemakesh Chowdhury of Khanagram was communicator of the study circle. Gobindapur, Palsheet, Begut were also included in the study circle. In 1930, Binoy Chowdhury and Saroj Mukherjee set up 'Sanyabas' in Kuchut with the help of Durgapada Nandi. Binoy Bhattacharya too came here in later.<sup>67</sup>

Guskara in Burdwan was famous for nationalistic activities during British period. Youths of the locality used to assemble themselves under the banner of Hindu Milan Mandir organized by Kaitista Chandra Chatterjee. Bhabani Ghosh, Lal Mohan Maji, Shibuji Chongdar and many others used to engage in body building exercises, sports, boxing and many social welfare activities. Balam Bandopadhyay too was an active participant of the Hindu Milan Mandir. Saradindu Sekhar Gupta, Gobardhan Pal, Bijoy Ghorai sentenced to prison due to their participation in Non-Co-operation movement and to boycott foreign goods. In 1939, Guskara Sadharan Pathagar was established at the Thakur Bari of the Changdar family. Bijoy Kumar Ghorai, Umacharan Mandal, Jiten Bandopadhyay were participating actively to set up library.<sup>68</sup>

Sudpur Ramkrishna Pathagar in Burdwan was founded in memory of eminent educationist and nationalist Ramkrishna Mitra. The library was first set up in a mud house adjacent to the Shiva temple and later, it was shifted to the pacca building.

Harmohan singha, Bhutnath Banerjee, Chandra Sekhar Mukherjee, Bechu Bhattacharya, Shailen Bhattacharya and others were the organizer of the library. They bought land of the library from Shankasi Bhattacharya. Books were collected as gift from different persons.<sup>69</sup>

Santa Tarun Sangha Library in Burdwan was established in 1946. Founders of the library were common men but they realized the necessity of education to boost nationalism among common people. Bhriguram Hazra, Tapan Kumar Sau, Ananta Kumar Maji, Dhiren Mondal, Shivaprasad Maji, Himanshu Bhusan Gayen, Panchanan Chakraborty, Tarani Prasad Maji, Sasthi pada Sau, Haradhan Chakraborty etc. were stirred with nationalism and set up the library. There was a library under the name, Santra Pallimangal Samity for the aged person of the village. In 1946, youths of the locality established Tarun Sangha library in the corrugated shed house of the social worker Balaram Sau and it stayed till 1974. Later, own building of the library had constructed on the donated land of the Balaram Sau.<sup>70</sup>

Simlon Bandhab Samity Pathagar Rural Library in Burdwan established in 1946 on the donated land of an aged woman of Roy family in the village. Roy family of the village was rich and famous for charity and nationalistic activities. Anupam Sarkar, Madhabananda Chattapadhyay, Biswanath Mukhopadhyay, Tarapada Das, Shanti Pada Sarkar had founded the library to preach nationalism.<sup>71</sup>

Ausgram Tarun Sangha Rural Library in Burdwan had established in 1947. Enthusiastic youths of the village bought plot and built mud-house for Tarun Sangha. Later library attached with it. Bishanka Banerjee, Sukumar Goswami, Nimai Bijoti, Bijoy Ghosh etc were earnest supporter of nationalistic attitude and encouraged people of the locality to set up library to spread education.<sup>72</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Bankura**

The census report of the year 1901 showed that the total number of persons able to read and write was 103,679, representing 9.3 per cent ,18.3 males and 0.5 females of the population of Bankura districts. According to statistics furnished by the Education Department, the number of schools in the year 1881 were 1,410 and there were 32,243 scholars on the rolls. In 1891 the number of educational institutions had increased to 1,534 and the number of pupils to 39,057. During the next 10 years

there was a falling off in the number of schools, while the attendance remained almost satisfactory, the number of the former in 1901 being 1,300, while the aggregate of pupils was 39,092. The census of that year showed that the total number of persons able to read and write was 103,679, representing 9.3 per cent ,18.3 males and 0.5 females, of the population.<sup>73</sup>

In 1910, Pramatha Nath Chattapadhyay established a library at Bishinda in Gangajalghati under the inspiration of famous journalist Ramananda Chattapadhyay. Sanbanda Arunaday Granthagar was established in that year too. Edward Thomson established a library at Nutanchati in Bankura town to spread education and Christianity among people of the locality in 1915. In that year too Ramkrishna Mission established a library school and a charitable Homeo dispensary in Bankura town at the bank of river Gandheswari. Young patriot Manmatha Mallick established a library at Ramjibanpur under Kotulpur which was said to famous for its close relationship of Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, a famous revolutionist of Maharastra.<sup>74</sup>

In 1920-21, Hari Kishan Rathi with the help of local people established Bani Mandir Public Library in the nearby place of Bankura station. In 1922-23, Bishnupur Vivekananda Library was established by the financial assistance of Shibdas Rathi and it was said that branches of communist Party in Bishnupur was spread to centring it. It is also said that Vivekananda Library was built up at the bank of river Dwarkeswar near Bankura town between 1923-26, which probably was established by Jogesh Dey. In 1923, a medical student from chitagaon organized secret revolutionary activities in the district. To follow the directives of Gandhiji, Sushil Palit and Jagadish Palit came to Bankura from Avayashram in Kumilla. They set up Harijan (untouchable) school and library in the Dattabandh area of Bankura. Jagadish Palit had rendered to the library in a purposeful and prestigious organization. According to Sanat Bhattacharya, Jagadish Palit was the founder of library evolution in Bankura.

Between 1924-25, Krishna Chandra had organized Sonamukhi Town Club Library in Bankura in favour of Avay Ashram but it has no relation with present Sonamukhi Town Library. It is too said that, in 1929, Bibhuti Kumar Ghatak organized a library at Schooldanga Congress Office in Bankura Town with full co-operation of the

‘Basumati’ Patrika. Few viewed that, in the same year, Bibhuti Kumar Ghatak was set up a library at Mirzapur under Joypur Police Station area as chief sale counter of Basumati Sahitya Mandir. In addition to that Swapan Ghosh chronologically had listed some more librares in the district, such as Bani Mandir Public Library which still existed and Khandelwal Library, renamed as Srikrishna Library at Nutanganj, Bankura in 1931. Vivekananda Library in Maliyara, Shantishankar Library in Baruipara, Tarun Library and Gangadhar Smriti Library in 1932. It is also mentioned in the same list that Sahitya Mandir Library was established at Nutanganj in Bankura Town in 1933, Jamguri Public Library in 1934, Galia Granthagar in 1938, Kshetra Gopal Smriti Pathagar and Kalachand memorial library in 1940. Azad Hind Sangha Gramin Pathagar in 1946 at Raipur, Kalachand Memorial Library at Ambikanagar in 1941, Gorabari Public Library at Gorabari in 1946, which are still existed and Vivekananda Pathagar at Ajodhyay in 1947 are also found in that list too.<sup>75</sup>

It’s unfortunate for us, Bengalese that no art city was built in Bengal, like Kasi or Mathura, Joypur Agra. Only one city is found in whole Bengal that is Bishnupur. The artistic works of old temples in Bishnupur distinguish among all cities in Bengal. But Bengalis are not visit, acknowledge and learn to respect it.

Bishnupur Public Library was established in 1904 and within a few years it had closed due to several obstacles. In 1932, it had re- opened by the leadership of nationalistic personalities, Hrishikesh Bhattacharya, Sujoy Chand Das, Dinabandhu Bagchi, Atul Chandra Banerjee, Radha Gobinda Roy, Bhubaneswar Kar, Ali Baktir Akhunji, Atayur Rahman, Akram Hussain and others. Mass literacy programme was its main objective. Study circle, exhibition cultural competitions, sports and games used to perform in the Bishnupur library as part its mass mobilizing activities. It had several items on archaeological documents.<sup>76</sup>

Ananda Library at the Asuria Village in Bankura won fame due to attachment nationalists, Lahtananda Gupta, Biman Chandra Gupta and Achyutananda Das in its initial stage in 1918. In later phase, freedom fighter Kanai Sengupta had attached with the library. In 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose came at Hat Asuria. Ashutosh Gupta, Nabin Chandra Gupta, Baidya Nath Gupta, Adwaitya Das and other nationalists were closely attached to its different activities. Radharani Debi, Namita



Sengupta and Puspa Gupta are found as the female member of the Ananda Library.<sup>77</sup>

Helna Susunia Ambujaksha Library was established on the donated land of village Zamindar Gopal Chandra Banerjee in 1930. Birinchi Banerjee, Ajit Trevedi, Ramgopal Mukherjee and others had organized the library to disseminate nationalistic ideas. The name of Gouri Shankar Trivedi is memorable as founder of the library.<sup>78</sup>

Harmasra Banimandir Sadharan Pathagar in Bankura was established on the one bigha donated land of Subal Chandra Roy in 1931. The name of president's awardee Primary teacher and nationalistic, Hari Kinkar Roy is memorable as a founder of the library. In addition to that, Kalyan Roy, Shankari Roy, Sombhu Das, Prallad Roy, Mir Ahmamad Ali, Adwait Roy and other had played pioneering role to spread education by establishing the Harmasra Banimandir Sadharan Pathagar in the locality.<sup>79</sup>

In leadership of freedom fighter Aswini Sahu and Prahallad Sahu and full Co-operation of the villagers Gorabari Binapani Club Library in Bankura was established in 1935. Contribution of Bibhuti Bhusan Sahu, Bhusan Chandra Khanra, Nimai Sahu, Chitta Ranjan Sahu, Gouripada Sahu and others were notable as organizers of the library and club.<sup>80</sup>

Galia Jatiya Granthagar was established at Galia under Joypur police station in Bankura on 41 decimal plots near national high way in 1938 to boost nationalism. Names of Pirumohan Mukhopadhyay, Avayananda Mukhopadhyay, Balai Roy, Sambhu Nath Pramanik and other are memorable as its founders.<sup>81</sup>

### **Public Libraries in 24 Parganas**

The ripples of a new stage of the Indian Freedom movement were felt in the 24-Parganas District during the Non-Co-operation Movement, initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. In 1924 the local people decided to resist the formation of a Union Board in their locality, and refused to pay its taxes. Another of their leaders was Krishnapada Bandopadhyay, traditionally a village priest who worked in the offices of the Alipur Court and who remembered forming a dislike for the overbearing ways of British people during his metropolitan experience; he specifically

mentioned Sir Charles Tegart, the notorious Commissioner of Police. Parmanik and Bandopadhyaya approached the 24-Parganas Zilla Congress Party office at Jadavpur for advice about their course of action. They also met Subhas Chandra Bose, and then Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's most trusted lieutenant. The advice they received was to enrol in the Congress, which they did. On their own, they began by forming a local Congress Committee and initiating a National School including public library in Lakshmikanta's palatial home. They also began khadi spinning and weaving in their homes for sale.

Meanwhile the Mahishbathan Union comprising 14 villages had been formed by the Government under the Presidentship of a local gentleman, Jokayayullah who was succeeded by Reverend Priyambad Das of the local Protestant church, with the alliance of Asutosh Bagui, a landholder of Baguihati. Villagers' refusal to pay Union taxes led to police forces being deployed in 1928 from the sub divisional headquarters in Bashirhat. The brutalities of the Darogah are still remembered. Extensive distraints began to be executed on the recalcitrant villagers during 1928-30, increasing tension against the colonial rulers.<sup>82</sup>

It has found that 11 per cent literate people in the district in 1931 followed by 16 and 24 percent in 1941 and 1951 respectively, which is painfully a slow growth. In the case female literacy, three per cent in 1931, which increased to seven and eleven per cent in 1941 and 1945 respectively which is also a grave state of affairs. Just on the eve of independence, i.e., in 1946-47, the position of primary schools found in the districts, there were 1,945 primary schools comprising 76,479 boys and 10,057 girls in 1920-21 which increased to 2,086 primary schools with 1, 89,394 boys and 32,163 girls in 1946-47.<sup>83</sup>

Agarpara was growing and prosperous area in present north 24 Parganas. The name of Agarpara Pathagar is familiar in the education and cultural history of Bengal. It was established in a small room more than hundred years ago. One day C.K. Sen, owner of 'Jabakusum' Oil Company and Tulshi Mukherjee decided to set up the library in their idle talk and the work was started without any late. The library established in 1891.<sup>84</sup>

Behala Public Library in Kolkata was established in 1st January 1903 to spread education and culture among common people to the locality. Brajendra Nath

Mukhopadhyay, Priyonath Sarkar, Jotish Chandra Roy, Surendra Nath Chattapadhyay, Binoy Krishna Mukhopadhyay, Nanigopal Gangopadhyay, Haridas Chattapadhyay, Manilal Gangopadhyay and many other educated youths of the locality started the library as a part of their nationalistic activities. Haridas Chattapadhyay had offered a room for the library and Brajendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Priyanath Sarkar, Sailajakanta Ghosh had collected some aids for the library.<sup>85</sup>

Kishori Mohan Goswami, pioneer to spread mass education, had established 'chatuspathi' (school for teaching Sanskrit) at Khardaha in North 24 Parganas in 1830. Rajendra Bandopadhyay had established Rajendra Institution on the donated land of Binod Kishore Goswami which turned in Middle English School later in 1884. Present Shivnath High School established in 1928. In 1856, first public library was established in Khardaha named as Khardaha Unit Library. Hiran Chandra Mukhopadhyay was its founder. The library was not running long years. In 1910, Sub-Divisional officer was present to distribute a prize distribution ceremony in Rajendra Institution and inaugurated library. Collections of Khardaha Unit library was given to Sriguru Granthashram. Manmohan Gangopadhyay was pioneer of library evolution in Khardaha. He and his friend and colleague Sanat Kumar Sengupta set up Sriguru Granthashram and different educational and cultural institution in Khardaha area in association with some enthusiastic youths of the locality. It is learnt that; British police kept some books and magazines of the library under strict observation.<sup>86</sup>

Budge Budge Public Library was established in 25<sup>th</sup> March 1911 after the establishment of Budge Budge Uchayavidyalaya in 1903. Both two institutions were the outcome of nationalistic idea of the inhabitants of Budge Budge. Initially the library had started as Public Library, Budge Budge and later renamed as Budge Budge Public Library. At that time, Union Library was established in nearby Shyampur village. The library had received land from the local Zamindar. Its books and user's strength were gradually increasing but the library had closed after ten years. Budge Budge library was survived for its financial aid from the Municipality. At least two private libraries had existed in Budge Budge before Budge Budge Library. One Arya Saraswat Niketan was organized by Hiralal Haldar in 1908. Basanta Kumar Dutta too organized a library, Dutta Sahitya Bhandar. Collections

of these two organizations were donated to the Budge Budge Library. The library had sent a felicitation later to Subhas Chandra Bose when he came at Budge Budge in 1940. In December 1941, first bombing was happened in Budge Budge and second also was happened in the January of following year. Peoples were in distressing situation. Library activities were a tippy- tardy. Hiralal Haldar had continued the library with the help of local youths. Budge Budge Public Library has acquired popularity for its rich collection and orientation as well as extension service to the nearby locality.<sup>87</sup>

Purnasashi Bandopadhyay was the disciple of Ramkrishna. He established Sri Gadadhar Ashram at Ichapur in North 24 Parganas in 1914 to show regard to his 'Gurudev'. He donated at least 10 bighas of land for this purpose. A library was also established side of Ashram. Nagendra Nath Chattapadhyay, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Panchu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, Tara Prasanna Mukhopadhyay, Sayaram Bhattacharya, Keshav Chadra Kundu, Kalikinkar Chattapadhyay, Ramani Prasad Singha Roy were actively participated to organize the Ashram and library as a part of the national activities.<sup>88</sup>

Bangaon Public Library and town Hall was started in the room of Lawyers' Library with 65 members and 155 books in 1917 and later it was accessible to all. Its foundation stone was established in 1927. Literary and cultural programmes used to regularly perform in the library side by side physical exercises. As a result, British government was suspicious to the activities of the library and frequently harassed library members. Famous novelist Bibhuti Bhusan Bandopadhyay was felicitated in a literary conference of the library in 1938. In 1947 user strength and collection of libraries were increased to 105 and 1500 respectively though assets of the library were lost due to natural calamity, political turbulence and partition.<sup>89</sup>

A band of energetic youth of Bakrahat in South 24 Parganas enlightened with nationalistic idea established the library in 1926 to spread literacy. Local youths comprising Nibaran Chandra Dutta, Satya Charan Pal, Jatindra Nath Ghosh, Mahendra Nath Ghosh, Narendra Nath Ghosh (freedom fighter) and Lalit Mohan Dutta had initiated the library with the help of common people. Initially, the library started to the house of Nibaran Chandra Dutta with 120 books and 32 members and after some time it had transferred to the charitable dispensary of Kalachand Dutta

for some time. Finally, it was set up on the donated three decimal plot of Dutta family. In 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1929, first executive committee of library had formed with Nibaran Chandra Dutta (President), Mahendra Nath Ghosh (Secretary) and Satyacharan Pal (Cashier). At that time, Sailendra Nath Ghosh, Haridharan Dutta, Pannalal Ghosh, Nabakumar Chanda, Bimal Hari Mukhopadhyay, Lalit Mohan Das had also actively participated to organise the library.<sup>90</sup>

Sinthi Banamali Bipin Public Library in North 24 Parganas established in 1930 with 85 volumes and 25 members. Stirred with nationalism, Banamali Das, Radharaman Das, Bipin Behari Das, Rasbehari Das had organized the library with the help of common men of the locality to spread literacy and cultural awareness.<sup>91</sup>

Sarangabad Bandhab Pathagar in South 24 Parganas was also outcome of nationalism. It was established at the house of Anathbandu Mitra in 1934 under the leadership of Srikesh Mitra and Manmatha Nath Mitra. Other organizers were Atal Behari Basu, Nilkanta Bandopadhyay, Chandra Nath Bandopadhyay, Bibhuti Bhusan Ghosh and others. Organisers of the library was activist of national movement. The library started with 36 members and few books and journals. After a month, the library shifted to the tin- shed house of Dinabandhu Mitra. Ananthbandhu had donated three almirahs, a table, two chairs and a bench to the library. First, the library was named as Imperial Library and later as Magazine Club as magazine was its main document. In April 1936, the library had finally named as Bandhab Pathagar. In 1935, first annual function of the library was celebrated.<sup>92</sup>

Sadhujan Pathagar in present North 24 Parganas established by Gopal Chandra Sadhu and Ratan Chandra Sadhu. Both the leaders are found energetic to disseminate nationalistic idea in the banner of library. In 1934, the library established with only 10 books 6 members who augmented to 45 and 18 both in collection and member respectively. At present, 18, 000 books and 200 members have attached to the library.<sup>93</sup>

In 27<sup>th</sup> October 1935, reanimated with nationalism, a band of enthusiastic youth of Baruipur had eager to set up a library in their locality and formed an executive committee to materialize the project. They unanimously named the library as Baruipur Public Library. First Chairman and Secretary was Ajit Kumar Bandopadhyay, vice-chairman of Baruipur municipality and Surendra Nath

Bhattacharya, assistant secretary Ananda Bazar Patrika respectively. The library first started in the house of Ramendra Kumar Chowdhury with 29 volumes and later it was shifted beside the room of shop of Pranballav Chakraborty.<sup>94</sup>

Shanti Samsad Sanskriti Pathagar in South 24 Parganas had started its journey in pre-independence period, 1939. Though its initiation had started in 1937. Samsad Pathagar had too established in same time. This library had also established with the donated books. It is reported that Harendra Nath Bandopadhyay, President of Shanti Samsad had donated books from his family collection and Kaliprasad donated from his personal collection to the library and the collection had increased to 4500. Other members had also donated books on occasion of every Saraswati Puja. It is reported that, a good number of books collected at the time of librarian, Rajkeshore Bandopadhyay. During 1939 to 1946, Samsad not only organized library, it also had played a key role to mass mobilizing work of the locality, like, literary campaign, poor welfare programme, medical aid and many other cultural activities.<sup>95</sup>

Brati Sangha Pathagar in South 24 Parganas was also organized by a band of energetic youth with full national spirit at Rail Quarter of Paresh Bandopadhyay in 18<sup>th</sup> February 1946. At the initial Stage, Samiran Dutta, Ratanlal Chattapadhyay, Muktaram Sasmal, Ajit Kumar Nath and others attached to the library and few books were collected from the old book shops at Calcutta and extra books of rapid reading from school students. Thus, book strength increased 11 and readers strength 8 at initial stage. The library had to shifted to the house of Ngendra Nath Dutta. At that time Arun Kumar Ghosh took the responsibility of the library. He formed an executive committee with President Bibhutibhusan Chattapadhyay. Chandicharan Panja, Mohan Lal Mondal, Milan Priya Pal, Durga Prasad Das, Mrinal Sen; Somdev Chattapadhyay joined the library by this inspiration. Arun Basu insisted old aged people to join the library too and bought some books for them. Thus, book strength increased to 15 and member strength to 10 in 1947. The library is discharging its services with cultural activities and organizing sports and games.<sup>96</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Calcutta**

Let me allow providing a literacy picture in Calcutta as public library established as a means to spread education.

Table 2.6: Literate population in Calcutta in the Year 1901 <sup>97</sup>

Speaking	Total Population	Literate	Percentage of Literates
Bengali	434,984	137,803	31.6
Hindi	318,635	35,311	11.1
Uriya	30,630	4,513	14.7
English	28,528	23,195	81.3
Urdu	24,424	4,462	14.1

Universalisation of education was not possible in Calcutta. Everybody was not able to admit in the Hindu College established in 1817. Though in the next year, David Hare minimize the problem by establishing the ‘Calcutta School Book Society’. Eagerness to accept western education was not found in all community. Especially in Muslim community, apathy was found to western education and modernity. Most of them were belonging to worker and technician class. The act of khidmatgar was their monopolistic right. Some of them tried to educate few meritorious students in new education lifting from village to city.<sup>98</sup> Regarding female education, statistics found from a female journal that, there were 53 upper primary school with 1170 girl students in all over Bengal in 1901.<sup>99</sup> In 1917, out two cores twenty lakhs female excluding European and Anglo-Indians, only 491 female attended first four classes of upper English Schools, because, girls who would admitted in primary schools, 98.3 percent of them would completed their study in the same school.<sup>100</sup> It is found from the Fifty Five years Report of 1932-37 that, in college and in the higher classes of the school 111.6, 111.4 and 84.9 percent girl student increased during five years and 30.7 percent increase in primary education.<sup>101</sup>

In 1886, it was decided in the death anniversary conference at City College Hall, in Calcutta, in presence of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar, Akshyay Kumar Dutta and many others that a good library should be established in the name of Rammahan to preserve his memory. In 1904, a proposal had been taken in meeting to set up a cultural centre including library in east Calcutta near Rammahan’s house in Maniktala. Narendra Nath Sen, Dwijendra Lal Roy and many others were initiator of it and an ad hoc working committee was formed with famous judge of Pannalal Basu as its secretary.

In 1905, new working committee was formed with Narendra Nath Sen as president. Dwijendra Lal Roy and some eminent persons had been given charge to select books for the library. The library was started in the rented house in 101/1 Upper Circular Road and 1394 books was collected from gift of different men. Prafulla Chandra Roy, Sister Nivedita, Sundari Mohan Das and Hemendra Prasad Ghosh were selected as honourable member to the library in the initial year. It was decided too in the same year that some books of the personal library of Vidyasagar would be included in the library.

Within a very short time, organizers were decided to build a house for library due to want of space. Gobardhan Das, Damodar Das had donated two thousand rupees in a condition that peoples from all sphere of the Community could be read books and journals in freely and words 'free reading room' would be attached with the Rammahan library.

Narendra Nath Sen, Lord S P Singha, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Prafulla Chandra Roy, Charu Chandra Bhattacharya was president of the library in different time. Satyendra Nath Thakur, Rajendra Nath Mukherjee, Shivnath Sastri, Prafulla Chandra Roy, Gurudas Banerjee, Rabindra Nath Thakur, Nilratan Sarkar, Charu Chandra Bhattacharya were its vice president in different times. In 1910, library transferred to 22/1 Cornawalis Street and Calcutta Homeopathic Society gave place to the library. Calcutta Corporation gave consent to donate 6 kathas land to the library in upper circular road in 1911. King of Burdwan laid down foundation stone on this land in 1912.

In 1915, Sarat Chandra Chowdhury donated some books of Debendra Nath Thakur to the library. Rabindra Nath used to attend in different conference in the library and presented important essays on current political, social, educational and cultural themes. Other eminent personalities in India used to attend in this different conference. Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose delivered lecture on the objects of the library in its 9th annual general meeting as, it is the earnest desire of the promoters of Rammohan Library to make it a centre of culture and intellectual activity. According to him, the library would not merely to be a place of people to come while away their time by reading light literature. It would help serious readers to choose best books to read, to create in them a love for knowledge, a keen desire



for advanced lectures, to be delivered by most eminent thinkers on literature, art and science. It was his desire that this institution should at, no distant date, would be a great centre of Educational Extension Movement. At present the library collected 56,368 Volumes.<sup>102</sup>

Role of Chaitanya Library to spread nationalism is memorable like Rammahan Library. Most of nationalists in contemporary Bengal were attached in that library. Glorious side of Chaitanya Library was to organize regular lectures and essay competitions. Theme of lectures expressed nationalistic views of library. Total seventy lectures were arranged from 1890 to 1948. Rabindra Nath himself delivered eight lectures here and each of them published as essay latter. His lectures were 'Europe Jatrir Dairy', 'Engrej o Bharatbasir Sammandha', 'Bankimchandra', 'Mayeli Charcha', 'Swadeshi Samaj', 'Path o Patheyo', 'Hindu Biswavidyalaya' and 'Bharat Barsher Itihaser Dhara'. Dwijendra Nath Tahakur delivered lectures on 'Aryani and Sahebiana', 'Sadhana Prachya o Pratichya' etc. Rajani Kanta delivered lectures on 'Hindur Ashramchatustay', Sister Nibedita, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, E B Havel delivered lectures on 'Sannyas o Garhastha Bitarka', 'Aranye Rodan' and 'Kaler Byabahar' etc. About 1500 to 2000 thousand participants used to attend in some of seminars of the library. It was reported in its Annual report that; major portion of attendants were elite. During 1890 to 1917, 54 essay competitions, both English and Bengali were held in the library.<sup>103</sup> In this connection, it is noted that Rabindra Nath presented paper on 'Swadeshi Samaj'<sup>104</sup> in presence of Ramesh Chandra Dutta, Gurudas Bandopadhyay, and Hirendra Nath Dutta in the Minarva Theater in Calcutta in 19<sup>th</sup> July 1904 under the organisation of library. It is reported that about one thousand people had returned due to want of space in the auditorium. Under tremendous pressure from the Bengali Public, Tagore had to present his Lecture again 9 days later at the Curzon Theater to an audience of 1200 people.<sup>105</sup>

Bagbazar Reading Library was established in 1883 with a view to disseminating knowledge and political awareness among common people. Organisers and donours were all familiar as nationalists. First organizers were Upendra Chandra Mukhopadhyay, Asutosh Bandopadhyay, Mahendra Nath Gangopadhyay, Nilkamal Das, Dolgobind Mitra, Kalikrishna Sarkar and many others. First chairman was Gopal Lal Mitra, vice chairman of Calcutta Municipality and first secretary was Upendra Chandra Mukhopadhyay. No book was collected due to

financial constraints up to 3 to 4 months though 33 daily newspaper and periodicals had collected without price or in low price. Later, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramgati Nyaratna, Rangalal Bandopadhyay, Dwijendra Nath Thakurr, Tarak Nath Biswas, Damodar Mukhopadhyay, Girish Chandra Mukhopadhyay and others had presented their writings as gift to the library. Sisir Kumar Ghosh used to donate periodical of different states of India regularly. It is notable that, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Debandra Nath Thakur, Sisir Kumar Ghosh, Amrita Lal Basu, Bhupendra Nath Basu, R.G. Kar were member of this library. Swarnamayee Debi, Queen of Kasim Bazar donated hundred rupees and Priya Nath Mitra donated hundred rupees and some furniture to the Bagbazar Reading Library. King of both Darbhanga and Dinajpur donated financial assistance to the library. Nilkrishna Deb and Binoy Krishna Deb of Shova Bazar Rajbari donated fifty rupees in each.<sup>106</sup>

Some more libraries had established in culturally enriched Khidirpur to boost nationalism. Famous of them was Michael Madhusudan Library, established at the house of Raj Kishore Goswami in 46/2 Manasatala Lane in memory of Poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta. Later, Rangalal Pathagar, Islamiya Library (1925), Lajpat Library (1933), Ramnarayan Library (1933), Avijatri Pathagar (1946), Kishore Library (1940), Rabindra Smriti Pathagar (1946) were established one by one during period. Beside this, Umesh Pathagar, Akshaya Pathagar, Kishore Pathagar, Balakabindra Pathagar etc. were found continuing their services. Among them Michael Madhusudan and Sukanta Pathagar are preserving their glorious heredity till now.<sup>107</sup>

Atmannati Bidhayini Sabha was founded at the old building of the Roychowdhury family, zamindar of Taki, present North 24 Parganas in 1875. Sashipada Bandopadhyay was its chief inspector, who devoted to social reform and education and cultural development of Baranagar. Baranagar Sashipada Institution and free Reading Room was established out of his initiation and generosity. Inspired by the philosophy of Sashipada, some youths also joined in the social development programme. Kalikrishna Dutta, Upendra Nath Dutta, Pravat Chandra Dutta, Gopal Chandra De, Shyam Charan Mukhopadhyay were pioneer among them. They were all appointed as executive member of the Atmannati Vidyayini Sabha. Summer School, Ethical School, and Girls School etc. were branch of the Sabha. Different topics used to discuss in the meetings of the society. Organisation of library was

the result of those discussions. Library of 'Atmannati Bidhayini Sabha' established in the middle of 1876 to spread religion, ethics and knowledge and seed of Baranagar Peoples Library was hidden in this library. Members collected books and pecuniary assistance for the library. Existence of the library was in danger after the pre-mature death of Bhabanath Chattapadhyay, disciple of Ramkrishna, Vivekananda and believer of Sashipada. Probably the library closed in 1891.

At the same time, 'Dakshin Baranagar Public Library' was established at the house of Madhab Mallik at Kuthighat area of Dakshin Baranagar. Ramdas Ghosh, Adhar Chandra De, Shyam Charan Mukhopadhyay, Ambika Bhattacharya etc. were founder of this library. The library was also closed after few years due to financial constraints. The learned people of Baranagar performed a constructive work, established 'Baranagar Peoples Library' in the first floor of Roychowdhury family of Kalighat in Baranagar. The library was founded with the collection of Atmannati Vidyayini Sabha and Dakshin Baranagar Public Library. Subhas Chandra Bose, Sarat Chandra Bose, Shivnath Shastry, Surendra Nath Bandopadhyay, Bipin Chandra Pal etc. invited to the library in different time. The library was in danger due to want of staff in 1919-20. Somebody took the charge of library. The library shifted from 'Ranibari' and house of Ramendra Mukhopadhyay to 113, Kuthighat Road in 1934. Initiative of Bamandas Lahiri, Pachudas Bhadhury, Bireswar Prasad Maitra and Shyamal Chattapadhyay was praiseworthy. Many valuable documents were lost due to frequent shifting of library.<sup>108</sup>

Boys on library and young men's institute, the best-off library among non-government library in Calcutta was set up in 1909. Krishna Prasannya Ghosh, Prodyot Kumar Rudra and Jiban Krishna Dey organized it in the house of Girish Chandra Dutta at 12 Ram Narayan Bhattacharya lanes by donating their own collection. Collection of libraries increased to 310 and number of members augmented to 32 in 1911-12. Surendra Nath Ghosh, Bengal Civil Service was first president of the library and Satish Chandra Roy a high-class government servant was its president later. Government was not suspicious about the activities of the library as a higher-class government servant is its president. Satish Chandra Chandra Roy introduced debate forum in the library. Eminent personalities, different trust and companies used to offer different type of assistance to the library. In 1937, library had placed finally in the house of a rich business man in 76/2

Cornawalish Street, in free of rent. In 1913, library rule was introduced and in 1917, the library had changed its name from Boys on library to Boys on library and Young Men's Institute.<sup>109</sup>

Chetla Nityananda Library, Calcutta established in an exciting situation of partition in 1910. Founder famous novelist Narendra Nath Mitra with the help of Bimal Mitra, Brajendra Mitra and common men of the locality, established the library with 22 members and near about fifty books and periodicals. It is found that activists related to nationalist movement used to assemble here to organize their mass mobilizing programmes. It is reported that both book strength and user's strength increased to 360 and 55 respectively in 1947.<sup>110</sup>

Entally Bani Institute in Kolkata is famous as it had attached with freedom movement by creating national conscious among people of the locality. It had organized night school and served plague effected patients at that time.<sup>111</sup>

During Calcutta Congress (1928), youths of the different revolutionary organization came towards a united work schedule by avoiding their own narrow groupism. Niranjana Sen had played key role in this work. He had organized youths of Barisal, Baharampur, Mymensingha, and Kalighat Tarun Sangha at Calcutta in indomitable spirit. In 1929 Jatin Das was arrested in Lahore Conspiracy Case. British Police was more conscious for Chitaganj armoury raid and 'Olinda fight' by Binoy, Badal and Dinesh. Many Bengal revolutionists were arrest. 30 to 40 active members of Tarun Sangha were arrested at that time. British Police had attacked office of Tarun Sangha time again. Three to four thousand valuable books of the library had been confiscated and houses of members were searched at that time. Office of the Tarun Sangha shifted to the 133A, S.P. Mukherjee Road and later shifted to the 2nd floor of the southern market after Second World War. After the departure of Jatin Das in 1929, library section of Tarun Sangha renamed as 'Sahid Jatin Das Smriti Pathagar'.<sup>112</sup>

In 1947, enlightened with nationalistic idea, Salil Mukhopadhyay accompanied with some local youth established 'Garia Public Library' at Garia in Kolkata which was then a market place. Garia was surrounded by flourished area Baishnabghata, Barhans, Fortabad and Boral. The library had to shifted in different placed and finally in its own house. In 1945, Garia Public Library was inaugurated in an old

Kachha house of Shibendra Nath Basu. Later, it was shifted to the house of Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Adhir Pramanik, Nagendra Nath Biswas, Bishnu Charan Seth, Bholanath Mukhopadhyay, Kalicharan Chattapadhyay and Nandalal Sadhukha respectively. The library had maintained social responsibilities of the locality side by side its educational and cultural awareness.<sup>113</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Nadia**

In the district Nadia, 22.43 literate males and 1.87 literate females were found in 1901 followed by 20.55 males and 2.85 in 1911. Thus 22.35 literate males and 4.31 literate females were noticed in 1921 followed by 19.85 males and 4.74 females in 1931. In 1941, 30.24 literate males and 9.83 literate females were found in the district. At the Census of 1951, only 15.31 per cent of the total population of Nadia was found literate as against the all West Bengal average of 21.5 per cent. At the beginning of the century in 1901 only 12.08 per cent of the total district population was literate. Female literacy then was negligible. The progress in growth of literacy till 1931 was not only imperceptible but there were actual declines in the percentage of literates in the total population between 1901 and 1911 and between 1921 and 1931. Males having had the major share in the literate section of the population showed these declines in the growth of literacy. Percentage of female literates, however, maintained a steady rate of growth. In 1931, the percentage of literates in the total district population stood at 12.49; from there in a decade it rose to 20.32 per cent of total population in 1941. The increase was particularly noticeable among the female population; in 1931, only 4.74 per cent of the total female population was literate, but in 1941, 9.83 per cent of the total female population was found literate.<sup>114</sup>

Nationalistic attitude of the district had expressed in the presence of the libraries in the district. Krishnahagar Public Library was the prime centre of nationalistic activities of the Nadia district in the early period of twentieth Century. Most of the revolutionary meeting of that time used to hold in the library ground. Revolutionary leaders and activists of the district had somehow attached with the library. Mass mobilizing activities, like, physical exercises and gymnastic activities used to perform in the library ground under the leadership of Jatindra Nath Mukhopadhyay (Bagha Jatin). Lalit Kumar Chattapadhyay and Nibaran Chandra Majumder, two

active members of the gymnastic centre were concealed and arrested in Howrah conspiracy case with Bagha Jatin in 1910. Many active members of the centre were arrested by the British government. The library had turned into centre of revolution at that time. So, many employees and member of its managing committee had been imprisoned by the British rulers. To assist revolutionaries, the library had been burnt. So many valuable rare documents of its initial period have not been found at present.<sup>115</sup>

In Nabadwip, library was established first by the religious preachers. Nitya Library was established at Ampuliapara in 1897 under the active initiation of Swami Jnanda Thakur (Nitya Gopal) and it was closed after few years. Swami Nityajananda Abadhut had reopened Nitya Library in 1962. In the worst situation of Sanskrit learning, valuable manuscripts of Sanskrit were gradually passing to the abroad. Pandits of Nabadwip had felt necessary to set up a manuscript library to preserve the valuable treasure in Nabadwip. As a result, a meeting was held at Poramatala in 17th February 1907 under the chairmanship of Bhuban Chandra Vidyaratna. A high-power committee was formed comprising Roy Dwarka Nath Bhattacharya Bahadur as President and Debandra Nath Bagchi as secretary.

Nabadwip had played pivotal role in library evolution. Fifteenth Conference of Bengal Library Association was held in the Public Library of Nabadwip under the chairmanship of Dr. Shiyali Ramamritan Ranganathan, pioneer of library Science in India. In 1921-22, Youngman's Institution, a library of revolutionaries was founded by Pannalal Mukherjee and Tafajjal Hussain at Sasthitala in Nabadwip. Later it had shifted to Diyarapara and merged with Public Library of Nabadwip.

It was decided in a meeting of the committee on 22.02.1907 that a public library would be set at Nabadwip town in Nadia. The widow of Karunanidhan Mukherjee had been proposed to use outskirts of her house at Poramatala Road as library in free of rent for the time being. The library had opened with few books and 56 members. A memorable incident of the year 1938 was visiting of Subhas Chandra Bose in Nadia. Pannalal Mukherjee was the secretary of District Congress. Bose had arrived at the land of palchowdhury in Swarupganj. Volunteers' had received him marching from Ganga-Ghat to Poramattala and he delivered a speech there. It is also found

that he also visited the library and delivered a lecture from Saptam Edward Anglo Sanskrit Library which renamed as Nabadwip Sadharan Granthagar.

During Quit India movement library authority did not permit to form anti-government organization and arrangement of any meeting in the library premise. Even they did not permit any anti-government discussion in meeting or conference though nationalists and patriotics did not accept proposal of partition of Bengal. Members of library executive committee had too assimilated to the movement. In 18th May 1947, a meeting was held on the topic. Proposal of anti-partition was raised and accepted by the majority.<sup>116</sup>

It was middle of the nineteenth century. High English School and Municipality were founded at Ranaghat in Nadia district in 1853 and 1864 respectively. Students of the school set up a small library in 1884 to meet up their own need. Naturally it was named as 'Students Library'. Activities of the library were performed from the small market area of Ranaghat. Brilliant students of the High English School were its initiator and founder. Nagendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Ramchandra Mallick, Sushil Kumar Basu were among the founder. Later, the library begun to familiar as 'Ranaghat Public Library'.

According to other views, there was a library 'River Thompson' by name in Ranaghat the same time at the side of Thompson Hall and High school was founded adjunct to the Thompson Hall. By 1894-95, condition of the library become so ruined that local students felt need of a library. Even River Thompson Library failed to meet reading taste of newly English educated class. So, they interested to form student's library. Enlightened people of Ranaghat and Basu family ,Palchowdhury Zamindars were lent their helping hand to library. It was 1900s' the library was in the age of sixteen. River Thompson Library was abolished. The name of five members of Palchowdhury family is found as subscribers to the student's library from that time. Apart from the name of three founders, others were Prafulla Chandra Banerjee, Nagendra Nath Biswas, Banamali Banerjee, Rajani Kanta Mallick, Nagendra Nath Gangully, Joytish Chandra Basu, Gokul Bhari Biswas etc.

The library was situated in the area of small market after its establishment at it was survived in a house of one Sitanath Dey by paying two rupees rent. Later it was

shifted to the house of Lal Gopal Pal. The library shifted to the present Subhas Avenue in 1906.

In the meantime, the name of library had been changed. In 1896, a team of government representative suggested to turn the library as Public Library during their visit. Thereafter, student's library became transform to 'Ranaghat Public Library' in 1902. The organizers were able to build a large collection of four hundred books with fourteen years of its establishment. Annual income of the library was rupee eighty-eight and eight annas and expenditure was rupees forty-eight and fourteen annas in 1898. The library was running by the financial assistance of hundfull founder members and few well wishers. Monthly membership subscription was four annas which were not collected regularly.

As student's library was founded to show challenge to River Thompson Library same as Ranaghat Reader's Association, Ranaghat Reading club and other libraries were established one by one to compete student's library. But all libraries were abolished by the fame of running library. As a result, collections of abolished libraries were included in the stock of Ranaghat Public Library.

Ramchandra Mallick, Bhujendra Nath Mallick, Rajani Kumar Mallick, Kali Kumar Mallick took responsibility of the library. Bhupendra Palchowdhury also lent his helping hand to the library to meet its space problem. Library collection had built in auspice of Barendra Trust. Barendra Palchowdhury also donated his father's name engraved Surendra Palchowdhury Memorial Hall to the library. Even other Palchowdhury Zamindars donated their personal collection of rare periodicals to the library. Ranaghat municipality too granted financial assistance to the library in different time.<sup>117</sup>

The ancient village Anulia in Nadia district, whose existence was even in the period of 'Buddhist', is stands on the bank of the river 'Churni', about 3.2 km south-west of the town Ranaghat in the district of Nadia. Its present name Anulia comes from the ancient name 'Anal gram' signifying Buddhist influence. There is a notable archeological relic, an image of lord Vishnu made of touchstone, which is even now regularly worshipped as the village- deity. Even to this day some descendants of the 'Nadiaraj' dwell in this place. It is no small pride that the late Vishnuchandra Chakraborty, who famous for singing, composing and preserving 'Brahma



Sangeets' and worked at the Samaj for a long time, was born in 1804 in this area in the village of Anulia. The late Shri Chakraborty was also a music tutor for some time in the 'Jorasanko Thakur Bari' and the great poet 'Rabindranath' received his early music lessons from the maestro.

In this ancient village, bearing a great tradition many learned, accomplished, notable persons were born under whose patronage art, music, literature flourished. Their love for education inspired them to found many educational institutions. The Anulia High School was founded in as early as 1883. Like spirited people came forward to contribute in various ways for the success of the project. Thus, the local land lord the late Bhrantimadhab Roy offered land for the library and people like Pulingopal Roy, Pramatha nath Roy, Panchanan Ghosh, Bipinbihari Banerjee came forward with assistance in the form of money, furniture and books for the library and the library became a thriving one catering to the long-felt need of the local people.

Even since its foundation and in its changed status too, the library has been rendering immense service to the community with aids from various authorities and organizations. Like other public libraries in Bengal in that time, it had also attached with a club, Recreation club by name and discharged mass mobilizing services to meet the need of time. It had also shifted to places and finally to the donated land.<sup>118</sup>

Basanta Kumar Mitra, freedom fighter of Chakdaha area in Nadia district is memorable for his contribution to spread nationalism among the people of the district as well as Bengal within the oppression of British government. He had suddenly passed in 1919. His friends' and followers had set up a library to keep alive his name. They were Purna Bachi, Rabindra Kumar Bandopadhyay, and Arun Bandopadhyay who begged from door to door to collect aid for the library. First, it was set up in local Panchanan Smriti Mandir and later it had shifted beside the chakdaha municipality.<sup>119</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Jalpaiguri**

In 1931, a library had started named Congress Pathagar in the then Congress Office. It was closed due to interference of British Government during Quit India

Movement in 1942. Sri Aurobinda Pathagar was also established at Dinbazar in 1939. In 1933, College and Ex student's library and Dramatic Club was established and Jibanjoyti Roy was its secretary. It is learnt that decision to set up Maroyari Sangha Pathagar was taken in meeting under the chairmanship of Ramdin Gaga in the same year. Pratap Singha Agarwal was its President. Banshidhar Daga and Nathuram Agarwal were its librarian and assistant librarian. Babupara Boy's Pathagar and friend's library had merged into Babupara Pathagar in 1944.

Students's Federation Pathagar was also established under the chairmanship of Paresh Mitra in the same year. During this period number of libraries were established in the district. Such as Mohanlal Pathagar at Mandal Ghat, Jatiya Granthagar at Rangalibajna, Netaji Book Club at Falakata, Jamini Milani Sangha, a famous institution of Tea Garden at Mujnai. Book lovers of Ranghora, Dumchipara, Hantrepara and Makra Para were its member. It is still discharging its services.

In the same year, Sailendra Smriti Pathagar was established in Shaktigarh under the patronage of refugee rehabilitation department. Netaji Granthagar at tea garden Nidam and Makrapara Pathagar were also established in the previous year. Mahinikanta Pathagar at Jalpesh was established in later time. During 1943-44, a club and library was established in Kheprabandhu village under the patronage of garalbari union. In 1945 Siraj Library and club was established in Jalpaiguri. M. A. Haque and Mahammad Safiquil Islam were its secretary and President respectively.<sup>120</sup>

Radhika Library in Moynaguri is an oldest library in Jalpaiguri district had established in 1910. At present, it is situated near Bus stand, centre of the town. From 1715 to 1860 West Duars was under the king of Bhutan. Moynaguri was the head office of West Duars. From 1867, British rule started in West Duars and whole Duars included in the district Jalpaiguri. At that time, a police station had also organized in Moynaguri. Circle office, khasmahal office and other offices were established for administrative purpose. Radhika Nath Nandi had joined as deputy collector at Khasmahal office in Moynaguri. He was lover of books. He used to read books exchanging from local peoples, Zotedars and government employees. In this way, he made a close relationship with the local peoples. He had planned to

set up a library to spread literacy among common people of Duars. In 1910, Radhika Nath Nandi had performed this noble work, to start Moynaguri Public Library at the waiting room of a Jotedars beside the khasmahal office. At that time, library premise had earned fame as educational and cultural place by organizing cultural competition, exhibition and indoor-outdoor games and sports.<sup>121</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Birbhum**

During the last half century, there has been a noticeable diffusion of education in Birbhum. In the year 1856-57 there were only three Government and aided schools in the whole district, but in 1870-71 their number has risen to 81, the number of pupils increasing in the same period from 247 to 2,810. There were also in the later year 544 private and unaided schools not under inspection by the Education Department, which, it was estimated, were attended by 7,103 pupils. During Sir George Campbell's administration of Bengal, a great expansion of primary education, under a system of village teachers took place. The result was that at the end of 1872-73, there were in Birbhum 129 Government and aided schools attended by 4,439 pupils.<sup>122</sup>

The oldest library in Birbhum district was established in 1900. It was Ramranjan town Hall and Jubilee library, present Vivekananda Granthagar established on the donated land of Ramranjan Chakraborty, king of Hetampur, Suri. Some more libraries established in Bolpur, Lavpur, Nagari, Bahiri, Nalhati, Kirnagar, Madhaipur, Ghurisha in Birbhum district by first part of twentieth century.

It found from the deed no 4671, Bolpur, sub registry office dated 02.12.1916 that Benukar, Pravakar and Sudhakar Majumdar son of Late Gopal Majumdar donated one bigha waste (Patit) land to Dwijendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, son of Binod Behari Mukhopadhyay, secretary of Bolpur Public Library under plot no 786 of the location Ferishananda Dakshin in Bolpur.

It is evident that Bolpur Public Library already existed previously before the deed had done but it has got permanent shelter under the generosity of the local zamindar. In 1916, Munsef Bagalapasanna Basu had built a tile house with the help of local common people. He established Bolpur Club and Reading Room by collecting assistance from king and landlords from Birbhum. Burdwan and Murshidabad apart from the assistance of the local people. It was become prosperous by the active

initiative of executive members, Dwarikanath Mukhopadhyay, Hariprasad Basu and Tin Kari Ghosh.

After closure for long times, Hansaswar Roy and Sachindra Nath Mukhopadhyay took the charge of the library with new energy in 1929-30. Sri Roy transferred the charge to Jyanendra Nath Ghosh in 1930, after working as librarian for some time. At that time, the name of Bolpur Club and Reading Room had changed to Bolpur Public Library.

Later Sudhir Singha took the charge of secretary. Prosperity of the library gradually increased by the joint effort of him and Jyanendra Nath Ghosh. Then admissions of the library were one rupee, subscription four annas per book and deposit fee three rupees. Bholanath Sen were life member of the library. At that time, Jyanendra Ghosh collected member, subscription and financial roaming from door to door. Jadav Roy and Yusuf were appointed as assistant in monthly pay Rupees fifteen.

Civil servant Ittehar Ali was president of the library in 1334-35 BS. By his effort, the library received both government and non-government assistance. Bagala Prasanna Basu became the Judge of Birbhum and visited the library established by him and collected some books from local peoples. Apart from this, a branch of the library was opened in courtyard in request of the Bar Council Bolpur court. Lokendra Nath Ghosh was charge of the branch. A close contact of the library with the Shantiketan was made during 1930s. Kshiti Mohan Sen Shastri, Bidhusekhar Shastri, Probodh Chandra Baghchi and Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay participated in the different programme of the library.<sup>123</sup>

Lavpur, a village of Birbhum had got famous place in the history of Birbhum due to the benevolent national activities of Jadavlal Bandopadhyay who got name and fame from a common to wealthy person. He had three sons and three daughters. Atulshib was his second son. Atulshib was a benevolent person and honorary magistrate of Lavpur, Nirmal Shib Bandopadhyay, younger son of Jadavlal Bandopadhyay had organized the library in memory of Atulshib. It is found that, at first a stage and club with library as its branch was established in memory of Atulshib. Sasthi Kinkar Bandopadhyay, Nirmalshib Bandopadhyay, Narendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Dharendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Kalikinkar Mukhopadhyay, Lakshmi Narayan Mukhopadhyay and many energetic persons were the patron of

the library. Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, the famous novelist of Bengali literature was the worthy son of Lavpur had closely attached to the library. He used to participate acting on the library stage.<sup>124</sup>

Hetampur is a prosperous village under the jurisdiction of Birbhum district. It is situated about 13 km. away from district head quarter Suri. The village had earned popularity by the name of its magnanimous nationalist king Ram Ranjan Chakraborty. Prince Rehati Ranjan Chankraborty had established the library in memory of Ramranjan in 1947 with only 22 books and 18 members as per the records of the library. King Successors, Queen Joytsnamayee, Madhabi Ranjan Chakraborty, Suranjan Chakraborty were co-operating to this work. Shivapada Mukherjee, Nrityagopal Rajak and other villagers were also the patron of the library. Besides lending of books, book reading study circle used to hold in the library to spread literacy among the people. Physical exercise was it's another attractive programme.<sup>125</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Purulia**

Madhutoti Saraswati Library in the Purulia district was established in 1923, on the donated 2.3-acre land of the Rakhal Garai and Shankar Garai. It is known from the interview that 14 members were attached to the library at the beginning stage and had increased to 80 in 1947. The library had not only desisted to landing books but it used to perform dramatic performances, cultural evening, competition of sports and games as part of its literary extension and orientation programme.<sup>126</sup>

Gorachand Granthagar in Purulia district was established by educationists as well as nationalist Debandra Nath Mahato in 1941. He was donor of the land to library. Nanda Rajak was also found as donor to the library. Chitty Ranjan Mahato, Chiranjnan Mahato, Bibhutibhusan Mura and others were found as the donor to library.<sup>127</sup>

In 1946, Adhar Smriti Bani Mandir earlier known as Bani Mandir was established by Adhar Pathak at village Hutmura under Purulia district. Adhar Pathak with the help of Saradindu Ojha, J.B. Ojha, Bibhuti Bhusan Ojha, Manik Chandra Ojha and Baidya Nath Ojha had organized the library with 20 volumes and 12 members. People of the locality had renamed it as Adhar Smriti Bani Mandir to keep memory of benevolent nationalistic worker Adhar Pathak.<sup>128</sup>

## **Public Libraries in Coochbihar**

In 1911, 13.4 per cent literate male and 0.6 per cent female was recorded in the Koochbihar district followed by 13.9 per cent literate male and 0.9 per cent literate female out of 7.8 per cent of total literate person in the district. In 1931, 11.3 per cent literate male and only 1.2 per cent literate female was found out of total 6.6 literate people in the district followed by 23.2 per cent male and 5.3 per cent female literate out of 15.0 per cent total literate person of the district in 1951.

The budget for the Primary Education and Higher Education was separated from 1891 and by effecting savings in the Primary sector where more of people's Co-operation was secured; the cause of higher education was advanced without much additional burden on the resources of the State. The Victoria College and the Jenkins School both made good progress and by 1890, 114 boys had passed from the Jenkins School in the Entrance Examination. Though started with only 16 boys in 1888, the Victoria College made quick progress and by 1900 there were 168 pupils on its rolls and within 9 years had turned out 199 under-graduates, 73 B.A.'s, 4 M.A.'s and 4 B.L.'s.

During the last quarter of the 19th Century education made considerable progress and the number of persons able to read and write more than doubled during 1881 and 1901; in the latter years 5.9 per cent of the population were returned as literates. The number of pupils rose from 10,194 in 1892-93 to 12,670 in 1901-02 in which year 26.2 per cent of the boys and 0.36 per cent of the girls were at school. In 1903-04, there were 12,639 pupils with 333 institutions including one Arts College, 43 Secondary Schools, 37 Night Schools and 9 Girls' Schools. The expenditure was Rs. 79,000, of which Rs. 44,000 was contributed by the State, the rest being derived from fees, etc. The control was exercised by the Superintendent, assisted by an Inspector and Deputy Inspector and Circle Pandits.

The Census of 1961 recorded 8,05,636 persons as literates, 1,29,518 persons as literates without any educational level and 84,652 persons having some education out of the total population of 10,19,806 in the district.<sup>129</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayan Mahakuma Granthagar was established at Tufanganj under the Jurisdiction of Cooch Bihar. King Rajendra Narayan was its founder.

Sarbananda Byapari, a local Zamindar and follower of Gandhi donated land to the library.<sup>130</sup>

The Pioneer Club library was established at Dinhata in Koochbihar in 1939. Joytish Pal, Harish Pal and Kshitish Ghosh, founders of the library were familiar as nationalist. At first the library was under the club and it was organized in the house of Pal with 45 donated books and 14 members.<sup>131</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Dakshin Dinajpur**

Sometime government bureaucrats in British period acted towards the interest of common people through elsewhere they belong to the elite class. Sushil Chandra the then SDO of Dinajpur was such type of benevolent person who had inspired common people of the locality to set up a library in kaliaganj under jurisdiction of Dinajpur district to spread literacy among common people. Sarat Majumdar, freedom fighter of the district associated to this work. Hiralal Karmakar, Gynendra Guha Roy was also participated actively to this noble work.<sup>132</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Murshidabad**

In Murshidabad, according to the statics of the Education Department, the number of male scholars in 1912-13 represented 34 per cent of the male population of school-going age, the corresponding proportion in the case of female scholars being 4 per cent. The number of pupils under instruction at educational institutions of all kinds was only 12,000 in 1883, but was nearly double in the next ten years, the aggregate for 1892-93 being 23,000. This advance has been more than sustained, the figure rising to 25,628 in 1902-03 and to 38,186 in 1912-13, when there were 981 educational institutions in the district, as shown in the margin.

There has been a very considerable expansion of primary education in recent years, the number of primary schools having increased by 292 or 57 per cent since 1900-01, while the attendance has risen by nearly 10,000 or 61 per cent. In 1912-13 there were 23 schools (including one High school) with 1,884 scholars managed by government; while 857 schools (including 9 High, 19 Middle English and 8 Middle Vernacular schools), with an aggregate attendance of 30,661, received grants-in-aid. The number of unaided schools was 101, attended by 6,341 pupils.

According to the statistics of the Education Department, the number of male scholars in 1912-13 represented 34 per cent of the male population of school-going age, the corresponding proportion in the case of female scholars being 4 per cent.<sup>133</sup>

Amarendra Nath Upadhyay, Kumarendra Trivedi, Bishnupada Awar, Radhabinod Bandopadhyay, Debdas Roy, Shantinath Trivedi were the initiator of the Tenya TMA Rural library in Murshidabad. At first, the library had started to the Kacha house of Amarendra Upadhyay and later it had shifted to the house Kumarendra Trivedi, Zamindar of the locality. It is an exceptional incident that the library had never closed since its beginning. Parbati Trivedi, wife of Zamindar was active member of the library. Common men of the locality had actively participated to organize the library to spread literacy and cultural awareness among people. Mass mobilization activities, by means of organizing night school, social welfare activities, and physical exercises used to perform in the library with full passionate zeal.<sup>134</sup>

Sonarundi Banwarilal Rabindra Pathagar in Murshidabad initially had started as a Club. It was started in the Katcha house with Tin shed of social worker and Gandhi followere Birendra Sigh in 1941. Later, Queen Kalyani donated four decimal lands to the library. Biswanath Ghosh, Satyanarayan Nandi, Pravat Mukherjee, Irfan Sekh and Common people of the locality collected books as gift to the library.<sup>135</sup>

By its name, Bhabta Hind Library in Murshidabad, it is versed that it was set up to boost nationalism. It was established in 1946 under the leadership of Sisir Kumar Saha. He too donated land to the library. Initially the library had started in the house of Prabodh Saha and later it shifted to the house of Dr. Sanatan and Jaganath Saha.<sup>136</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Darjeeling**

In 1904-05 there were altogether 142 schools with 3,950 pupils receiving instruction in the district Darjeeling. Altogether 19.8 per cent of the boys of school going age were receiving instruction, while the percentage of girls attending schools was far above the Provincial average. The total expenditure on education in the same year amounted to Rs. 38,216 only.



In 1860-61 there was only one school receiving Government aid, the English school at Darjeeling, which had a total attendance of 16 pupils; in 1870-71 one more English school and 16 vernacular schools had been started, and there were, in all, 18 Government and aided schools attended by 500 pupils; in 1872-73 the district contained 3 Middle schools, 23 Primary schools, 1 normal and 1 girls' school, the number of pupils on the rolls being 680. In 1894-95 the number of schools had increased to 109, with an attendance of 3,830 pupils receiving instruction. Altogether 19.8 per cent of the boys of school going age were receiving instruction, while the percentage of girls attending schools was far above the Provincial average. The total expenditure on education in the same year amounted to Rs. 38,216 only.<sup>137</sup>

Hundred years ago, few eminent Bengalee gentlemen felt the necessity of a library to spread literacy at the small town of Kurseong under the jurisdiction of Darjeeling district. They started collection of books from the town. Shri Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee, Shri Phani Bhusan Banerjee had played key role to organize the library. People of the town supported physically mentally and financially to start the library. Mr. Bloomfield, the then magistrate of Darjeeling and Maharaja of Kisanganj helped financially. Bibhuti Bhusan and Phani Bhusan Banerjee donated land for the construction of the library and Bloomfield Public Library was established in 1916 in memory of the benevolent magistrate Mr. Bloomfield.<sup>138</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Malda**

Govinda Charan Nandi, Brajaballav Das, Anil Kumar Saha, Anil Kumar Das, Mrinal Kanti Goswami, Adhir Kumar Mishra and common men of the locality were established Arapur Tarun Library in Malda district in 1945. Sorajini Das, a housewife and social worker was the donor of the land to library.<sup>139</sup>

Kishore Sangha Rural Library was established by Sasanka Sekhar Mukhopadhyay in 1945. Enthusiastic persons were Nirmal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Parimal Das, Jagat Jyoti Mukherjee and Amal Das, Phanibhusan Das, a prosperous person of the locality had donated land to the library. Ardhendu Sekhar Roy, Ramnarayan Chaterjee, Mriganka Sekhar Mukhopadhyay, Parimal Das, Baidyanath Das were first register their name as member of the library. Atul Chandra Kumar, local Zamindar and freedom fighter came to the library in 1945.<sup>140</sup>

## **Public Libraries in Rangpur**

High caste Hindus firmly established dominance in economy, education, administration and in different profession in Bengal especially in East Bengal. So, they played pioneering role in both land ownership and acceptance of western education in Bengal. It is vividly represented in the Report of Hunter Commission in 1871. No doubt Bengali Muslims were backward in educational and other sphere comparison to Bengali Hindus. In 1901, educational expenditure of Calcutta was much more than the total educational expenditure of Muslim dominated East Bengal. In undivided Bengal, 463 students were Muslims out of total 8009 students in General Degree Colleges. Only 73 and 05 Muslim students were found out of 284 B.A. students and 79 M.A. students in 1903- 1904.<sup>141</sup>

In 1901, number of English educated Hindu and Muslim were 114 and 22 respectively out of each 10,000 in Bengal.<sup>142</sup> Muslim occupied only 41 Government high posts whereas Hindus occupied 1, 235 posts though their number was less than half of Muslims in East Bengal.<sup>143</sup>

Curzonan educational policy aimed to dissolve dominance of Hindus in Higher education. Educational statistics of that time revealed that truth. Education expenditure of the province increased from 13, 28,123 in 1906-07 to 25, 33,569 in 1911-12. Major portion of this amount was spent for Government institution<sup>144</sup> and as a result, Muslims were benefited more. Consequently, their presence in Government institution increased from 3, 64,803 in 1906 to 5, and 33,333 in 1911-12. It was increase of one and half in comparison to Hindus.<sup>145</sup>

A significant number of Muslim student strength was increased in the primary and secondary schools in East Bengal during 1907-12. Total 35 percent student strength increased and stood up as 3, 31, and 900 in 1901-02 to 4, 25,000 in 1906-09 and 5, 75,700 in 1911-12. During 1906-07 to 1911-12, 42 percent student strength increased in primary level.<sup>146</sup>

As a whole, no revolutionary change or exceptional development in educational sphere had happened in the province during first half of the twentieth century. But significant feature in educational sphere was private initiative to its development. The inhabitants of this province proceeded whole heartedly to set up school, college and libraries to spread education and culture. Government assisted somehow in the

form of grant but personal assiduity of many persons was main force to spread education in that period.

It is found from the history of public libraries in Bangladesh that their condition was good before partition. Most of the libraries were established by the Hindu Zamindar though few of them are found as Muslim. After partition, high class Hindus left the country and none had been found to look after the library. So, most of the library had been abolished.

Rangpur Sahitya Parishad familiar as Rangasap and Rangpur Public Library known as Rangopal were two famous literary organisations of Rangpur in Bangladesh. Former was founded after about 73 years of later. Rangopal house was used as the office of Rangasap for years. Special meetings and conventions of Rangasap frequently held in building of Rangopal. Both organisations were founded by assiduity of the Zamindar of Rangpur. Zamindar of Kundi was founder of both two organisations.

Foundation of Rangpur Public Library, Rangopal was a significant incident of the literary cultural history of Bangladesh. Not only in present Bangladesh, it was oldest Public Library in the then whole Bengal. Most of the libraries in the country were established in middle of nineteenth century one after another. Including Rangopal, four oldest libraries of Bangladesh were Barisal, Jessore and Bagura Woodburn, established in 1854. Many years ago, Rangpur Public Library established in 1832. Even Calcutta Public Library was also established in 1835. It would not an exaggeration that Rangpur Library at Kundi village under Sadya Puskarini police station in Rangpur district was an oldest public library not only in Bengal but also in undivided India though Calcutta Public Library had occupied lofty place in the mind of public. Due to want of information, its history is unknown and lost.

Another old public libraries in Bangladesh were Rajshahi Sadharan Granthagar (1884), Northbrook Public Library (1882) established by Ananda Nath Roy, king of Natore, Coomilla Sadharan Granthagar (1885) established by king of Tripura Birendra Manikya Kishore. Noakhali Public Library established in 1896 which abolished due to bringing down banks of the Meghna and reformed in 1944. Henceforth most of the libraries in Bangladesh had set up within three decades.

Pabna Muslim Institute (1919), Dinajpur Khaja Najimuddin Muslim Hall and Public Library (1931) were significant among them.

Rangpur was first district town which took place after capital Calcutta in case literature and cultural pursuit and patron. It is found from different sources that Rangpur Public Library was set up in 1854 but the library was established in 1832 by the initiation of Zamindars of Kundi. Later Zamindar Rajmohan Chowdhury (1786-1847) took financial responsibility of the library. First library started its services from four annas share of Zamindar family. Later it shifted its works to the Rangpur Lands Association office in Rangpur. In 1858, a temporary office was established on the donated land of King Sambhucharan of Kakinar. In 1868, after death of King Sambhucharan, Ramanimohan Roychowdhury, zamindar of Bhush Bhandar (1860-1887) and Mahimaranjan Roychowdhury (1873-1909), later Zamindar of Kakinar patronised the institution with the collection of many books, manuscripts and archival materials.

Library house was destroyed in the earthquake of 1897 and a large part of its collection was lost. Its temporary office was damaged in conflagration of 1903-04. Surendra Chandra Roychowdhury, grandson of Rajmohan Roy Chowdhury amalgamated Rangpur Public Library to the Rangasap in 1905-06. He was the nominated from representative of Bangasap (Calcutta) as a representative of Rangasap. Rangopal was abolished as independent and separate institution after six or seven years. After it, Rangopal started function as independent organisation after completion of its building 'Edward Memorial Hall'.

Hard time of the library started in the second decade of the twentieth century and in 1914, district magistrate nominated as its president. Most probably, District Magistrate was first president of the public library. He invited a meeting in 1st April, 1914 in Edward Memorial to consider the following objects.

- i) Election of President of Rangpur Public Library and its improvement.
- ii) To consider what steps may be taken for the improvement and continuance of the Public Library and the Edward Memorial Hall.

J.N. Gupta E.Q. I.C.S. was voted to the chair.

Following resolutions were taken in the meeting.

- i) The Edward Memorial Hall will be open to the Public Library and the Sahitya Parishad as a Reading Room and for the purposes of holding meetings.
- ii) The Hall will also be available to the Public for the holding of any Public meeting with the permission of the District Magistrate. If the Magistrate in any case withhold his permission, the public will have the right to appeal to the board of Trustees whose decision will be regulated by majority of votes.
- iii) That a Board of Trustees be elected for the Edward Memorial Hall consisting of the following members –
  - a) District Magistrate
  - b) The President Bar Library
  - c) The Secretary, Mahamedan Association
  - d) Raja Gopal Lal Roy of Tajhat
  - e) The Hon'ble Raja Mahendra Ranjan Roy Chowdhury of Kakira

The above resolutions were proposed from the chair and carried unanimously. About the first item of the day's business, it was proposed that the Public Library Improvement committee be abolished. So, there could be no election of President.

Earthquake of 1897, a great fire of 1903-04 and amalgamation with Rangasap, turned Rangapal into a critical situation. Huge amount of subscription was outstanding, negligence in preservation of books was observed. Unbearable crisis of Almirah and allied furniture was reported. Only a small number of books were preserved in the library. Later, amount of outstanding subscription was decreased. In such circumstance, library was benefited by the at a time donation Rs 500 of Mrityunjoy Roy Chowdhury, Zamindar of Char Ana Kundi and significant amount of donation of Rajshahi Divisional Commission in 1913 and 1915.

During the tenure of the president of the library and District Magistrate J.N. Gupta (1916- 1918), condition of the library was developed to some extent. At that time, the library collected 9000 volumes and enrolled five thousand subscriber members. Later, history in unknown to all. Even names of other committee member have not found due to want of information. But it is assumed that Suresh Chandra Roy Chowdhury, permanent secretary of Rangasap was member of the Rangpur Public

Library by virtue of his post. Later in 1935, India Government brought under control the Rangpur Public Library as public institution. Henceforth, it has been running as government institution. Political turmoil of the country threw library in critical situation from 1935 to 1984. Partition of 1947 was the critical situation of the library. The library was closed for many years due to the mass leaving of educated and cultured Hindus from the country. Later, executive committee with 13 members was formed to govern the library through information on its employees was not found anyway. During freedom movement (Muktijudha) of 1971, Rangpur Public Library was ruined. Rangpur was ruined more than Rangpur. Most of its archival rare and old books are praiseworthy still now. Its collection of history and literature are more laudable. It is noted that locally published periodicals, journals, magazine and other documents would collect in the library through at present it is not followed.<sup>147</sup>

In the meantime, literacy rate of Rangpur district increased to some extent. Total 8.6 per cent Hindu literate comprising 14.8 male and 1.3 per cent are found literate in 1921. In case of Muslims, out of total 4.3 Musalman literates, 8.1 male and 2.2 female are found literate in the same year.<sup>148</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Jessore**

It was not favourable time to set up Public Library at Jessore in 1854. The then political and social situation of Jessore was sparking. Indigo factory of Jessore and its adjunct areas turned to the centre of oppression of Indigo farmers. Administrative power of India was in the hand of East India Company. Indigo planters Morel and Macanges had boundless power in the society. Distressing conditions of farmers from village to village due to inhuman oppression of the Indigo planters. Magistrate Maloni and Skinners was the friend of Rowdy Smith and Lemur. Even they indulged in idle talk in the court. Justice was denied. So, agitation was fomented in the mind of the farmer. At any moment, agitation could be sparked in revolution. It was also happened. Indigo disturbance was first started in Jessore in 1860.

There may be two probable causes to establish Public Library in Jessore by the collector Ricks. First, he arrived recently from England. Public Library act was

passed in British Parliament in 1950. Inspiring the library movement of that country, he could have interested to establish a public library in his own work place.

Secondly, he may be interested to set up a public library for the entertainment of the english and half english educated few local fawners. But it was impossible to set up library from government fund at that time. So, Ricks had collected books and money to construct library building from the rich people at that time. Some indigo planters and Zamindar of Naldanga and Narail assisted collector Ricks to establish library. Own building of Jessore Public Library was founded in 1854. After establishment of Jessore Municipality in 1864, common men would hold meeting in the building of the Public Library. But exact place of first building of the Jessore Public Library is not known now a day.

Initially Jessore Public Library was a small institution no doubt. Libraries expenditure would have meet up from the subscription of members. But who were members? Who would attend the library? Prof. Sharif Hussain assumed many Indigo planters were lived in Jessore town and its adjunct area and they were the reader of public library. According to him significant member of Billiard players was also among the readers.

The then Jessore Public Library was not only place of book reading but also centre of recreation. At a time, library became place of indulging idle talk, collection of books had existed side by side billiard table. Even up to third decade of the twentieth century Jessore Public Library was used as centre of recreation. In 1909 after the foundation of Town Hall, place of Public Library changed to Town Hall.

Prof. Sharif Hussain narrated a fine description of that time as, when the library existed in the Town Hall, at that time too accessories of Billard and playing card were kept side by side books almirahs and reading table in a room without any contradiction. Well educated, position holder people specially lawyers were dominated there. Book collections too were appropriate for high educated aged persons and almost in english. Books would preserve in almirah with care. Only librarian could open the almirah at the time of issue. It was seemed appropriate at that time. Then public library was centre of recreation and amusement for mainly english educated, self-centred gentlemen of colonial middle-class people.

Jessore Municipality had close relation with public library from its establishment in 1864. Craze of Indigo planters were gradually decrease after indigo movement in 1860. After introduction of english education, english educated Bengalese was gradually appeared in forefront not only in cultural sphere but also in administrative and political sphere. Though most of them were in separate from the mass and they co-operated English man by all means.

In Municipality, indigenous non-government leadership was established by the introduction of new tricks Indenisation by Indian in 1885. In the same year, Indian National Congress was established. In the important movement of indenisation in 1885, Piyari Mohan Gupta was remained first native chairman of Jessore Municipality. He was renowned lawyer of Jessore. At that time, attention of municipality and local English educated middle class was increased towards library.

During first half of the twentieth century, nationalistic democratic movement of the country created a positive impact on the economic, social, political and cultural sphere of the sub-continent. Total 9.6 Hindus comprising 18.5 male and 1.0 female are found literate and 3.3Musalmans comprising 6.5male and 0.1 female are found literate out of total 1,04,828 literate persons in Jessore in 1901.<sup>149</sup>

Its good reaction was also observed in the history of Jessore Public Library. Previously where library was meant for the institution of recreation of ruler Englishman and their patron native Zamindar and self- centred English educated colonial middle class, under the leadership of the nationalistic democratic leadership. It was transformed into public library from first decade of the twentieth Century. The first four decade was marked as age of transformation. In 1913, winning of Noble Prize by Rabindra Nath was an important event. Only Rabindranath first won Noble Prize in Asia. It was unexpected that Bengali language could be applied to the rich literary works before Tagore's achievement. This incident increased prestige as well as self-confident of the Indian especially Bengalese. Rabindra Nath noble achievement played a significant role to the self-invention In Bengali life. Russian revolution in 1917 inspired Indian nationalists to sharper the freedom movement. But side by side the positive activities, an evil power emerged at that time.



In the direct co-operation of the British rulers, communalism, a poisonous tree had grown adopting Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League. As communal politics devoured all human value in the history of the sub- continent, so Jessore Public Library had not escaped from this evil force.

Gradually, educated Bengalese reinvented them from the illusion of British rule. In 1919, Jallianwala massacre created fierce hat among the mind of Indians. They were zealous to political freedom. In reading table, playground even in dramatic stage, they were prompt to bring cultural renaissance. At that time, Town Club and new Arya Theatre were established in Jessore.

B. Sarkar Memorial Hall was founded in 1921 for New Arya Theatre. In 1927, Jadunath Majumdar took initiative to found a complete cultural centre by assembling Public library, New Arya Theatre and Town Hall. Public library was turned into a sister organisation of Jessore institute by a government order. Now, scope of work expanded and cultural correspondence and co-operation increased. Khan Bahadur M.A. Momila, cultured person of that time who lent his generous hand to the cultural revival of that time. He was the district Magistrate of Jessore of that time and President of Jessore Institute by virtue of Post.

The year 1928 was the important for the history of Jessore Public Library. Abinash Chandra Sarkar, Lawyer and son of Sarkar family of Lohagara founded a new building for the library and named it Biswanath Library Hall to keep memory of his father.

The library would raise fund to supply relief work in famine, flood, storm, devastating epidemic time and again which were inseparably related to Bengal. It had earned fame by organising urgent relief work in hard toil and effective organisation.

By the assistance of the non-government organisation, Bengal Central Railway, easy rail communication between Jessore and Calcutta was established in 1884. In the first part of the nineteenth century, Kaliprasad Roy, son of Jessore, constructed pacca road from Jessore to Calcutta, planted trees on both side of the road, constructed bridge on Kapotaksha in Jhikargacha and Ichamati in Bangano. As a result, communication of Calcutta in the cultural life of Jessore was easy and close. From the beginning of Twentieth century, manifestation of national consciousness

intensively effected cultural sphere of the country. Swaraj movement of 1929 transferred to the complete freedom movement. Cultural revivation assisted to precede nationalistic democratic movement. During third and fourth decade of the twentieth century, a continuous onward movement was created in the cultural life of the Jessore Institute which was not observed in its later history.

New journey of Jessore Public Library started henceforth. Outlook of society in relation to public library was changing rapidly. Nationalistic democratic consciousness was developing. Swaraj movement developed to complete freedom movement. Bengali literature was honoured in the courts of universal literature. Thirty young readers would come to the library to remove thirst of knowledge. Educated youths did not want to confine with conventional concept. Readers in public libraries increased many times over. Demand of books too increased. Need of new almirah was felt side by side increase of books; wooden closed almirah was replaced to glass panel new almirah. In the present system spine of books was through visible but close contact between readers and books was not possible due to lock and key as proceedings. Open shelving system was not imaginable at that time. Even in advance country England, its introduction was matter of debate.

First four decades of twentieth century were period of advancement in the history of Jessore Public library specially, third and four decades were period of spring tide. But in fifth decade its misfortune was begun. This heritage institution had counted movement of death due to Second World War, communal riot in the sub-continent, partition and demand of mother language. But it is a matter of fortune that, it has been surviving within hundreds obstacle though ruined severely. After misfortune, its development was possible due to the governor's service of the social welfare worker.

During Second World War, British Air Force set up outpost in Jessore. In May, 1942, Royal Air Force occupied all buildings of Jessore Institute due to need of war. As a result, Jessore Public library lost its building and its existence was in crisis. Common men of Jessore and Jessore Municipality came forward to save this important institution. Nagendra Nath Shom, who discharged his duties as vice chairman with full dignity during four decades was secretary of the Jessore institute. Lawyer by profession, freedom- seeker and cultured he rapidly arranged

to transfer library in the newly founded building of Jessore institute otherwise it might be turned as source of history.

After the end of war in February 1916, buildings of the Jessore institute were returned from the occupation of the military authority and building of the Biswanath Library Hall, B.S. Sarkar Memorial Hall had severely damaged and except urgent repair and renovation, these will not be used. Buildings were repaired by spending huge amount of money, and then all documents of Jessore Institute returned to their own places.

Now leader of progressive political workers achieved right to admission to the Jessor Public Library. As a result, it had achieved mass characteristics. Formerly where English books would have gained supremacy, later Bengali books accessed many in number, books on socio-democratic system were first arrived in the library and prohibited door was opened for common men. Irrespective of political faith and class, everyone has achieved the right to member of the Jessore Institute or Library.

Communal clash was increased in the sub-continent at that time. But anti communal protests were in leading part in Jessore. Jessore was one of the districts among sixteenth districts of Bengal where peasant movement was violent. Many members of the Communist Party of India were the influential member of Jessore Institute. Members of Leftist Forward Block and Socialist Republican Party and some liberal leaders of Congress were among them. Some people who progressive but were not belong to any political organisation directly took initiative to turn library as people's Institution.<sup>150</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Bogra**

The library at Bogra, which bear the name of the Sir John Woodburn, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal between 1898-1902, was founded it on the bank of the river Korotoa. The local gentry contributed to the construction of the library building. In 1900 T.P. Larkins, I.C.S. the collector took interests in its development. Total 17,199 Hindus comprising 15,972 male and 1,227 females are found literate and total 40,578 Musalmans comprising 39687 male and 941females are found literate out of total 57,777 literate persons in Bogra ditrict in 1911.<sup>151</sup> He doubled the monthly subscription and collected some fund from the affluent sections of the community for the development of library. After it was destroyed in 1897 by

earthquake, the library was again in a house which was a gift of the generous Nawab of Bogra Nawab Abdus Sobham Chowdhury. In 1908, at the initiative of J.N. Gupta the district magistrate and later the author of the district Gazetteer of Bogra, the library was move into the Edward park where, a building was constructed and an addition has been made. There is an auditorium on the first floor of the building. Sayed Altaf Ali Chowdhury, Zamindar of Bogra and zamindar of Kakinar were formidable among the patron to set up library. In the British period, large number of rare books was collected in the library. English books would have collected more than Bengali in British period. The library has closed in the last part of the twentieth century due to administrative crisis and its documents were transferred to the library of Bagura.

The library has a good number of rare books and hand-written manuscripts. Total collection of the library is 18000 & member of the library is 1921. A Committee of 29 members elected by the general members of the library. The Deputy Commissioner is the ex-officio president of the committee. The library has a good source of income from the membership subscription.<sup>152</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Barisal**

Barishal was in second position in education and politics after Calcutta. Even before the birth of the Congress, Barisal had political organisation in 1884. Mainly lawyers used to present demand and protest against social injustice. Barisal was called Lawyers Government due to dominance of lawyers in social and political sphere. In 1873, Barisal Peoples Association was formed by the assembles of Lawyers and Zamindars of Barishal and it was first political organisation of Barishal and it used to place demands on behalf of people. Zamindrs also organised Land Holders Association to look after interest of their class.

Swarup Chandra Ghosh and Pyarilal Roy were sharp intelligent and popular leader of Barisal at that time. First political consciousness was emerged in the social life of Barisal after arrival of Aswini Kumar Dutta in 1880. Before Ashini Kumar, P L Roy was only politically conscious people and inhabitant of Bikrampur. He organised many organisations after beginning legal profession in 1867. He took initiative to form political organisation after accompanying with Aswini Kumar Datta. Barishal Peoples Association was stronger by the inspiration of Aswini

Kumar. The association was formed with Piyarilal Roy, President and Rakhal Chandra Roychowdhury as secretary. Members were Haranath Ghosh, Monoranjan Guhathakurta, Ugra Kanta Roy, Maulavi Muhammad Wajed, Kaliprassana Bandopadhyay, Avayananda Das, Dr. Tarini Kumar Gupta, Hara Kanta Sen, Behari Lal Roy, Aswini Kumar Dutta etc. Aswini Kumar Dutta delivered lecture from village to village to form public opinion. Peoples Association joined national movement from 1886 with Congress. Form Barisal Peoples Association, Aswini Kumar Dutta and Lawyer Saijaddin Miya attended annual conference of All India Congress, held in Madras in 1887.

In each year, selected representative of the association would attend conference of Congress. Influence of Farazi movement was more on the Muslim community of Barisal as well as whole Bakerganj district in the ninetieth century. Religious leaders were indifferent to the western education. So, they did not create renaissance among Muslim community who were the 70 per cent of total population of the district. Muslim Zamindar and Talukdar did not take any initiative their tenants whose 90 percent were peasant. Both party branches of the 'Anushilan' and 'Jugantar' were in Barisal. Revolutionary movement was started in Barishal town in 1908. Jugantar Dal of Barisal was familiar as Barishal Party. The government prohibited Barishal Party in 1908.

Many branches of Jugantar and Anushilan were in Bakherganj district, such as Galia, Uttar Sahabajpur, Bhola, Nalchiti, Jhalkathi, Patuakhali, Banaripara, Rahamatpur and Ujirpur. Main organisers of Barisal Anushilan Dal were Debendra Nath Ghosh, Gopal Krihsna Mukhopadhyay and Jotindra Nath Roy. They kindled the fire of revolt among the youth of Barisal. Secret societies were set up in Barisal, Noakhali, Coomilya and Chattyagram by the assudity of mainly Satish Chandra and Narendra Mohan Ghosh.

In the end of the 19th century, an awakening was observed in the sphere of literature and culture in Barisal. In Barisal, Nara Narayan Roy and Ayen Ali was first writer of modern Bengali Literature. Chandi Charan Sen, Braja Mohan Dutta, Kamini Roy, Girija Prasannya Sen, Aswini Kumar Dutta, Rohini Roychowdhury, Monoranjan Guha Thakurta, Khosal Chandra Roy, Kusum Kumari Debi etc. enriched Bengali literature by their works. They created sensation among people

and inspired to form new society. In 1862, first Press was set up in Barisal and 'Parimal Bahini' a daily edited by Harakumar Roy was published.

There after Barisal Bartabaha, Kashipur Nibasi and Barisal Hitaishi were published duly. During nineteenth century about 200 people belonging to Brahmin, Baidya and Kayastha obtained Degree. Only four from Muslims obtained degree.<sup>153</sup>

The Barisal Public Library is founded by Kemp, I.C.S. and District judge in 1854. Being of the earliest libraries of the country, this library was not as good as it should be. Its old building was renovated in 1959 and about that time it acquired thousand books from the private libraries of migrated Hindu families. The improvement was due to the initiative of its president S.M. Usman, C.S.P. then the District Magistrate. In the post- independence development, the Barisal Public Library was undertaken as one of the five non-government Public Libraries for the development under the First Five Years Plan.

The library would raise fund to supply relief work in famine, flood, storm, devastating epidemic time and again which were inseparably related to Bengal. It had earned fame by organising urgent relief work in hard toil and effective organisation. The library became fortunate enough to receive direct assistance and inspiration of Aswini Kumar Dutta in that social welfare work.<sup>154</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Noakhali**

Noakhali district was set up in 1821. Mr. Plowden was Salt agent at that time. He faced some problems to discharge his duties. So, he recommended to Government to form a new district with appointing him collector. At this juncture, company announced Noakhali as separate district and Mr. Plowden took charge of first collector. Shahabajpur (present Bhola district) at West Bank of the Meghna and wide area of greater Noakhali is under its jurisdiction. In 1868, the district renamed as Noakhali. In 1829, Noakhali included under the division of Chattyagram which remained still today. In Noakhali district out of total population 1,472,766 total 16.2 per cent Hindu comprising to 29.5 male and 2.8 female are found literate and 5.2 Musalmans comprising 9.9 male and .3 per cent female are found literate in 1921.<sup>155</sup>

In 1921, 25.2 per cent Hindu comprising to 41.9 male and .3 female are found literate and 5.8 Musalmans comprising 11.3 male and .5 per cent female are found literate in specially Noakhali police station area.<sup>156</sup>

Noakhali inherited revolutionary idea since first part of the nineteenth century. Thousands of Bengali Muslims joined crusade against oppression Sikh administration. They were familiar as 'Mujahid'. According to the account of William Hunter, large number of 'Muja hid' from Noakhali, Coomillya in Bengal to fought against the force of Ranjit Singh. Maulana Imam Uddin and Allauddin-Al-Bangali proficient sons of the district offered significant contribution in crusade movement. It is found from various sources that, pious Muslims of Noakhali area offered handful rice, skin of 'Korbani', 'Fetra', 'Jacket', liberally to the crusade. It is reported in the reporting of the magistrate of Noakhali in the district Gazetteer that Noakhali was clam in November 1857 when Sepoys were engaged in battle.

In 1920, inhabitants of Noakhali participated Khilafat movement under the leadership of Haji Abdur Rashid Khan and Muhammad Ulya Hafeji Hujur Debon. Peoples of the district actively participated Non-Co-operation movement in 1921. Both Khilafat and Non-Co-operation movement inspired peoples of Noakhali in freedom movement. Many leaders and workers had been arrested and spontaneous hartal was also observed. Muslims of Noakhali supported cordially programme of Muslim League and Pakistan movement. Proficient sons of Noakhali, Khan Bahadur Abdul Gaffar, Habibullah Bahar, Samchun Nahar Mahamud, Abdul Majid, Abdul Malek Ukil, Sahid Najib's name had been written in golden letters for their contribution in Pakistan movement.

Library is measurement standard of civilisation, formidable place of advancement of learning and talent of societies of allages. Noakhali Public Library too established at Noakhali old town in 1895, 1302 BS owing this ideal. In 1944, the library shifted to the main town Maijde court when old town of Noakhali faded way by bringing down banks of the Meghna. Still the library has been preaching light of knowledge to the common people with hundred year's heritage.

At present it is situated in a semi- concrete tin shade hall adjunct to heritage Town Hall at the four point of Judge court Road. Different cultural, social and political events have been performing in its open courtyard old days.

Noakhali Public Library is found engaged in a variety of activities, such as, physical and moral training, social work during famines, epidemics or religious festivals, preaching swadeshi message through multifarious forms, organising crafts, schools, arbitration courts and village societies, and implementing the technique of passive resistance etc.

The library has been preserving books on novel, short stories. Religious scriptures, poem, biography, history, science, health, law etc. from its beginning. Many rare books on British India are in the collection of libraries. Old journals are preserved scientifically. Apart from daily newspaper, it also collected and preserved souvenir, magazines and annual report of organisations and institutions of inland and abroad. Scholars often visit the library to meet their information need of old records. As a whole heritage of Noakhali Public Library is no doubt a treasure of human knowledge.<sup>157</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Kishoreganj**

Kishoreganja prosperous place on the east bank of the Brahmaputra River. It is a significant district of another 64 districts of Bangladesh, comprises 13 police stations. It was emerged as district in 1984. In 1860, it was appeared as sub-division under Mymensingh.

In Kishoreganj 5.7 per cent Hindu comprising to 10.6 male and 0.3 female are found literate and 4.1 Muslims comprising 7.6 male and .5 per cent female are found literate in 1921.<sup>158</sup>

There are so many libraries in Kishoreganj in schools, colleges, Madrasa but district Public Library in Kishoreganj exceptionally rich in collection and standard of services it delivered. It was situated at station road in Kishoreganj. Mannad Dad Khan Dewan of Haybatnagar set up a good library in 1920 which is existing as Kishoreganj club. Zamindars of Kishoreganj set up libraries by their personal collection. Local youths and intellectuals were also energetic to found libraries to spread literacy among common people. Eminent educationists Riajuddin Ahmed established Riajul Islam Library in 1924 which still exists somehow. Other libraries were Kishoreganj collectorate library, Bar Council library though they were related to law document. Another government library with rich collection is in 'Alor Mella'.



In early 1930, the then second officer of Kishoreganj sub division established Muslim Institute. Later this Muslim Institute transformed into sub-divisional Public Library. The institute existed with full glory within hard times of two decades. MI superscripted ventilator of sub- divisional library and later district library recollected memory of old days. The library started its journey in new form under the assiduity of the then sub divisional officer of Kishoreganj, Janab A.K. Chowdhury. The only big library of the sub – division, it has been considered as centre of learning and dissemination of knowledge. Educationist Dr. Muhammad Sahidullah termed it as ‘Pride of Kishoreganj’ during his visit in 1960. In the same year, poet Jasimmuddin acknowledged it as ‘Wealth of the Country’, ‘National Property’.

Significant feature of the Public Libraries its Museum in first floor which started under the assiduity of M.A. Sayed. Its rare collection included old coin, old manuscripts in Palm Leaves, Sword, Shilalipi received from ‘Egar Sindu’, pictogram of Bir Isha Khan, King Nabarang Roy’s memorial pillar, indegenous weapon, hand written holy Quran etc.

Another two features of the library have been demanding special collection, one its literary organ ‘Sahitya Samayiki Sristi’, which regarded to the intellectuals and literary circle of the country and other its source materials to write ‘Kishoreganj Jelar Itihash’.

The library has also been discharging social service as well as poor welfare activities by forming education fund to assist financial assistance to poor students in each year. District planning works has also been developing under the assiduity of the library. It is also found that many organisational planning of the district had been initiated from the library. The library had to spent hard times during 1971. Many rare important documents had lost during freedom movement of the country.<sup>159</sup>

### **Public Libraries in RajShahi**

Rajshahi College Library was set up at the time of the establishment of RajShahi College in 1873. Though the library was meant for the student and teachers of the college, public admittance was also arranged due to want of public library in the locality at that time. The books of the library stored in a room of 8500 square feet

building. According to the estimate of 2009, the library holds 7200 books. Apart from this, Gazetteers, government reports are preserved in the library. Rare books and documents in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit and obviously Bengali and English language are asset of library.<sup>160</sup>

RajShahi Public Library established in 1884. It is situated at Miyapara in Ghoramara. It is found from the account of Hunter that king Ananda Nath Roy of Natore Raj family set up the library before 1866. Probably it was set up during the period of Lord Canning. It had no land or building during its foundation. It had got the nature of mobile library during the period. Its activities were started in one room of Kashimpur House of Kedar Prasanna Lahiri, Zamindar of Kashimpur. Later it was transferred to the Ranibazar house of its founder secretary Kali Prasanna Acharya. Present land was donated by Pramadanath Roy, king of Dighpatiya. Kedar Prasanna Lahiri had constructed the building out of his own cost. It is two storied building with 10 rooms.

At first its name was 'RajShahi Sadharan Pustakalaya'. After many years, during the time of independent Bangladesh, it was renamed as 'RajShahi Sadharan Granthagar' or 'Rajshahi Public Library' in 1975.

Government publications of undivided Bengal were preserved in the library. King Ananda Nath Roy donated numerous books to the library. Almost all zamindar family of Rajshahi bore its maintenance cost after its establishment. King Chandra Nath Roy assisted 20 pounds to the library. It is found from the account of Hunter in 1876 that two classes of members of the library would have paid Rs. two and fifty paise, Rs.one and fifty paise.

It is also found from the account that users' strength of library in 1871-73 was 18 including six Europeans and the library would open six hours per day. Electricity connection was first set up in 1935. Trustees of library became owner of movable and unmemovable property of the library by a deed according to the discussion of meeting dated 23 July, 1921. Except members of the executive committee, trustees would have performed responsibility of development. They look after accounts, construction, renovation, costs etc.

By this time literacy rate of the district had increased. In Rajsahi district 11.6 per cent Hindu comprising to 19.1 male and 3.3 female are found literate and 3.7

Musalmans comprising 7.1 male and .2 per cent female are found literate in 1921.<sup>161</sup> It is unknown the time of by law of formation of RajShahi Public Library, though news of executive committee found in the yearly general meeting dated 20th April, 1925 has been found in different sources. King Pramathanath Roy and Babu Asok Chandra Chowdhury elected as President and Secretary respectively.

Every members of the executive committee were rich person. Most of them were member of zamindar family and highly educated. Some of them were lawyer and doctor by profession. Executive committee consisted with 40 members. They would have called C.M.S. (Committee Member Section) member. They would have donated about Rs. 700 and chairman of Municipality would have ex-officio member.

The library was governed by the regulation 'General rule of RajShahi Sadharan Pustakalaya' 12th May, 1934 though shape of executive committee was same as elected committee of 1925. In the regulation of 1934, life membership was fixed in one hundred rupees and it was changed in 1963, 1969 and 1975.

Roy Bahadur Pramatha Nath Roy, Zamindar of Dighapatiya and his brother Sarat Kumar Roy, Zamindar of Dayarampur were president of the library upto 1925 and 1941 respectively. It was the golden age of the library. After Sarat Kumar Roy, King Jagindra Nath Roy Bahadur (1942-43), BabuKishori Mohan Chowdhury (1943-46), KingPrativa Nath Roy Bahadur (1946-52) and Janab S.A. Sobhan (1952-53) was president of the library respectively.

As a secretary of the library we found the name of Babu Kali Prasannya Acharya (1884-1921), Babu Bhabani Gobinda Chowdhury (1921-23), Babu Ashok Chandra Chowdhury (1924-30), Babu Dharani Mohan Maitra Roy Bahadur (1930-52) and Babu Dharendra Nath Sarkar (1952-63) respectively. It is noteworthy that Muslim personalities were significantly absent in the executive committee of the library from its inception through the situation had changed during Pakistan period. A Clerk, a peon and a night gourd were found as staff of the library apart from accountant and librarian. According the regulation of 1934 librarian and accountant's post were non-remunerative.

According to the budget of 1938, monthly salary of head clerk, second clerk, peon and night guard were Rs. 17, 15, 13 and 05 respectively. Due to financial constraint

the number staff decreased to four. According to the statistics of 1909, there were only librarian, assistant librarian, peon and sweeper in the library, having salary between Rs. 500 to 2000.

From its inception, the institution had faced financial constraints. Zamindars had not paid regular expenditure to the library though they set up the library. Rs. 1678 was allotted in 1934 budget of the library.

It is found that 3247 books and six periodicals were in the holding of RajShahi Public Library in its initial stage. Printing catalogue was introduced from 1925. According to the printing catalogue of 1925, there were 1949 Bengali books, 2050 English books and 46 Government reports in English in the library.

Special features of RajShahi Library are that it comprises different rare valuable books with Bengali and English encyclopaedia and old periodicals.

Secondly, it had not only preserved rare documents but it counted as the centre of learning and culture of RajShahi. Frequently eminent persons were invited to the library. They delivered lectures on the popular topic. Essay competitions, literary conferences were hold in the library. Celebrated persons attended the programme. Up to partition of India, the library was managed properly. Its fame was gradually increased and spread to whole sub- continent.

RajSahi Public library occupied fourth place among the non-government libraries in Bengal in the All India non- government library conference hold in Baroda under the chairmanship of Prafulla Chandra Roy. The library would raise fund to supply relief work in famine, flood, storm, devastating epidemic time and again which were inseparably related to Bengal. It had earned fame by organising urgent relief work in hard toil and effective organisation.<sup>162</sup>

Shah Makdum Institute Public Library is one of the old and familiar libraries in RajShahi. It is located at Rajpara adjunct to the historical Madrasa ground of RajShahi. Since 1891, it has been serving in different names. It has a historical background of formation. Scholars and intellectuals of RajShahi founded ‘Anjuman -I-Himayet-I-Islam to spread education culture and to discharge social welfare activities. It was set up to preach and spread mainly Muslim community

related social, worldly, cultural and religious knowledges. Its name had changed to 'Muslim Club' in 1927.

In 1928-29, local Makdum Estate donated few lands to the club and building had been constructed from the earning from the property. Eminent social workers of the locality renamed it as 'Muslim Institute' during the period of Pakistan Government in 1949; it was renamed as 'Jinnah Islamic Institute'. During the independence of Bangladesh, it was named as Shah Makdum Institute to pay homage to the famous saint of Rajshahi Hajrat Shah Makdum Rupas (Rah) and its auditorium was renamed as 'Mother Book Hall' to keep alive the memory of eminent social worker Marhum Mother Book.

There are seven division of Shah Makdum Institute, such as library, literature and culture, sports and recitation, social welfare, religion, property and infrastructure. Democratic procedure had been followed to govern the institution.

Shah Makdum Institute Public Library holds more than nineteenth thousand books. Most of them are rare and valuable. Thousands of religious scriptures in Urdu, Arabic and Persian language are belong to the rare collection of the library. The collection has got special merit for its album on memory of freedom movement (1971) by cutting of newspaper, periodicals and posters. It holds rare periodicals as well as dailies weeklies, monthlies of both inland and abroad.<sup>163</sup>

Library section of Barendra Museum is one of significant, oldest and outstanding library Rajshahi. It is located at Hetamkhana (Sadar Hospital). Sarat Kumar Roy of Dighapatiya and his associates Akshyay Kumar Maitrey, Rama Prasad Chand and others founded 'Barendra Research Society' and Barendra Research Museum in 1910. The library was established in the north side of the main building. It is unknown the exact date of establishment of the library though museum set up in 1910. It was written in 'Bibhag Guide Rajshahi' by Kaji Rauson Ali that library was set up in 1947. But Quazi Muhamad Micher found a trustee board of library and museum was formed in 1919. So, it would be concluded that library had started its journey from the establishment of the museum, i.e. before 1919.

Many old and rare books, periodicals, Gazetteers, reports and other documents preserved in the Barendra Research Museum Library which deserved immense value. More then fourteen thousand books are preserved in the library. A good

number of books written in Bengali during twelfth and thirteenth century is preserved in the library. It is noted that valuable Palm Leaf and cotton paper manuscripts written on both Sanskrit and old Bengali language are preserved in the museum.

It is supposed that library was set up at the same time Barndra Museam in 1910. Up to partition of the country in 1947, the library did not face financial problem. It was due to liberal attitude of Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy of Digha Pitya. But the library faced hard time for some years after this. At last Rajshahi University took the responsibility of library and the library has gradually become rich and regained its and fame.<sup>164</sup>

Panihar Public Library established in 1945 under the assiduity of SK Enayetullah, teacher of Panihar Primary school with a view to set up library, he started collection of books from 1932. Panihar is situated 20 K.M. north of Godagarisadar. The communication system of the place was bad when the library was established. A prosperous library was founded in such a backward place by the assiduity of the Sk Enatullah. It was received affiliation as Panihar Public Library in 1958. Since then, Ministry of culture has been granting assistance Rs.500 per year. In 1980, Ministry transferred it to the RajShahi District Administration. Later it was transferred to the Godagari sub- district executive officer. But the library has been gradually ruining due to absence of its founder, want of official management above all want of financial patronage and in a certain stage, its function was totally closed due to want of government patronage, reader and above all want interest of villagers.

One can have astonished to see its collection. It is a matter of amassing that a primary school teacher collected and preserved treasure of knowledge in such remote village in British period. Some important books and journals in the holding of the Panihar Public Library.<sup>165</sup>

Puthia Sadharan Granthagar is district RajShahi was a rich library in the locality. Total 17.1 Hindus comprising 27.7 male and 6.5 female are found literate and 2.3 Musalmans comprising 4.3 male and .09 female are found literate under the Police station area of Puthia in 1921.<sup>166</sup>

Many valuable English books are found in almirahs in an earthen house which could be considered valuable in any university library. But it is a matter of regret

that it is not properly preserved.<sup>167</sup> Young Men's Association founded in 1926. Its library section was very rich though it was a social welfare institution. Much indigenous and foreign collection was in the holding of the library.<sup>168</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Bagerhut**

Kumudbasini Pathagar was the oldest library in the district Bagerhut which endured cultural heritage of the district. It was set up in 1888 after six years of the formation of the district Khulna at prosperous village karapara. It was turned into live centre of education and culture in the last part of nineteenth century and early twentieth century due to the benevolent attitude of the Zamindar of the village. Roychudhury titled Zamindars would have lived in the mansion on the margin of Kalikadighi. They were aristocrat as well as influential. The founder of the Zamindar family was Paramananda Roy, close kin of Pratapaditya, a king of 'Bar Bhunia'. By their assiduity, Karapara became life centre of education and culture and earned fame more than Bagerhut town.

In 1888, Kumudbasini Pathagar founded in that karapara and it was oldest library in Bagerhut sub-division. Its founder was Nikunj Behari Roy, son of Roychowdhury family. He was engineer by profession. He received 'Roy Saheb' title from the British due to his performance in the profession. He founded the library in his own village by hard toil and named it as 'Kumud Basini Library'. Kumud Basini was wife of his uncle Judge Prasanna Chandra Roy. It was a prosperous library of that time. The library was decorated by rare and valuable books. Zamindars were very careful to the collection building of the library. Books collected from both inland and abroad. Books and journals used to procure from Calcutta. Many eminent persons frequently visited the library.

At that time several functions were held in the library. In that connection the name 'Hitisini Sabha' of Habeti Parganas could be mentioned. It was a famous social and cultural association of that time. The association was the prime force of different social welfare activities. The same Nikunja Behari Roy was also its founder and patron. So many meetings of the institution were held in the Kumudbasini library. The library was as its temporary office. After long time, permanent building of the library was constructed to forceful the programme of the

library. The then District Magistrate A. N. Roy inaugurated the library building in 1941.

The library was survived for long time. It was lost its image after partition in 1947 as sophisticated Hindus left the country and gradually the library lost its membership strength. Bagerhut town gradually increased its area and population and became the centre of education and culture while Karapara lost its importance.<sup>169</sup>

The name of Binapani Pustakalaya established at Mulghar under Fakirhat P.S. has got special attention in this context. Its founders were Zamindars of Kharia Pargana. Zamindars were not only founder or only its management; contribution of local educationists was enough. It was established in 1910.

Once it was very famous library though its existence has abolished at present. It was founded beside the present Fakirhut Etim Khana. Mulghar i.e. Fakirhut was very old famous area in various way. It was not lagging in culture of education, literature, culture. It is expected that the library had played pivotal role to spread education, culture and knowledge of the locality. Many eminent persons visited library in different time. The name of Prafulla Chandra Roy, C.R. Das, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Deshpriya Jatindra Mohan would have been mentionable among them. It is heard that its collection was amassable. Mulghar, Saidmahalla and other villages of the area were resident of highly educated aristocrat people. Their combine effort and Zamindars direct patron made the library prosperous and it won fame in the sub-division. Library's poor condition begun from the partition in 1947, though it was not fully closed, it was survived for some years after creation of Pakistan.<sup>170</sup>

Macferson Library is one of the old libraries of the then Bagerhut sub-division as well Bagerhut district. It is survived till now among the old heritage library. The population of Bagerhut town gradually increased after its affiliation as sub-division. Service men, lawyer, businessmen, teacher as a whole people of different profession gathered in the town. Side by side school and college were established. Educational and cultural environment was increased side by side strong commercial and financial establishment. To meet cultural, educational and intellectual needs, people interested to set up library. It is assumed that demand to



set up a library was raised here from the first part of the twentieth century. Local government officials and educationists were come forward to meet the demand. At that time, Bishnu Pada Bhattacharya was sub- divisional officer at that time.

It is heard that he first took initiative to set up library in Bagerhut but it was not possible to set up at that time. It was inaugurated in 1931. First it was named as Bagerhut Library. During 1937, it was become prosperous. Building of the library was constructed by the financial assistance of District Magistrate Macferson. So, name of the library was kept as Macferson library to memorise benevolent Magistrate. Later, reading room was constructed extending the library. Pranab Chandra Roychowdhury, Zamindar of Karapara came forward to provide financial assistance to build reading room of the library. Here after, the library renamed with slight change as 'Macferson Library' and Purna Chandra Reading Room. This Purna Chandra was the father of Pranab Chandra Roychowdhury.

Gradually Macferson Library became foot- stool social and cultural celebration. In that connection, the name of 'Purnima Sammilani' could be recollected. It was mainly a literary organisation. Members assembled at the literacy circle in each full moon. Local and external litterateues used to attain in the circle. Later, all activities of Bagerhut literacy association had performed from the library. Some total, the role of the library was immense in a small town like Bagerhut in that age.<sup>171</sup>

Some libraries were set up in Bagerhuttown which has been running till now. Ram Krishna Ashram Granthagar is one of them. It is one of the best libraries in Bagerhut town at present. Ram Krishna Ashram is a very old charitable serving institution in Bagerhut. It was founded in the small town Bagerhut in 1926 when no such institution was established in Khulna District Town. The Ashram and its library have been discharging social service since its inception.<sup>172</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Khulna**

Umesh Chandra Public Library was continuing its activities in a small room of Khulna Municipality after its foundation in 1897. Organisers were energetic to perform library work at the preparatory stage but gradually they lost their energy. New energetic numbers were step forward to take responsibility of the library. Initially it was set up to spread education and cultural awareness among people. They library had faced hard times in post independent Bangladesh in 1970s. Janab

Muhammad Abdur Rajyak and his younger brother Muhammad Abdul Kader took initiative to survive the library. Dr. Manaf and his younger Janab Siidik Ahmad also regularly visited the library in the hard times. Dr. Manaf frequently lent old books from the library and returned binding the same.

It is found that Dr. Manf donated 36927 books and 1689 periodicals to the library. Executive committee of the library resolved that Dr. Manaf Reading Room would be organised in the half hall of the 2nd floor as acknowledgement to Dr. Manaf's donation. In 18th August, 1996, Janab Obaydul Kader, master of youth welfare in Bangladesh had inaugurated Dr. Manaf Research Reading Room with about nine thousand books and periodicals.<sup>173</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Natore**

Victoria Public Library, Natore, was an old Public Library in Bangladesh, established in 1901. Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore would frequently visit Natore. In 1898, he visited Natore by the earnest invitation of King Jagadindranath Roy. He was favourite of Tagore as he was not only usual Zamindar, but also an educationist and litterateur. Rabindra Nath would accost 'Rajan' (King) to Jagadindranath Roy, who famed as 'Sandha Tarar Kabi'. Poet said the king about the need of a public library in Natore. It is heard that King Jagadindranath Roy took initiative to set up library by the inspiration of Tagore. Victoria Public Library was founded by the direct patronage and financial assistance of King.

King primarily donated a good number of valuable books, a clock and money. Two close friends of King, famous historian Akshaya Kumar Maitreya and Jaladhar Sen, editor of the 'Bharatbarsha' offered charge of books selection, so library had a rich collection of history books. Another valuable book was Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vidyasagar Rachanabali, published by Bangiya Sahitya Parishad etc. The library was regular subscriber of 'Manasi', 'Marmabani', 'Prabasi', 'Baharatbarsha' etc.

There is difference opinion on the year of establishment of the library. It is mentioned in 'Natorer Itihas' by Samar Pal, 'Natorer Gourav' edited by Maksuder Rahman and 'Natorer Katha o Kahini' published from 'Natore Mahakuma Sammmilani' of Calcutta that Victoria Public Library established in 1984-85. But it is found in date stamp in old books that the library was established in 1901. Apart from that, short name of library VPL and establishing year 1901 were engraved on

the stair- stone of old library building which was broken at that time of the construction of present library building. Above all, Late Govinda Saha, general secretary of the library in 1942-43 stated 1901 as the establishing year of library.

It is found in its history that the library was not active from its inception though did not abolish. It was simple a club, Victoria Club. Musical performances were executed here. Side by side lending of books. The then SDO, Janab A. H. Asadiquil Haque and additional SDO, Janab Sahidullah Miya and Saifuddin Sardar took initiative to reform Victoria Club in a full-fledged library.

In Natore police station area, 22.3 per cent Hindu comprising to 34.2 male and 9.6 female are found literate and 4.2 Musalmans comprising 8.07 male and .6 per cent female are found literate in 1921.<sup>174</sup> However, thirtieth decade of the last century was important chapter of the history of the library. In 1930, activities of the library started at present Kapuriapatty transferring from Lalbazar, from rented house to own land. At this stage, Dr. Nalini Kanta Sha, Niranjan Kumar Sha, Subir Chandra Roy, Narendra Nath Lahiri, educationist Shitendra Mohan were initiator to develop library. Shitendra donated Banglar Itihas and Rabindra Rachanabali published in Biswa Bharati.

During Second World War in 1940s, many people left Calcutta and came to mofussil in fear of Japanese bombing. At that time, Jogindra Nath Roy, son of King Jagadindranath Roy, with family stayed in the palace of Natore. In 1939-40, eminent politician and social worker Kaji Abul Maus was general secretary of the library. Thereafter his close friend Gobinda Saha was secretary of the library. By his assiduity and inspiration of Jogindranath, a study circle, 'Purnima Sammilani' was started. As it used to convene in each full moon, so it was named as 'Purnima Sammilani'. In each full moon the library conference would hold by inviting countrywide litterateurs. Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, poet Bibhuti Bhusan Bandopadhyay, Vivekananda Bandopadhyay, editor of 'Jugantar' Chapala Kanta Bhattacharya, editor of 'Ananda Bazar' etc. would attend as guest in different yearly conferences.

Activities of the library in the second part of 1940s are found from the statement of the then secretary Gobinda Saha. At that time, Kalicharan Roy, dewan of the younger party of Natore Kingdom was president of the library by virtue of his

position. At that time, the king would subscribe monthly Rs. 10.00. Chairman of Natore Municipality would member of the executive council by virtue of post and library used to receive yearly about Rs 300.00 from the municipality. At that time, two types of member were in the library. Those who deposited Rs. 12.00 and monthly Rs. 01.00, they were special member and they could loan books to the home. Members who deposited Rs. 2.00 at a time and monthly four annas were general member and they would avail the scope to use reading room of the library. In addition to members everybody would avail scope to read newspaper and journals.<sup>175</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Pabna**

Ananda Gobinda, foster son of Ganga Gobinda Chowdhury, Zamindar of Tantibanda at sub district Sujanager in Pabna set up the library by his name in 1890. The library started with some Bengali, Sanskrit and Persian books. Contemporary Bengali periodicals were also collected here. As an educationist Zamindar, Ananda Gobinda founded the library in the Pabna municipal area in 1890, same way another educationist, industrialist, social activist and chairman of square group Samson H Chowdhury inaugurated fourth floor of the library in 25th October, 2002. The library turned into modern standard library of 21st century by the benevolent assistance of Janab Anjan Chowdhury Pintu who was president of the executive committee of library. Present book strength of the library including new and old is 25,300. The library preserves 9,806 three hundred years old hand-written manuscripts. There are three hand written Palm leaf manuscripts. 11,500 journals and magazine and old journals from 1967 onwards preserved in the library. Oldest journal 'Pravati', 1881 have preserved in the library. Even 1100 books above 135 years old have preserved in the library.<sup>176</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Naogaon**

In 1910, the library established in the financial assistance of the Piyarimohan, benevolent donor of the village Naogaon. Total 16.1 Hindus comprising 26 male and 6.3 female are found literate and 4.8 Musalmans comprising 9.1 male and .3 female are found literate under the Police station area of Naogaon in 1921. The library situated in a pleasant environment side by pond near Kachary. All Vedas translated by Maxmullar including many valuable rare books were preserved in the

library. During partition in 1947, many books had been stolen. Later, it had started its journey newly but did not regain its former condition. Present book strength of the library is about 5,500 and user strength is 75. Financial constraints are observed as barrier to smooth organisation of the library.<sup>177</sup>

Rejwan Sadharan Pathagar of the village Chakrail under police station Badamgachi of subdivision Naogaon accepted as another famous library of the locality. It is a matter of amazing that such a library could be established in such remote village. Educationists and benevolent persons of the locality established the library in 1936. A good number of valuable rare books including old journals like, Nabanur, Kohinoor and Basana etc. have preserved in the library. Numerous manuscripts, hand written 'Punthis' are also preserved in the library. The library has 5000 books and 112 users. Researchers frequently visit the library for their literature search.<sup>178</sup>

Bhat Sail is the nearby village of Chakrail. It is a prosperous village. Apart from high school, it has a post office. Local youths laid the foundation of Pragati sangha. Foundation stone of its own building was laid down in 1959. The library holds seven thousand books and 50 users. Library preserves valuable books on Bengali literature. Manuscripts of religious scriptures are its valuable resources.<sup>179</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Dinajpur**

Khaja Najimuddin Muslim Hall and Public Library is heart place education and culture of inhabitants of Dinajpur. The library was founded when no institution education and culture of Muslim community was in the district town of Dinajpur. In 1933, Muslim Pathagar of Lalbag was transferred to the Munsipur, centre place of the Dinajpur town after its extension and development. Janab Khaja Najimuddin, the then education minister of undivided Bengal was laid its foundation stone. The library was named after his name.

Founder of the library, Allah Muhammad Hamayet Ali T.K. Saheb was passed away in 10th July 1969. The library was established by his initiative and utmost attempt of inhabitants of Dinajpur district. Khaja Najimuddin Hall is the materialisation of dream of culture and ideas of Muslim community of Dinajpur. Hemayet Ali Hall, Dinajpur Museum and Naoroj Sahitya Majlish were founded under the shelter of the Hall.

Previously written constitution of Khaja Najimuddin Hall and library was accepted by only its executive council and did not publish as book form. The matter was caught attention of present district magistrate Janab Safiul Alam C.S.P. He appointed a draft constitution committee keeping similarity with present day need. The committee comprised with Janab Rahimuddin Ahmed, advocate, Janab Najimuddin Chowdhury, Janab Khairul Alam, Janabs. Sharif, advocate, Dr. Hafijuddin Ahammad and Janab Muhammad Saharab Ali. The draft constitution was framed by their hard effort. Later it was placed to general members for acceptance. Present constitution is the result of these hard attempts.

According to the constitution of the library, it has been running completely as a public library. The library will be treated as resource of Dinajpur as it was built by the initiative of mainly people of Dinajpur. But it was also noted that, its activities may extend to whole Pakistan and its allied countries in need. The constitution has set up following objectives of the library. Such as, organisation and administration of full-fledged library to meet the long outstanding demands of local people.<sup>180</sup>

### **Public Libraries in Dacca**

Rammohan Roy Library was an institution created and organised by the Brahma Samaj of the East Bengal. It was founded to spread knowledge. Total 32.3 Hindus comprising 48.8 male and 8.8 female are found literate and 10.1 Musalmans comprising 18.3male and 1.3 female are found literate out of total 20,728 literate persons in Dacca in 1901.<sup>181</sup>

It was proposed in the first meeting of the subscribers that the library would be named after his name if a person will donate ten thousand rupees at a time for it. But suitable amount of money had not collected in schedule time, so in 18th January, 1871. 1<sup>st</sup> Magh, 1277 B.S. Bengal Brahma Samaj Public Library was established in a room of second floor of the Brahma Samaj building and gradually its book and readers strength had increased. Its functions were performed in the place upto 1314 B.S., i.e. 37 years and everybody realised the need of its separate building. In 1279 B.S., Rs. 1528 was received as donation to the library from famine fund. Rs. 1200 was leanded to rupay the loan of the society in 1285 B.S. It is unknown whether the loan was repaid but Brahmasamaj of East Bengal extent huge amount of money for the sake of the library.

In 1285 BS Ananda Chandra Roy donated Rs. 100 (one hundred) and Kali Kishore Chattapadhyay gifted many back volumes of the Tattobodhini Patrika and Brajendra Kumar Guha donated Rs. 150 (One hundred and fifty) in 1287. In 1288, Prasanna Kumar Roy took special measure for the development of the library and Ramkrishna Lal, Durgamohan Das and Srikrishna Das donated Rs. 300, 240 and 10 respectively. English and Sanskrit, Bengali books were purchased in Rs. 500 and 150 respectively. For purchase of English Books, money was sent to Miss Colet in Great Britain.

Journals and magazines were kept in the reading room and it would open occasionally. Journals were collected by purchase and gift. Due to want of librarian, its function was closed after a certain time and magazines were not preserved with care. At that time, the library became prosperous and book strength increased by the assiduity of Rajani Kanta Ghosh. In 1316 B.S., Sons of Naba Kanta Chattapadhyay donated 370 books to the library. Attempt had been made to collect fund for years to construct building to increase income of the society and to set up library. In 1313 B.S. Gurudas Chakraborty came at Dacca, as a chancellor of East Bengal Brahma Samaj and by his initiative Ratnamoni Gupta donated Rs. 5000 at a time for the library. Henceforth, donations from several places were collected to construct building of the library. It has been noted that Damodas Gobardhan Das of Bombay donated one thousand rupees for the purpose.

In 1315 B.S. Pandit Shiv Nath Shastri came Dacca to join yearly festival of the Samaj. On this occasion he laid down the foundation of the library and participated prayer as part of the festival. He perused the programme of festival in English and Gurudas Chakraborty in Bengali. Mr. Shastri narrated aims of the library in touchy language and conveyed thanks to the donours and mentioned benevolent outlook of Srinath Chanda, Atul Chandra Roy, Gurudas Chakraborty and Ratnamoni Gupta. In 1316 B.S., 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1910, after Magh Utsab, a special meeting was held under the chairmanship of Krishna Gobinda Gupta on occasion of house- warming. Educated people in high position were invited in the house- warming ceremony and the library was opened to all and referred to Rammohan Roy Library and Reading Room.

In his presidential speech, Krishna Gobinda Gupta told that library would be counted as inevitable agency in present day as it necessary to acquaint with particular subject of universe subject. Religion and Ethics would special division of the library though it would hold books on literature, art and science. The library with good books would be found in many places but the library with special emphasis on religion and ethics would rarely find. According to him, ignorance would harmful than knowledge because knowledge would be another name of power. To go to astray, only create sin. Under the in charge of librarian, functions of the library started opening two hours in morning and four hours in afternoon except Sunday since then. Executive committee of the East Bengal Brahmasamaj appointed supervisor in each year to observe activities of the library.

The library was in debt of Rs. 3000 dues to excessive expenditure of Rs 11000 for building of house and purchase of furniture's. All debts were paid by the initiative of Mathura Nath Guha and the library became prosperous. Its fame and effectiveness had spread in the town. The library gradually developed due to purchase of books in Rs. 50 in each year and collecting donation from the interested persons.

In 1317 B.S., Jotindra Prasad Mitra donated two almirahs and some books. Ram Mohan Mitra donated 35 volumes of Encyclopaedia Britanica in 1321 B.S. Pran Krishna Acharya donated 255 books of price Rs. 600 and Tara Prasanna Das, Kali Prasanna Das donated an almirah and 46 books in 1339 B.S. In 1340 B.S., Briendra Roy, Banka Behari Kar, Joytish Chandra Mukhopadhyay, Mrs. Aswini Basu donated 540 books, an almirah, 65 books, 51 books, 28 bound volume of Tattya Kaumudi respectively. In 1341 B.S., I.B. Sen donated 653 books and 181 periodicals, Shanti Bindu Gupta donated 206 books of Amrit Lal Gupta and sister of I.B. Sen donated four almirahs in 1342 B.S. In 1347, Mrs of Apurba Chandra Dutta constructed a one room based first floor building in the plot adjunct to library and donated it to the library in memory of her husband.

Yearly financial assistance was arranged from municipality in Rs. 100, 150 and 200 was arranged in the years 1341, 1342 and 1343 B.S. by the initiative of Guruprasad Mitra and Banka Behari Kar. Later the amount was increased to Rs. 300. Since establishment of the library Brahmasamaj of the East Bengal had expend



huge number of rupees. Apart from them, many persons had donated books and money. A list of donours who had donated rupees fifty and above have been mentioned here with as reference.

Table 2.7: List of donours in Dhaka Rammohun Library.<sup>182</sup>

Name of Donour	Amount
Ratan Moni Gupta	5000
Damodar Gabardhan Das	1000
King of Tripura	1000
Brajendra Kishore Roy	500
Rebati Mohan Das	400
C R Das	300
Monorama Majumdar	250
Lord Car Michael	250
King of Baroda	250
King of Cochin	250
P C Sen	230
Krishna Gobinda Gupta	200
Girija Nath Roy	150
Suresh Chandra Singha	150
Mohini Mohan Das	115
King of Burdwan	100
S R Das	100
Mrs. K G Gupta	100
Prasanna Kumar Roy	100
Atul Chandra Roy	100
King of Kasimbazar	100
P N Mukherjee	100
P C Lion	50
Janaki Nath Roy	50
Ganesh Das	50
Nawab Ali Chowdhury	50
Khaja Aram	50
King of Jhalore	50
P C Militas	50

More than eight thousand books are in the holding of the library. It includes English, Bengali and Sanskrit books. Periodicals and magazine on different topics are also in the preservation of the libraries. Rammohan Roy Library has been found as centre of attention to the educationists of the Dacca by its collections of rare and old valuable documents. The authority should take utmost care for its preservation.

### **Public Libraries in Kusthia**

In the history of literary movement in Kusthia the years from 1932 to 1937 could be better termed as 'Golden Age'. Apart from local energetic person, some litterateurs came Kusthia as Magistrate or Collector. 'Sahitya Basar', a literary circle was formed at that time. Its meeting was convened in the house of the public library in Saturday interval of each fifteen days. Written essays would peruse, discussion and lecture would also perform thereafter. Songs also used to perform in between discussions. The literary circle was lasted for few years. Its inspiration begun to ebb due to transfer of litterateur collectors and joining of eminent litterateur Ananda Shankar Roy as Magistrate in Kusthia. Members hesitated to say on to write sometimes in front of Ananda Shankar. In this way, the session of 'Sahitya Basar' was stopped.<sup>183</sup>

Kusthia Public Library is an old library in the area. It had got self-entity long before the regime of Pakistan. Exact date of its establishment is not found but it is obvious that it was established in the extremely agitated first decade of twentieth century and it had completed its Diamond Jubilee in 1985. Initially, it was familiar as 'Harishchandra Hall' and its evidence have received from the written 'Harishchandra Hall' in its then Iron Gate of library. Though it was established as a sub-divisional library, still it preserved numerous valuable documents. Educated persons of the locality were keen to its resources. Most of its valuable resources were lost sometime before 1947. Mainly government employees were its member. Later, the library transferred to 'Rifle Club' and all books of the library dumped in the 'Varanda' of Zilla Board. After few days, books were returned to the library and kept in the almirah. Later, programmes of the library were almost closed and library room was turned to the 'Officers Club'. Book almirahs were open. Book lending was confined mainly within officers. No other important books were in the holding of library except some English novel and biographies and Bengali Novels.

Library and club were running side by side. Sports including gymnastic activities used to perform in the library and club side by side indoor games, like, chess, table tennis and cards.

Social services including welfare activities would also perform in the library. Former one storied library building was in the east side of the present library building. Rooms of the building were extended from east to west. Tennis court was in the courtyard of the library and officers would play here. Bioscope show and magic lantern, lectures used to hold as a programme of mass awareness.<sup>184</sup>

Kusthia was not separate district before partition in 1947. It was belonging to Nadia District. Collector's office and head quarter was in Krishnanagar. Before independence, its surface was 2841 Sq. mile with population 17, 59,000. 61 percent population of the district was belonging to the Mahamedan Category. Nadia was in Presidency division and Kusthia was first in Rajshahi Division. At present, it is under Khulna division. Kusthia comprised with 1371 sq. mile area and 11,66,262 population. After liberation Meherpur sub division was abolished and its two police stations, Meherpur and Gangni were included to the Chaya danga sub division. Meherpur sub division again reformed in 1949. Kusthia was renamed as Nadia after liberation. The part of the then Nadia district included in West Bengal was named as Nabadwip. The present name Kusthia was given in early 1948 and it has three sub-divisions, namely Kusthia, Chuyadanga and Meherpur.

In 1765, Nadia came under subjugation of East India Company with another district of Bengal. Nadia district was formed in 1787 and its first collection was R. Redfearn. Abu Muhammad Nasiruddin was last collector of undivided Nadia. After independence, he had come to Kusthia from Krishnanagar and set up district head quarter there. The district named as Kusthia from 1947.

Indigo farming was introduced in Bengal in the early part of the nineteenth century. So many indigo plants were established in Nadia from 1830-1860. At that time, 8000 mounds 'Nil' was produced yearly in Nadia district where as only 40, 000 mounds 'Nil' was produced in whole Bengal. Some reputed plants of the district were Dholrakol plant of Kanthagojra Union, Gachua plant of Jagati Union, Shalghar Madhua plant of Kumarkhali P.S., Amla Kuthi of Mirpur P.S. Sonai

Kundi plant of Daulatpur P.S., Shilaidaha Plant, Amjhupi plant of Meherpur sub-division and plants of Nischindipur, Bedyadharpur and Kasba etc.

In 1860, peasant resistance was held in Jessore- Naida due to oppression Indigo planters. Peasants were not agreeing to cultivate indigo due to increase of agro product price. Planters forcefully pressured tenants to cultivate nil. As a result, mass resistance was formed in these areas. At that time, Sir Peter grant, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal visited the area by boat. Thousands of peasants gathered on the bank of river and protested oppression of indigo plants. In 1860, Dinabandhu was born in Chowberia in 1829 under jurisdiction of then Nadia district, later included in Jessore.

In 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1869, Municipalities were established in Kusthia, Meherpur and Kumarkhali. Charitable hospitals were also set up in Kusthia, Chaudanga and Meherpur in 1863, 1864 and 1868 respectively.

Among Muslim writers, Sk Jamiruddin, inhabitant of Garadob- Bahadur did a good return to the Muslim Community by writing ‘Mehercharit’, ‘Shokanal’, ‘Islami Lecture’ etc. Munsii Asgar Hussain and Munsii Fasihuddin wrote bi- lingual religions manuscripts. Sayad Abdul Kuddus Rumi also did a profound well of the Muslim Community by delivering lectures on the development of religion and society. Mir Musaraf Hussain caught attention of the public on the oppression of planters in Kumarkhali-Mirpur area by writing ‘Udas Pathiker Maner Katha’. It is found from the brief socio cultural and political history of Nadia- Kusthia that a glorious cultural, social and political heritage existed in the district since 1830s. Kusthia Public Library was result to retain the culture of progress of the district.<sup>185</sup>

### **Observation**

Since very beginning, Britishers were indifferent to the expansion of education in India. But nationalists hold the idea that an ignorant and illiterate nation can never make any solid progress and must fall back in the race of life. So, schools and colleges were set up to diffuse elementary as well as higher education. Night classes for workers were organized in cities and libraries were organized in both cities and villages for liquidate illiteracy.

It is found that 66 Public Libraries established in Bengal during 1850 to 1900 and highest number of libraries in Calcutta followed by Howrah, 24 Parganas and Hooghly. Educational, Cultural and political progress of common men in four districts in comparison to other district were prime force to build up library awareness among them. It is also found in district wise development of Public Libraries in Bengal during 1901 to 1940, that highest number of libraries established decade of 1930, as provincial government had autonomy to materialize programmes to spread education under diarchy, as education have been brought under the control of Indian Ministers in 1921. A moderate number of increases of public libraries are also found in 1920s, as experiment of educationists and nationalist leaders to spread education have been observed during this time.

It is found from the analysis of the history of the development of public library that, initially landlord, rich people, educated person as well as magnanimous person took initiative to set up library but the baton transferred to the common people very soon. Common people of all class, creed and sex were organization of the libraries, though a small number of people of minority community and women are found as organizer or user of libraries. What was mere centre of recreation that transformed to centre to spread education and culture to boost nationalism.

Accounts of sources of finance and expenditure shows that lion-share of finance came from subscription and donation followed by lesser in Grant-in-aid and least in Grant-in-aid from Government.

Primarily libraries were housed in a room of lordly mansion, rented house or donated piece of land. Katcha house of the library transformed to pacca house by the donation of single person to common people. Place and name of the libraries had been changed time and again to stable in present address. A large number of libraries had been amalgamated and furniture included in the contemporary running library. Libraries are found managed by the committees formed by representative of users of all class when they were out of the authority of single person or family. Rules relating to membership, subscription fees, library hours, period issue and others were ascertained in committee meeting.

Libraries started with few members and small number books both in Bengali and English version. English classics or services reading used to meet the reading habit

of English educated people. Gradually Bengali version books arrived abundantly due to growth of literacy and advancement printing and publishing.

Libraries were run by untrained staff at initial period as no library science training programme had been introduced anywhere in the world and so the technical work of these libraries were not systematic. Libraries were meant a room or building where books, magazine, newspapers were preserved and given to the use of readers. Salaried employees are found received low wages. After introduction of Library Science training programme, systematic library work was in vogue.

Printing, publishing and selling of books influenced to set up library and vice versa. At least some of the library of nineteenth century had stable till now. An overall increase in number of subscribers, reading materials, number of issues, income and expenditure had persisted in history of the libraries in this period.

Greatest number of public libraries were set up in Calcutta in comparison to other districts of Bengal as it absorbed the impact of western contact at a faster pace. Hooghly and 24 Parganas owing to the number of European residents and visitors, so, rapid advancement of education was found in these two districts. As a result, a good number of public libraries were established in these two districts in comparison to other districts in Bengal. Apart from these, Hooghly was fortunate enough to found worthy personalities like Joykrishna Mukerjee, Nripati Kumar Ghosh, Munindra Deb Roy etc. as patron of public library development. Burdwan was always straight forward to religious, social and nationalist movement. A good number of public libraries were established in the district under the influence of nationalist movement. Since last part of the nineteenth century, Bardhaman Indian Association, Kalna Indian Association Purbasthali Hitakari Sabha etc. and Anushilan and Jugantar in later period played vital role to spread library awareness to the people of the district. In case of education and politics, Howrah was also advanced district in Bengal. A significant portion of male was found as literate in English. In case of organisation of public libraries, it occupied important place.

Including Rangpur Public Library, four oldest public libraries in Bangladesh were Barisal, Jessore and Bagura established in 1854. Even before birth of Calcutta Public Library, Rangpur Public Library was established in 1832. Dinajpur was biggest administrative district in undivided Bengal. People of the district used to

receive and despatch letters, newspapers, books and parcels through post office since the last part of 19<sup>th</sup> century to spread education. A good number of public libraries in the district were outcome to their library orientation. Bakherganj was fortunate enough to found Ramtanu Lahiri, Shivnath Shastri, Aswini Kumar Dutta and others to spread education. Due to active participation of Bakherganj Hitasadhan Sabha, Barisal Peoples Association, Anushilan Samity, Jugantar and Swades Bandhab a significant number of public libraries were established in the district. In spite of poverty and low-level literacy a moderate number of public libraries were found in Bankura, Birbhum and Malda. Mymensingha had rich cultural heritage. The district had glorified to found anti British leader Mahadev Sanyal, writer Upendra Kishore Roychowdhury, Sukumar Roy and Leela Majumdar. Nationalist movement create great sensation in the district. So many Samities and Public Libraries were established in the district as result of it. Pabna district is under the division of RajShahi.

Most of the old libraries of Bangladesh were established in RajShahi division. In comparison to other division, a significant number of libraries were established in RajShahi division and greatest number of library users were found in the district. Tripura was a princely state in colonial period. From very early times, the Maharajas were very much in favour of Bengalis and the Bengali culture. Rabindranath Tagore's long association with them reflected royal patronage towards the Bengali art and culture. Public libraries of the state were the mark of kings' progressive attitude to spread education.

Lord Curzon controversial measure partition of Bengal in 1905 led to widespread agitation in Bengal. Imbibed by the nationalism a large number of public libraries were established in villages and cities in Bengal though they had very precarious existence but some of them continued for long time. The constant pressure of police was an important reason for the decay of the libraries.

The motivation of founders of the public libraries during nineteenth century to first decades and second decades of the twentieth century was somewhat different. Cursorily public libraries of nineteenth century basically satisfied reading taste of english educated class of Bengali community and certainly to spread education among common people. During first two decades they were busy to spread

nationalistic education and organized public library system appeared as social force from afterwards.

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