

Chapter -1

GENESIS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN COLONIAL BENGAL

The concept of public library was imported in India by the Western World. It was the freak of nature that the British came to dominate India but they brought with them an ideology and literature embodying ideals of the common man with which the whole of Europe was imbued at that time. They could not get rid themselves in India of ideas to which they had been attached in England. Inevitably, they inspired, though they may not have actively encouraged the setting up of public libraries in this country. Circulating libraries in Bengal were result of British initiation to set up on the model of subscription libraries in Great Britain.

Apart from Circulating libraries, Fort William College library and Calcutta Public Library, Europeans patronage in foundation of public libraries are found in its initial stage. Contribution of James Long is not undeniable in that stage. Societies had also played predominant role to continue public library work. Minority section such as women and Muslims were also played formidable role in public library organization in its primary stage.

CIRCULATING LIBRARIES

From the second part of the eighteenth century, few circulating libraries were opened in Calcutta mainly to meet the recreational need of the Europeans. Though it is known from the 'Bengal Gazette', the first newspaper published in English in 1770, that John, an Englishman had opened a circulating library at old fort in Calcutta in 1770. It is too learnt that some Andruz had also opened a circulating library in the same old fort in 1780. It is known from Calcutta Gazette dated 13th December 1787, that Cock Maxwell and Company had established Calcutta circulating library. In 1798, 'Bengal Harkara' a daily had organized a good circulating library and that was discharge service for long time.¹

In the first half of the nineteenth century, some circulating libraries were organized in Calcutta by the Europeans. Some of them were found as permanent. Such as,

circulating library established by Greenway and Company in 1819, circulating library established by H.G.C. Gulland at 127, Dharmatala, British circulating library established by book seller T. Weston, Union Library established by Canty and Company at 28, Dharmatala, circulating library established by JJ Fury at 87, Kashitola etc. Principle cause behind the spread and popularity of the circulating libraries was to increase the number of English men as well as Europeans in Calcutta. In 1750, where 1500 Europeans were in Calcutta, these increased to 12200 in 1837.²

In Hickey's Gazette in 1780, advertisement used to publish regarding sale of books containing information of title, author, size, price, quality of paper and binding.³ Soon book traders had realized that readers need would not be meet up only sailing of books but to set up circulating libraries. So, in next year's, report of circulating libraries published in Hickey's Gazette, Calcutta Gazette and other newspapers in that time. It is evident from these references that books became subject of recreation and education in the city life and proprietary subscription libraries had come into vogue.⁴

According to Hickey's Gazette, John Andrews was the first founder of circulating library at old Fort in Calcutta as early as 1770.⁵ It is also found that one Mr. John set up library at same old Fort in Calcutta though no confirmation has been found that the library was existed as early as 1770.⁶ It is confirmed from the well-designed book plate in British Museum engraving circulating library of John Andrews in the year 1774 that John Andrews was first founder of circulating library in Calcutta and a Calcutta directory listed from as 'Late Librarian', under the category of British European sellers and not in the service of East India company. James Shakell is found to announced in Calcutta Gazette in 1787 about opening of 'New Library' in Calcutta. James Shakell became partner of the India Gazette after sudden demise of John Hay in March 1787 and took charge of formers business ventures, i.e. book selling, stationary. Shop and circulating library.⁷

Messrs Cock, Maxwell and Company purchased both libraries of Meres, Macdonald & Arnott and Mr. Shekel in December 1787 and advertisement in Calcutta Gazette as their new venture to the public.⁸ The efforts of the Meres, Cock, Maxwell & Co was praise worthy, as they extended their activities to the

considerably higher European population area such as, Berhampur (Bengal), Dinajpur (Bihar) and Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) rather to only Calcutta and it was two consecutive users of the Calcutta Gazettee.⁹

An important circulating library had appeared during first half of the nineteenth century which was not in the ownership of any book seller or any sales proprietor but was run by the Bengal Harkara.¹⁰ The proprietors of the Harkara performed three functions simultaneously, such as, publication of newspaper, sale of books and running of the circulating library. It is found from the advertisement of the Bengal Harkara that this library had high quality of collection and there was a large demand of classics.¹¹

The tradition of the proprietary subscription library continued till the mid-1830s. These libraries owed their growth and existence mainly the expanding population of Englishman in Calcutta and the population demand of books for amusement and relaxation.

Apart from proprietary libraries, some newer trends were reflected in the establishment of libraries, libraries of literacy societies, academic libraries, reading rooms or clubs in Calcutta during this period. The Asiatic Society was established in 1784 by Sir William Jones with the objective to enquire into the history and antiquities, arts, sciences and literature of Asia. From the beginning the society attained an esteemed position from learned individuals. Soon after its foundation various kinds of library materials and museum objects namely books, papers, manuscripts, drawings, copper plates, and other articles were being presented to the society. These gifts formed the nucleus of an accumulating and expanding library and of a museum later years. The society and its library were first located at the office of Sir William Jones. It was ultimately shifted to the present location of the society at the Park Street, Calcutta. Prior to 1830, Indians were debarred from the membership of this society and the library attached to it.¹²

The Asiatic Society has had a spectacular role through subsequent history, being the repository of rare and valuable resources. It provided encouragement and incentive to scholarly studies and investigation into Indian history, culture and tradition, among both Europeans and Indians.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the following educational institutions were established in undivided Bengal: Fort William College (1800), Hindu College (1817), Srirampur College (1818), Oriental Seminary (1823), Sanskrit College (1824), General Assembly (1830). Gradually libraries were also developed in this institution.¹³

In 1819 several gentlemen established Calcutta Library Society. Although a proprietary society, it was called a public Library. Some proprietors invested money and lent books in exchange of subscription. It was a library, not an adjunct to any business unit, and had an independent existence. The documentary evidence regarding the library can be traced back to the Calcutta Journal in 1819.¹⁴ The society opened with a collection of 2,700 volumes and received almost every month an addition of select new publications from England.

In the early 30s of the nineteenth centuries there was a trend to establish reading rooms with daily newspapers and periodicals both local and foreign. The reading rooms were mainly designed to provide the members with light reading and current information and some games. The sponsors of one such Billiard and Reading Rooms (Bengal subscription Billiard and Reading Rooms) announced that their reading room was planned after those available in the West End of London.¹⁵ The place was illuminated with gaslight and provided with local and foreign newspapers, Navy and Army lists, directories, etc. The Reading Rooms however had a very brief existence. In 1832, Messrs. Leyburn and Company announced the auction of the Bengal subscription Billiard and Reading Rooms.¹⁶

CALCUTTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 21st March, 1836 Calcutta Public Library started its journey from the house of Grants at Esplanade Row in Calcutta. After some time, the library shifted to the old Fort William. The library again shifted to the Metcalf Hall in 1844, founded in memory of Charles Metcalf beside the Strand Road. In 31st August of the year a meeting was held by the initiation of Stock whaler and under the chairmanship of Chief justice of the Supreme Court, Sir John Peter Grant. Stock Whaler said in the meeting that, cultural relation among the inhabitants of the Calcutta would be possible by setting the public library and such a centre should be organized where citizens would assemble to discuss culture and literature. It was unanimously

decided in the meeting as the object of the proposed library, that it would have expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a public library of reference and circulation, which should be open to all ranks and classes without distinction, and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature.¹⁷ In a reporting in 'Jnananeswan', it sought help of common people to set up the library.¹⁸

Majority of the British organizers showed their liberal attitude to open the library for all classes of people and helped to serve the aim of the library. A committee was formed with twenty-four eminent personalities to make effective the proposal to set up library. There were only two Bengali members, Rasik Krishna Mallick, editor of 'Jnananeswan' and Rasamay Dutta, secretary to the Hindu College. Prominent British members were Sir John Peter Grant, Richardson, Professor of Hindu College, Marshman, editor of Samachar Darpan etc.

To consider the report of the adhoc- committee a meeting was held at the Town Hall in 7th November 1835. It was decided in the meeting that seven curators would be responsible to govern the library and Stock wailer elected as honorary secretary. Seven curators of the managing committee were Sir Edward Ryan, W.P. Grant, Charles Cameron, J.C. Marshman, T. Dickens, J.R. Colin and H.M. Parker. Within three months about three thousand moneys were collected from partners and members. About 1500 books were received from the public and 4,675 books were received as donated from the Fort William College library by the initiation of the Governor General Charles Metcalf.

During that time, Piyarichand Mitra appointed as librarian after the resignation of first librarian Mr. Starchy. By virtue of his personality, library had turned into heart place of authors and scholars of Calcutta. By virtue of post, Piyarichand was the secretary of managing committee. A committee was formed with three curators. There were two sub-committees except general committee. One was House committee and another was selection committee. House Committee was responsible to look after library building and another property whereas, Selection Committee selected books and periodicals. Library council was formed in lieu of three curators committee in 1873. Curators were elected from the partners. General

members had right of voting but in the extensive new council, partners and members had their legitimate seats.

The source of income of the library was mainly two; sell of share and monthly subscription of the members. Donation would also available occasionally. During 1847-48, total income of library was Rs. 13,986 and expenditure was Rs. 8,631. Rs. 650 was expended to purchase books and Rs. 512 for periodicals. Rs. 2,710 for salary of employees. In 1857 both number of members and income were increased. In that year, library had purchased books amounting Rs. 5,018 and budget for newspapers and periodicals were Rs. 355. Rs. 5,469 was spent for salary of the employees. It was found from the account after ten years; amount of income had gradually decreased. Development and prosperity of library would depend mainly upon employees. Numbers of employees were not enough; their salaries were not high and still the library was success in all respect by their whole-hearted service. Table below illustrates posts of employee and their salaries.

Table 1.1: Monthly income of Calcutta public library employees¹⁹

No. of Employee	Monthly Income
Librarian (Anglo Indian)	200
One Assistant Librarian (Hindu)	50
One Sarkar	16
Two Daptari	12
One Beyara	5
One Piyon	5
One Daroyan	5

In 1849, both activities and strength of employees were increased. But expenditure on salary had decreased. Expenditure on salary account was Rs 343 up to the librarianship of Anglo- Indian Starchy. From the tenure of Piyarichand Mitra, that decreased to 316 in spite of increase of number of employees. Starchy used to receive Rs. 200 and for Piyarichand it was Rs.120. Salary of four Assessment librarians were in between Rs. 36 to 15. Cashier, four Sarkers, clerk, two guards, three Pankha Pullar used to get Rs. 14, 06,08,09 and Rs. 04 in each respectively.

In 1873 there were about 30 employees and annual expenditure for them was 4,224. Fewer employees existed in comparison to work load. Newspaper reading room were remain open from morning to evening and lending section from 9 a.m. to 6

p.m. Poor students would get scope to read in library without fees except shareholders and members.

Public Library authority always careful to develop the book processing, display and collection development system. After joining the managing committee, Bethune proposed that reader would not allow to book racks. Books would be delivered to the readers on requisition slip as in the big libraries of London and Paris. In 1853, 28 principle subjects including some sub division had introduced with view to classification. Public Library had published three printed catalogues. Last catalogue had published in 1898. A manuscript of the catalogue used to preserve on the librarian's table and readers usually informed about the new books from this catalogue. In addition to that, 'Englishman' and 'Friend of India' regularly published monthly catalogue of new books. In 1890, Calcutta Corporation agreed to take the responsibility of manage the library on condition of representation. Re-organization was started and famous political leader had been appointed as librarian of the library. In consultation with Beverage, Pal begun to complete Dictionary catalogue in his two years' tenure.

With a view to set up a first-class library in the capital of India, in 1899, Lord Curzon went to the Metcalf Hall and saw work of the library was about to stop. Few readers used to come to consult newspaper and novel. Curzon entranced to see the rare books had been kept carelessly. He consulted with shareholders to buy ownership of the library by paying Rupees Five hundred and attached the same with the Imperial library which established mainly for the use of the government employee in 1891. Thus, two libraries had united in the Imperial Library and established in Metcalf Hall. In 30th January, 1903, Curzon had opened the newly organized Imperial Library to the public. In 1902, Imperial Library Act was passed to legalize conditions of the government's purchase of Calcutta Public Library. Government of India took the responsibility of the library and the tradition is still running. John Macfarlane, Assistant Librarian of British Museum, London was the first Librarian of Imperial Library. After Macfarlane, Philologist Harinath Dey was the librarian of the library. He was a polyglottic with colourful personality. Due to want of space, Imperial Library shifted to Foreign Office Building at 6, Esplanade East. During Second World War, Imperial Library transferred to famous Jabakusum House at Chitta Ranjan Avenue for some time in 1941. The library had

returned to its old place, Esplanade East in 1948. In the meantime, India won freedom. Imperial Library Act, 1948 was effective. By the Act, name Imperial Library changed in National Library and B S Kesvan had appointed its first librarian.

Authority of Public Library had not only desisted to open the library for public but they offered a scope to sit in its reading room without any subscription. In that respect, it inspired to set up library in Calcutta and its adjunct area within the hurdles of time.²⁰

REVEREND JAMES LONG AND PUBLIC LIBRARY

In nineteenth century, wave of renaissance had come in the national life of Bengali people. Many learned and talented scholars had created wave of new progress in the field of society, education, art, culture, literature etc. Both indigenous and foreigners were among them. James Long was an eminent person among the foreigners of that time.²¹ Reverend James Long (1814-87) arrived at Calcutta to preach Christianity in 1842. He began to reside in the area of Thakur Pukur, Behala. Contemporary periodical had reported that some natives and foreigners interested to enrich Bengali language. Rev. Long was notable among them. Editor of 'Sambadpravakar' conveyed gratitude in its report.²²

Reverend Long had tried in many ways to establish 'Bangiya Pustakalaya'. In a report in same 'Sambad Pravakar' dated 1851, the editor reported that libraries had established in ten places and discharged services under the librarianship of Europeans. The places were Thakurpukur, Calcutta, Agarpara, Bardhaman, Krishnanagar, Chapra, Solo, Ballavpur, Ratnapur and Karpasdanga. Native Christians of Ratnapur had signed for Rs. twelve to collect extra books. 1400 Bengali books had purchased or gifted for these ten libraries. Libraries in Calcutta had received special gift, which included several types of four hundred Bengali books. Special features of these libraries were to deliver good books to the natives who were unable to read English and Europeans would also receive knowledge and syntax of native subject. Ways had also been found to growth of libraries by collecting books. The libraries have collected history of England, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Banga, India and antiquities of Christian parliament. Books on Physics, Astronomy, Tools and appliances, geometry, physiology of beasts and birds,

biography of chambers, ethical history had also been collected in these libraries. There were five English libraries had been existed among these above-mentioned places for English knowing persons. Long expressed his satisfaction to learn that people had benefited from the libraries. People were acquiring knowledge in their leisure, turn in book lover and get scope to read books printed in Calcutta but unfamiliar to Mufassil.²³

BENGAL LIBRARY CATALOGUE

In 1867, Press and Registration of Books Act were passed. Under this Act every press was obliged to deposit their publications to the Government Department. As Calcutta was capital of India, so, a library was founded there with the deposited books and other publications. It was familiar as Bengal Library, though it was a Government departmental library rather than public library. Famous Scholar Haraprashad Shastry was librarian of Bengal Library from 1886 to 1894. A list of deposited books in Bengal Library used to publish in the Calcutta Gazette in the interval of each three months. That list was familiar as Bengal Library Catalogue. That Catalogue was a fair account of press and publishers, characteristics of publications as whole which denoted the motives of the then society. In this connection, reporting of the Indian Mirror will helpful to understand the importance of the catalogue.²⁴

EUROPEAN INITIATIVE TO SET UP PUBLIC LIBRARIES

During Colonial period, public libraries were established in cities and villages in Bengal by the active initiation of common people. Some more libraries also found established and rendered services under the assiduity of Europeans.

Colonial government who frequently seemed to receive numerous requests for support in starting libraries or in funding them as the following typical letter makes clear:

In the month of March 1838, Board of East India Company received a letter from the acting judge at Ahmednagar, stating that the native community of that town had formed a Society for the establishment of a ‘General Library’; but that the people being poor would require some assistance at the outset. He therefore solicited a pecuniary donation from Government, in aid of the institution and a few copies of

any works in the Native Languages which Government had at its disposal; considering the object an excellent one, we requested the sanction of the Government of India to grant a donation of Rs.100 which that Government was pleased to sanction.²⁵

The later Annual Reports of the Presidencies indicated a gradual increase of scientific, literary societies and libraries in the country in European patronization. Thacker's India Directory indicates proportionate increases in the number of libraries and reading rooms for other regions as well. Calcutta went from having 49 libraries and reading rooms in 1886 to 137 in 1901, an almost three-fold increase, while the number of such institutions in Bombay increased over five-fold from 13 in 1886 to 70 in 1901.²⁶

Fort William college libraries, Calcutta Public Library were mainly organized by the Europeans. James Long is memorable as a founder of many libraries in Bengal. Thus, many Europeans were directly involved in growth and development of public libraries in Colonial Bengal. Their contributions have been considered in this section.

Lord Wellesley was the Governor General of India from 1798 to 1805. He decided to train new entrant company employees before starting of their work in India. For this purpose, Fort William College was established at Calcutta in 18th August, 1800. It was an important educational institution which will create interest to oriental education and by this education, it was hoped that their minds would be imbued with sound and extensive knowledge, as well in the languages of people they were to govern.²⁷ Wellesley not only decided to set up the college but also, he decided to set library as part of the college.

Reverend David Brown, Provost of the College was zealous to set up college library and public admittance was arranged in the library. The 'Calcutta Gazette' dated 20th November 1800 reported this news.²⁸

The library had a well-rounded collection of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit language including manuscripts of oriental studies. Rich collection of Tipu Sultan Library included in the library in 1800. In this connection, the opinion of Governor General was deep consideration. In the interest of the Company and for the pursuance of knowledge and literature, the collection would serve the purpose better if it was

locating in the college.²⁹ Library collection have increased as well as property of the college. In 1805, a native librarian was appointed to the Tipu Sultan Library and an English librarian for European library.³⁰ George Hilario Barlow, the then Governor General was happy to the prosperity of the Fort William college and expressed his pleasure to its collection in a lecture in 1806.³¹

The library was widely used by the students and public. In 1815, total expenditure of the college was rupees 1, 91,124, where rupees 41,011 was spent for library. In 1827, total expenditure of the college was rupees 1,39,636 where only rupees 7,722 was allotted to the college.³² However, on the eve of the Bentinck's administration (August 1828) the college of Fort William was apparently in full vigour of institutional health.³³ Though expenditure on library account had decreased, the library had able to keep its standards of service. Unfortunately, the college was not able to maintain its standard for long time as Bentinck dissolved college council in 1st March, 1831.³⁴

It is noted that, though it had especially in collection of oriental literature, it had good collection of European literature. In 1834, college librarian Captain Owsley had reported in a letter to an officer that, the oriental portion of this library is probably unequalled in point of value and extent throughout Asia.³⁵ In 1835, William Bentinck had closed the college and its library. He closed dormitory of the library and advised students to go anywhere they want.³⁶ Fort William College and its library had appeared as good model of colleges and libraries in later British India. They deeply influenced the process of westernization of education in India, the library only provided a centre for the encouragement and development of scholarship among local students.³⁷

Unfortunately, no fund was allotted for library in the college budget after 1830. In 1830, only rupees 6,611 was allotted for college library.³⁸ Without financial assistance the library was survived for few years but no new books added in its collection and services of the library for which it had won fame was hampered. From 1835, it was impossible for librarian to run library without financial aid and it decided to close the library and to transfer its collection. Its valuable collection was transferred to the library of Asiatic Society from 1835 to 1839.³⁹ European and remaining collections were preserved to newly formed Calcutta Public Library,

1836, Imperial Library, 1902 and later Indian National Library, 1947.⁴⁰ Thus, the collection of Fort William College passed into history as part of the legacy and tradition of Bengal.⁴¹

Apart from Calcutta Public Library or Fort William College Library, some more libraries were founded by the active patronage of Europeans in Bengal. Mr. Henry Vincent Belly would be retained to his attachment with Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar. In 1851; the library had started with the help and co-operation of Mr. Henry Vincent Belly, Rajnarayan Basu, Head Master of Midnapore Zilla School and local patrons of education. District Collector, Mr. Belly had collected approximate rupees 24,000 from the then Zamindars and aristocrat persons. Construction of library house, purchase of books, journals, and maps were maintained from this fund. First, it was named as 'Public Library' and later the name was changed to 'Belly Hall Public Library' in memory of the contribution of Mr. Vincent Belly.⁴²

There may be two probable causes to establish Public Library in Jessore by the collector Ricks. First, he arrived at that time 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.

The library at Bogra in Bangladesh which bear the name of the Sir John Woodburn, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal between 1898-1902, was founded by one Royal, 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. He doubled the monthly subscription and collected some fund from the affluent sections of the community for the development of library. The Barishal Public Library is founded by Kemp. I.C.S. District judge in

1854. Being of the earliest libraries of the country, this library is not as good as it should be.

Building of the Bagerhut 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.

Hajson Prat is memorable for Krishnanagar Public Library. He was an I.C.S., Inspector of Schools in Nadia district had planned to set a library in the district in Nadia and he had disclosed his plan to the chief surveyor Babu Rammohan Ghosh and later had convened a general meeting at Krishnagar College Hall on 1st July 1856.⁴³ Contribution of Eric Heyward and W.R. Crisper are not enticing. Eric Heyward donated large number of valuable and rare books to Konnagar Public Library. W.R. Crisper is found as the member of Konnagar Public Library building Committee. Sub-divisional officer T.G. Richie played important role in the first phase (1815) of the organization of Shreerampur Public Library. In 1924, Car Michael inspected the library and donated a set of 'Imperial Gazette' by Hunter as a sign of his pleasure. District Magistrate W. Fadden had closed contact to Shibpur Public Library. He invited an annual function of Library in 1891 and expressed his pleasure to inspect it.⁴⁴

Padre Alex Tamari was also actively engaging to set up the Chaitanya Library and Beadon Square Literary Club. Many permanent members and general members were attached to the library by the endeavour of Reverend Tomri; it had received many books as donation. In 1907, it received 253 books as donation of which, C.W. Memin alone donated 78 books. At first Ganga Narayan Dutta donated Rupees Three Hundred to the library. Gradually many Bengalese eminent persons, government officials including Indians foreigners donated books and finance. Maharaja Bhadur, Sir Narendra Krishna, Raja Surendra Mohan Thakur, Dr. Lalmohan Mukherjee, Judge J.F. Norris, R.R.S. James Duff, post Master General H M Kiss, American consul general B F Bonham, Reverend A P Telfair were famous among the donours. Sir Fancy O Mac Lean, Sir Gurudas Banerjee, A. Else Jenkins, Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, Raja Senbox Bhagla, Sujat Ali, representative of Murshidabad Begum had participated in annual general meeting in 1898.⁴⁵

C.R. Wilson and HEA Cotton are found associated with Bharati Parishad, Cotton Library and Bhabanipur Institute. Sripur Kalyan Samity is fortunate enough to receive compliments from foreign rulers. Comments of Mr. J. Lang (1911), District Magistrate, Hooghly, C.W.D. Prentice (1913), Mr. Bibradale (1916) authenticated the real development of Sripur Kalyan Samity, Hooghly at that time.⁴⁶

Martin Company and Lord Carmichael were associated with the foundation of Rammohun Library. In 1913, Martin Company built the house of Rammohun Library without profit under the supervision of Rajendra Mukherjee. Lord Carmichael was also a donor to build house. In 1913, Honourable P. Lion, education minister of Bengal presided the inauguration ceremony of library building.⁴⁷ We have found Europeans were provided administrative assistance, financial assistance side by side donation of books for the development of libraries. The then sub-divisional officer of Contai Mr. Hudson had donated 49 rare books to the Contai Club Makuma Granthagar in November, 1908.⁴⁸

Our countrymen also expressed their gratitude to the then emperor in library organizational work. After passing of King Edward VII, a condolence meeting was held at Poramatala 30.05.1910 and discussion was taken that, 'Nabadwip Public Library' henceforth be named as The Nabadwip Edward VII Anglo Sanskrit Library in sacred memory of late beloved king Emperor.⁴⁹ Uniformly in 1917, Saptam Edward Memorial Hall, and a library was established in Alipurduar in memory of Saptam Edward.⁵⁰

We have found another local administrator as patron of library. F.B. Bradley Bart, the district magistrate of Hooghly visited the Garalgacha public library and put up good comment on the library.⁵¹ Duke Library was another attempt to express gratitude to foreign ruler. Raibahadur Jot Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Zamindar of Uttarpara donated this library in honour of Sir William Duke. So, it was named as Howrah Duke Library. It is written in the plate of the library wall that, this library has been erected and equipped by Raibahadur Jot K. Mukherjee Bahadur of Uttarpara in honour of Sir William Duke, K.C.I.E., C.S.L. Lt. Governor of Bengal in 1915.⁵² In 1917, Madhab Smriti Pathagar was inaugurated by the Magistrate D. Ascoli and he remained close touch with the library.⁵³

EARLY SOCIETY- LIBRARIES

From the last part of the nineteenth century, different religious, educational, printing institutions, societies and associations were formed attached with library where common people were also allowed to use.⁵⁴ Sanjibani Sabha of Joytindra Nath Tagore, Students Association of Surendra Nath Banerjee, were relentless to spread education culture in the period.⁵⁵ Rammohun's revolutionary ideas, cognition introduced a new revolutionary idea in Bengali Society reflecting in then Brahma Samaj. In 1856, young Keshab Chandra Sen attached to the Samaj. He holds the idea that self – confident and self –respect of nation could not be awakened without mass education. He first attempted to start night school for this purpose. Brahma Samaj library was an effort to this purpose.⁵⁶ In the libraries of City College (1881), City School (1889), Brahma Girl School (1890) and Sadharan Brahma Samaj, public access was allowed in later period.

The Synthesis of two great forces, the ancient and oriental and the modern or western, marks the Ramakrishna Mission (1897), the last great religious and social movement which was characteristics the nineteenth century. It has too put in the forefront of its programmes of the idea of social service, not as mere philanthropic work, but as an essential discipline for religious and spiritual life. The Mission has opened many school's libraries and dispensaries, and has always rendered ungrudging help to the people in time of distress caused by famine or flood or other calamity.⁵⁷

In the village organization department of Sriniketan, near Shanti Niketan (1863) in Birbhum district, arrangement of different type of education has been continuing for rural development, such as, Charitable dispensary for health, prevention for infectious disease, midwifery, Pathsalahs for education of children's, Teacher's Training, adult education. Revival of small industry and livestock farming for the financial development of weaver, cobbler etc. Naturally, Rabindra Nath had to assiduous to organize library to materialize the projects. He was organized 'Chalantika' a mobile library system.⁵⁸

In the first part of the nineteenth century, approximate in 1818, Calcutta Library Society was established. Any person could use the library of the institute by a paying a fixed subscription though it was set up on the basis of private ownership. Special feature of this library was that, it was not a branch of any agency on

institution, itself it was a library. In that sense, it was the predecessor of modern library in undivided Bengal as well as present West Bengal. Activities of the library are found, as, the society was at length in full operation, and offers to the reading part of the comments an excellent opportunity of pursuing all the best new works, in every department of science, at the least possible expense. The library contained about 2, 700 volumes, and received almost every month an addition of select new publications from England'.⁵⁹ The book of the Calcutta Library Society situated in Town Hall. It is evident from that feature that it had acquired the ideal of Public Library. News of its existence up to 1832 is found from 'Bengal Directory and General Register'. Henceforth, we have information about the library. There was no Indian in its administration though it was continued about fifteen years.⁶⁰

In 1817, Calcutta School Book Society was established. It had a library too. Raja Rammohun Roy was closely related to the society. He felt the need of all equipped library in the educational institutions side by side introduction of modern education.⁶¹ He also introduced scientific management in his aided library of Unitarian Society. Mr. Adam was its supervisor. He regularly catalogued the books of the library. In a letter to J.B. Osteen of the Bristol in England, he informed about fair condition of library.⁶² Sir Edward Ryan, the President of Calcutta School Book Society, noted in its proceedings of 30 April, 1836, that an explicit aim at mass education of Calcutta School Book Society.⁶³

As to preparation and supply of books the Annual Reports of the Calcutta School Book Society give a good index of Bengali books prepared and circulated by the society is given below:

Table 1.2: Book distribution of Calcutta School Book Society⁶⁴

Report	Year	Period	Books Distributed	
			Vernacular	English
12th	1840	1836-39	20,363	72,205
13th	1845	1840-44	31,303	74,244
15th	1852	1848-51	58,125	65,766
20th	1858	1858	55,822	46,323

In 1844, soon after its creation the society expressed its concern for the neglect of vernacular Education and maintained a good library to spread mass education. Peary Chand Mitra in his secretarial address appealed to the Government for

promotion of vernacular schools in populous villages and affirmed that the state of the agricultural community in the Mofussil was lamentable; they were generally unable to understand their rights and duties and were totally incapable of protecting themselves against the fraud and oppression to which they were often subjected. He wanted to convince that to effect a radical cure of the disease the light of education must be shed amongst them as extensively as possible, and urged the Government to extend the benefits of education to the peasantry who ultimately paid for it by contributing the bulk of the land revenue to the Government treasury.⁶⁵ Stalwarts like Vidyasagar could bend the energies of the Government and their own more effectively for the spread of Vernacular education in the sixties and really a large number of kindred spirits while the British Indian Association held for the landholders in all cases affecting them.

Growing contact with the outside World, eager yearning for the revival of the cultural treasures of the past, the desire to reform all aspects of life and speculations about the problems of common weal and common woe, have profoundly stimulated Indian thought and have caused a comprehensive cultural renaissance, the influence of which is visible on modern Indian literature as well as Art. Bangiya Sahitya Parishad has been during much to revive the lost treasures of Bengali literature. In 23rd July, 1893, The Bengal Academy of Literature was established. It was renamed as 'Bangiya Sahitya Parishad' in 17 Baisakh, 1301 B S by a unanimous decision in the Thirteenth meeting of the institution. L. Leotard was its founder vice president. In the building of King Binoy Krishna Deb at Raja Nabakrishna Street the academy was established. Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Satyendra Nath Tagore, Joytindra Nath Tagore, Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Suresh Chandra Samaj Pati, Rajani Kanta Gupta were attached to the Parishad. Ramesh Chandra Dutta, Chandra Nath Basu, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Satyendra Nath Tagore were president to the Parishad. In nineteenth century, L. Leonard, Debendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Rajendra Chandra Shastri, Hirendra Nath Dutta were secretary to the parishad.

Book collections of Parishad have crossed into two lakhs. Binoy Krishna Deb, Ramesh Chandra Dutta, Rajani Kanta Gupta, Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan, Shitindra Nath Tagore, Trailakya Nath Mukhopadhyay, Rajnarayan Basu and Ramendra Sundar Tribedi donated their personal collection to the library. In 1320

B. S., Bengal Library had presented 18,975 books to the library of Parishad. 3213 books received from Bandhab Pustakalaya of Shikdarbagan. Satish Chandra Ghosh of Padmapukur Entally donated one set of Tengur book. King Rao Jogendra Narayan Rao had deposited large collection of Vidyasagar as mortgage. Many books of Sabitri Library in Bowbazar were kept in Sahitya Parishad during partition of Bengal.⁶⁶

FEMALE CONTRIBUTION TO SET UP LIBRARIES

According to the Census of 1881, full literacy among Indian males was 6.6 percent while it was 0.3 percent among females, suggesting that the typical ‘reader’ was male.⁶⁷ Yet, James Long, an esteemed civil servant in the Bengal Presidency commissioned to write a report on the culture of print in India, documented that native females were very intelligent, many were learning to read from their husbands and brothers.⁶⁸ According to Long, even for those who could not read, print was still available.⁶⁹ Long’s testimony alerts one to the fact that despite the low female literacy rate, women nonetheless had access to the world of print and seemed to avail of it in considerable numbers. Yet, in spite of his assertion, there is little ‘hard’ data corroborate or amplify this in public library circulation records of reading, and scholars have had to back track from the extremely few memoirs and biographies available to fill in the many silences within the archive.⁷⁰

During nineteenth century, mainly Brahma leaders were enthusiastic to publish magazines and set up societies for the development of female education. Keshab Sen’s wife and Pratap Chandra Majumdar edited ‘Arya Nari Samaj’ (1879) and ‘Paricharika’ respectively. Females belong to ‘Sadharan Brahma Samaj’ community established ‘Banga Mahila Samaj’ and arranged a craft exhibition. Several institutions established in Calcutta and Mofussil for the development of women. ‘Madhya Banga Sammilany’, ‘Bikrampur Sammilani’ and ‘Uttarpara Hitakari Sabha’ were renowned among them. Swarna Kumari Devi had established ‘Shakhi Samity’ to spread education among women and to develop craft education among widows. Sister Nivedita was also energetic to spread female education among Hindu community and she attached herself to number of societies. These samities were performing their mission with the help their attached libraries. Advancement of education and spread of progressive ideas in the country

accelerated the emancipation of women. In spite of some limitation in social sphere, their contribution to set up educational institutions and libraries could not be denied. Educated women were boosted up with nationalism. Swarna Kumari Devi and her two daughters, Hiranmoyee Devi and Sarala Devi successively edited 'Bharati' an organ of nationalism. They took an active part in the struggle for freedom. Swarna Kumari Devi, Kadambini Gangapadhyay and other Bangalee women attended Calcutta Congress in 1890 as representative.⁷¹

Frequently benevolent persons of the locality extended their helping hand to preserve the memory of their dear and near ones. To preserve memory of their mother and grandmother, Sukhada Debi, Satyacharan Chattapadhyay and Byomkesh Chattapadhyay respectively donated five katha lands to the library on the bank of the Ganga in Ariadaha and had constructed a building on the land within two years. Plot of Rajnarayan Smriti Pathagar and its adjunct pond was the property of Rani Shiromoni wife of Ajit Singh, King of Karnagarh. So, she is still alive in our memory.⁷² Swarnamayee Debi, Queen of Kasim Bazar would be remembered for her donation to Bagbazar Reading Library. She donated hundred rupees and Priya Nath Mitra donated hundred rupees and some furniture to the Bagbazar Reading Library.⁷³

Kumudbasini Pathagar in Bagerhut sub-division was sign of regard to women in that period. In 1888, Nikunj Behari Roy founded the library by name Kumud Basini, wife of his uncle Judge Prasanna Chandra Roy.

A considerable number of women are found as donour and user of Chaitanya Library. Before Second World War, building works of the library was not completed due to want money. So, a fund was created to collect money in 1944. Bimal Chandra Singha, Shanti Prava Bhattacharya, Sudhir Prasad Kururi had donated cash in this fund. Building work was completed by the financial assistance of Bijoli Ganguly, Malati Debi, Harendra Ballav and many others of the locality. There were 248 members including 234 Hindus, four Christians, four Muslims and Six female in the initial period of the Chaitanya Library.⁷⁴

According to the recollection of famous litterateur Ashapura Devi, Women of interior received books from the library filling up books name and call number, by their kins or servants. In 1988-89, centenary celebration of Chaitanya Library was

celebrated with great gravity. In this occasion, Ashapura Devi wrote in her benediction letter. From the letter, women participation in libraries is vividly recorded.⁷⁵

Like Bagbazar Reading Library, Swaranamayee, Queen of Kasim Bazar was also patron of 'Cotton Library and Bhawanipur Institute'. In Hooghly, both Achala Dasi and Shanti Sudha Dasare found as member and donour to the Jamgram Nandy library and Mandalai Sahitya Sabha respectively.⁷⁶

Chandra Saraswati Pathagar in Hooghly too received tax-free land as donation from Ranu Bala Saha and Durga Debi. Village women of Mahesh regularly participated different social welfare activities of library. In library management, they also used to visit the chariot during famous Ratha festival.⁷⁷

A significant number of women are found as reader of Contai Library. At the beginning and it had enrolled 77 users including 14 females of them. Female strength had increased up to 26 in 1947. Rupasi Jana, Sabitri Roy is found as donours to the library.⁷⁸ 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 outskirt of her house at Poramatala Road as library in free of rent for the time being.⁷⁹

Book store of the Hemchandra library, Khidirpore, Calcutta is on the first floor, engraved as 'Radha Rani Smriti Kaksha'. It is found from the old record that Bata Krishna Bandopadhyay donated one thousand rupees to construct library building. His wife Radha Rani Debi also assisted in many ways to organize the library. So, the room was dedicated to her name. Burikhali Public Library in Howrah established on the donated 8 decimal land of Khirad Bala Ghosh in 1932.⁸⁰

Bainan Public Library has able to enrol Hiramati Debi, Bhagabati Roy, Kalyani Roy, Ashalata Debi etc. as female users of the library. Mirjapur Satsahitya Sammilani library had 43 volumes including two newspapers and 83 members including five females of them in 1918. Anandapur Public Library could have included only two female members up to 1947. Names of Radharani Debi, Namita Sengupta and Puspa Gupta are found as the female member of the Ananda Library at the Asuria Village in Bankura.⁸¹ Motilal Ghosh library collected whole books of Urmila Debi, sister of C.R. Das. Samsujoha Jakia Public Library was established

at district head quarter at Suri in Birbhum in 1938. It was a sign of progressive outlook of Samsujoha to organize a public library in the land of Jia- ul- Madrasa in the name of his wife when Muslim women used to keep away from education and Muslims were lagging to achieve modern education.⁸²

Sonarundi Banwaribad Rabindra Pathagar in Murshidabad initially had started as a Club. It was started in the Katcha house with Tin shed of social worker Birendra Singh in 1941. Later, Queen Kalyani donated four decimal lands to the library. Narayangarh Sadharan Pathagar was too established on the donated land of the Zamindar Mahamayadevi.⁸³ Three Female members are also found included in each in the Radhaballavpur Public Library, Dhanga Gyaner Alo Granthagar.⁸⁴

Sahid Pathagar established on the donated 18 decimal land of Panchanan Maity and Rajbala Hazra in Midnapore in 9th August 1947. 15 females name are found were the user of the library. Five females are found as member in Asansol Subhas Library in Burdwan.⁸⁵ Prince Rehati Ranjan Chankraborty had established the Ram Ranjan library in memory of magnanimous king Ramranjan at Hetampur in Birbhum district in 1947. Queen Joytsnamayee had actively participated to the development of the library with other successors. Rani Minakumari Saheba is perceived as donour to the Dakshin Dinajpur Zella Granthagar, Balurghat.⁸⁶

MUSLIM PARTICIPATION TO SET UP LIBRARIES

Till the seventies of the nineteenth century the Muslims kept themselves aloof from nationalist political ideas which were gaining ground among the Hindus. This was due to a large extent to their virtual boycott of English education and their adherence to revivalist ideas in the sphere of religion. In spite of such barriers, a food number of Muslims extended their co-operation to set up educational institutions as well as libraries to spread education in Bengal. Najrul Pathagar, Saiyad Amir Ali Library, Gayesbari Youngmen's library, Enayetpur Public Library in Malda, Samsujoha Jakia Public Library, Muslim Library, Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri and Jessore Public Library etc. were the manifestation of Muslim sagacity.

The contribution of Muslim revolutionaries, Poets and writers cannot be denied and obliterated. In all the national uprisings from Sanyasi movement to independence, the files of the Home Department are replete with their immense sacrifices that finally led to the withdraw of British from India 1947.

In 1895, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad was established and recognized as the holy place literary pursuit. Both Hindu Muslim writers and artists were the member of this institution. Eminent educationists Muhammad Sahidulah, Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay, Pabitra Gangopadhyay, and Nripendra Krishna Chattapadhyay were prominent member of the Parishad. In that period Muslim society were not moving forward due to financial constraints and educational backwardness. Educated and wealthy Muslims were in anxiety to the matter and they tried to develop their literature and social pursuit in their own behalf. In 1911, Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samity was established parallal to Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. Muhammad Sahidulah was the first secretary of the institution.

In 1918, 'Bangiya Muslim Sahitya Patrika' a quarterly was published from the society. Muhammad Sahidulah and Muhamad Mujammel Haque was joint secretary and Mujaffar Ahmad was assistant secretary of that literary organ. A library also established in association with the publication of quarterly in the same house. At that time Poet Nazrul Islam came to Calcutta returning from War and began to live with Mujjafar Ahmad in his College Street, Calcutta address. Later, he attached with 'Bangiya Muslim Sahitya' as an editor. His poetry 'Mukti' was published in this literary organ.

Khan Bahadur M.A. Momila, cultured person of that time who lent his generous hand to the cultural revival of that time. He was district Magistrate of Jessore of that time and President of Jessore Institute by virtue of Post.⁸⁷

Woodburn Public library shifted to the gifted house of Nawab Abdus Sobham Chowdhury, generous Nawab of Bogra after it was destroyed in 1897 earthquake. Sayed Altaf Ali Chowdhury, Zamindar of Bogra and zamindar of Kakinar were formidable among the patron to set up library.⁸⁸ Barisal Public Library improved due to the initiative of its president S.M. Usman, C.S.P., and the then the District Magistrate.⁸⁹

Noakhali Public Library was astringent and bearer of political excitement during the period. Khilafat, Non-Co-operation, Pakistan movement and programme of Muslim League were chalked out with in activities of library by the active initiative of Proficient sons of Noakhali, Haji Abdur Rashid Khan, Muhammad Ulya Hafeji

Hujur Debon, Khan Bahadur Abdul Gaffar, Habibullah Bahar, Samchun Nahar Mahamud, Abdul Majid, Abdul Malek Ukil, Sahid Najibs etc.⁹⁰

Mannad Dad Khan Dewan of Haybatnagar set up a good library in 1920 which is existing as Kishoreganj club. Eminent educationists Riajuddin Ahmed established Riajul Islam Library in 1924 which still exists somehow. In early 1930, the then second officer of Kishoreganj sub division established Muslim Institute. Later this Muslim Institute transformed into sub-divisional Public library and started its journey in new form under the assiduity of the then sub divisional officer of Kishoreganj Janab A.K.Chowdhury. Significant feature of the Public libraries and its Museum in first floor which started under the assiduity of M.A. Sayed.⁹¹

Shah Makdum Institute Public Library is one of the old and familiar libraries in Rajshahi. It is modified name of ‘Anjuman -I-Himayet-I-Islam’ and ‘Muslim Club, was set up to preach and spread mainly Muslim community related social, worldly, cultural and religious knowledge.⁹²

Reformation of Victoria Club to a full-fledged Victoria Library in Natore was possible due to the active initiative of the then SDO, Janab A H A Sadiquil Haque and additional SDO, Janab Sahidullah Miya and Saifuddin Sardar.⁹³ Panihar Public Library in Rajsahi district established in 1945 under the assiduity of SK Enayetullah, teacher of Panihar Primary school.⁹⁴

Khaja Najimuddin Muslim Hall and Public Library formerly familiar as, Muslim Pathagar was founded at a time when no institution of education and culture of Muslim community were in the district town of Dinajpur. In 1933, Janab Khaja Najimuddin, the then education minister of undivided Bengal was laid its foundation stone. So, the library was named by his name.⁹⁵ Kusthia Public Library had been gratified by the attachment of Muslim writers and scholars, Sk Jamiruddin, Munsif Asgar Hussain and Munsif Fasihuddin, Sayad Abdul Kuddus Rumi, Mir Musaraf Hussain etc.⁹⁶

Bangiya Muslim Satya Samity with its literary organ and library had continued for years. At that time, political and social condition of country had rapidly changed. Mujafar Ahmad was busy to party work as founder of Communist Party and imprisoned many times. Najrul was busy to editorial as well as literary work. In 1942, he attacked in paralysis and divided power of understanding. In 1946, daily

works of society was hampered and its library was seriously damaged and became deadlock due to riot. In 1950, social welfare workers of the locality tried to receive library under the leadership of Abul Hasand resolved to name it as Najrul Pathagar to memorize contribution of poet Najrul Islam.⁹⁷ Saiyad Amir Ali Library established at Mominpur area of Middle Calcutta during Civil Disobedience movement during 1929. Mass literacy and different mass mobilizing programmes used to hold in the library. Dr. P.Jha, Abul Kalam and Muhammad Jamal under the attachment of young Muslim Association started the library with the help of common people of the locality. It is reported that, the library started with 45 different types of documents in Bengali, English and Urdu language and 14 members which augmented to 155 collections and 25 users in 1947.⁹⁸

Maulabi Shajahan Fajlul Haque, Majahar Hussain, Samsuddin Miya Iyar Muhammad, Hussain Miya, Masiruddin Pandit, Muhammad Isahak were established Gayesbari Youngmen's library in 1930 in Malda with the help of common people of the locality. It was first started in the drawing room of Belal Ali under the active effort of Maulavi Sabarak Ali. In 1939, it had purchased 1.5 decimal plots from the donated fund of common people. It is found from the library record that 25 books had collected and 12 members had attached to the library in its initial period which had augmented to 37 books and 26 members in 1947. Poet Samsuddin had visited and praised the library in 1934. In 1959, the library had got affiliation from the government. 904 members and 9230 books on different subjects are found as the holding of the library.⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰

Enayetpur Public Library in Malda was established in 1937 on the donated land of Sayed Ali. Mir Masharaf Hussain, Sk. Rayamattulla, Social workers and Sk. Alauddin, teacher of High School was the organizer of the library. Formerly it was existed as Anayet Union Library and Club. Later the Club was discontinued, only library had been running since its inception. It is found from the library records that it started with 15 books and 6 members which stood to 27 and 11 both in books and members respectively in 1947. Mass literacy programmes were regularly performed with the help of radio speech, news and newspaper reading, books

reading etc. the library has able to collect 6500 books and 590 members till the present. Community information services are presided with the help of computer application.¹⁰¹

Samsujoha Jakia Public Library was established at district head quarter at Suri in Birbhum in 1938. It was a sign of progressive outlook of Samsujoha to organize a public library in the land of Jia- ul- Madrasa in the name of his wife when Muslim women used to keep away from education and Muslims were lagging to achieve modern education. Gorachand Miana, Satyajil Chatterjee, Sk. Kalu, Ahmed Raja, Muhammad Jan Ali, Muktipada Mandal, Ajijul Rahman, Edd's Ali Hussain, Abdus Salem, Ashis Banerjee, Sk Jamaluddin, Mujibar Rahman and others had also actively engaged to organize the library.

It is found that the library had started with 125 gifted books and 45 members in 1938 which augmented to 181 collections and 62 members in 1947. At present, it has able to collect 700 books and 300 members in the library. The library received government's affiliation in the year 1986. The library had been performing different mass mobilization activities as a part of its extension programme.¹⁰² Biswanath Ghosh, Satyanarayan Nandi, Pravat Mukherjee, Irfan Sekh and Common people of the locality collected books as gift to Sonarundi Banwarilal Rabindra Pathagar in Murshidabad.¹⁰³

In 1923-24, Muslim Library was established at Kadamtala in Jalpaiguri. First it was set up in a part of the house of the Madrasa and first librarian was Maulavi Nur Ahmad, teacher of Fanindra Dev Vidyalaya. After few years, it was transferred to the house near Janab Enamul Hussain. Maqbul Hussain was then its librarian. The library had closed after independence.¹⁰⁴

We have found the name of Mir Najir Ali as a donour of Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar. Plot of the library and its adjunct pond was in ownership of Mir Nazir Ali. In 1852, he donated it to the Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar. Abdul Fajul Karim Mandal also donated 1.50-acre land and money to construct building of the Bainchi Kashipati Smriti Pathagar.¹⁰⁵ Sk Kalu of Raniganj is found as the founder member of Raniganj Public library. We found some Muslim gentleman as administrative post of the library. A.M. Abdur Rahaman along with Surendra Nath

Bandopadhyay, Narendra Nath Sen was the president of Taltola Public Library from 1882 to 1919.¹⁰⁶

Mujaffar Ahmed is seen frequently visited to Ariadaha Association Library and Literary Club. Secretly with Marxist literature and per sued to the common men to organize anti-imperialistic oppression. Muslims contribution not only confined to donation to the library. They often delivered their honorary services to the library. The then record keeper of Jalpaiguri District, Din Ali Ahmad was first honorary librarian of Radhika Library.¹⁰⁷

Muslim administrators were also eager to offer their patronage to the development of the library. District Magistrate of Hooghly, Khan Bahadur Haji Kasimuddin Mollah is seen attached to Garalgacha Public Library, Hooghly. A.H. Ahmed, S.D.O of Dakshin Dinajpur is found attended inauguration function of Zella Granthagar, Balurghat. Prominent Muslim personalities are found as donors of the library. Such, as, Md. Ibrahim Chowdhury, Ajj Md. Saha, Abdul Hakim Saha, Khatemi Saifuddin Chowdhury, Baharuddin Chowdhury, Samsul Haque Chowdhury, Majiruddin Chowdhury, Said Kutub Ali Shah Fakir etc.¹⁰⁸

Observation

During Colonial period, Public libraries were established in towns and villages in Bengal by the active initiation of common people. Some circulating libraries are found established and rendered service under the assiduity of Europeans. Fort William College libraries and Calcutta Public Library were mainly organized by the Europeans. They were also found as patron of many public libraries in cities and villages in Bengal. James Long is memorable as a founder of many libraries in Bengal and compilation of bibliographies. Literacy societies, academic libraries, reading rooms or clubs were established in Calcutta during this period. Libraries of Asiatic society, Calcutta Library Society, Calcutta School Book Society, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad were pioneers to form reading habit of people and library culture of Bengal for future generation.

Women and Muslim emancipation are observed in the organization of libraries. Women are found donor and reader of libraries in spite of their low literacy rate. Despite barriers, like, boycott of English education and religious bigotry a good

number of Muslim was progressive to set up educational institutions and libraries in Colonial Bengal to spread education and library orientation to common people.

The libraries in initial stage were set up to create reading awareness among people. Emigrants in Calcutta had various tastes and responsibilities, from trade to administration. Reading for pleasure was not in idea of anyone except scholars or academics. Emigrants fulfil their need of social intercourse by meeting, week-end tour etc. It is amazing the foresight of early pioneers of library development to organize libraries where literacy rate was low, transport, printing and publishing system was not developed. It is also matter of conjecture that how much troublesome it was to orient common people to library by preaching utility of library. Moreover, it is unknown if they had at all any experience of library organization. So, an amateurish trend was perceived in organization of early libraries. However, in spite of this amateurish effort, concept of library was filtered from European community to Indian community.

Early pioneers' effort was praise-worthy for two reasons, one, creating concept reading for pleasure, two, set up formal organization, like library. Including Adam, Europeans were also patron of many libraries. From John Andrews to Calcutta Public Library, the journey was not smooth, but it was certainly a good beginning of new enterprise. Effort of John Andrews was personal, effort of Calcutta Library Society, School Book Society; Calcutta Public Library etc. were joint venture. These joint ventures were primary condition to transform libraries to public institution in later period. As a result, women and people from minority community like, Mahamedan were organizer and reader of public libraries. In such a way, early pioneers effort stirred the consciousness of people of Bengal that good number public libraries were started in districts and villages in later period.

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42. Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar Secretarial Report, Sesquicentennial Volume, 2003, pp.18-19, A Formal discussion was held on dated- 05.09.2014 with Asit Mahapatra, aged 56, Secretary of Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar, Councillor, Midnapore Municipality, Kirtide Bakshi, aged 59, President of the Library, Primary Teacher, Pankaj Roy, Library-in-Charge, on account of library; In 1853, Mr Rickett's visited the library and submitted report to the government.

He wrote, “I must not omit to take mention of the Midnapore Public Library, for I think it affords an example which might be followed with much advantage at all large stations.”

43. Krishnagar Public Library Catalogue, Kajal Mitra: Krishnagar Public Library Ekaler Anushandhan in 150th Souvenir, 2006, p.212-14, Interview with Aninda Chatterjee aged 50, School Teacher, Secretary of the Library, Akulananda Bandopadhyay aged 84, Former Professor, Shantipur College, President of the Library, Rabindranath Biswas, Librarian, Sanjit Dutta, Library Assistant dated- 31.05.2016.

44. A Formal discussion was held with Ramaprasad Banerjee, Secretary of the Konnagar Public Library, aged 70 and Parth Banerjee, Librarian with the help of Accession Register and related files dated- 01.04.2015, Govinda Chattapadhyay: Sardha Satabarsher Granthagar in Sesquicentennial Souvenir.2008. pp.16-19; Abdul Gaffar, Librarian, share information on past account of the Shreerampur Public Library & Mutual Improvement dated 19.03.2015, Shreerampur Public Library & Mutual Improvement Catalogue, Debiprasad Dasgupta: Amader Granthagar Atit o Bartaman. 125th Souvenir Volume, 1997, pp.4-8; Asit Bandopadhyay, Howrah Shaharer Itibrittya, Vol.II., Howrah Zella Itihas pranayan, Unnayan O Smarak Samity, pp.106-112.

45. The Ninth Annual Report of Beadon Square Literary Club and Chaitanya Library ,1898 A.D.

46. For accounts of Bharati Parishad, Cotton Library and Bhabanipur Institute, book entitled Bangladesher Granthagar by Krishnamoy Bhattacharya, Vol. I, Calcutta, Deb Dutta & Co. 1957, pp.53- 63 found valuable; Bhadreswar Barik, aged 56, Telephone Ex Change Officer, Dhanapati Seth, aged 65, Ex Serviceman, Hind Motor, Satya Kinkar Ghosh, aged 62, Common People, Prabir Saha, D.C.B. (Librarian) shared an excellent account of Sripur Kalyan Samity library in dated 16.04.2015; Sripur Kalyan Samity Catalogue, Secretarial Report, Sripur Kalyan Samity, Centenary Volume.1990, pp.19-21.

47. Hazra, Niradbaran. Pathagar Hisabe Rammohun Library, Kolkata: Itihaser Dinlipi, Kolkata: Paschim Banga Raya Pustak Parishad, 1995, pp.62; Sengupta, Sujit Kumar. Kaler Prahari: Rammohun Library and interview with Shankar

Bhattacharya, General Secretary, dated 5.01.2016; Krishnamoy Bhatteerjee, Bangla Desher Granthager. 1952.

48. Secretarial Report, Contai Book Fair Volume, 1985,pp.4, Interview with Sukumar Midya aged 78, Retired School Teacher, Carrier Advanced Guide in Charge of Library, Executive Committee Member, Ranjit Kumar Bera aged 82, Retired School Teacher, General Member, Arup Kr. Das aged 58, H.M. School Teacher, Committee Member, Prasanta Pramanik aged 65, writer, Goutam Kumar Pati, Librarian dated- 21.09.2014, Contai Club Mahakuma Granthagar Catalogue, Library File No. 1; Proceedings of the first meeting of the committee on 13.05.1905 available in courtesy of Contai Book fair Volume, 1985.

49. Swami Nityajogananda Hansbadhut, Jnanda Abadhut Missioner Agnibhut Pratisthangulir Sanskhipta Bibaran, pp.21; Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Nabadwip Adarsha Pathagar, pp.71 ; Nabadwip Sanskrita charchar Itihas, p.38 ; Mrityunjoy Mandal, Nabadwiper Itibrittya, 2013, Days Publishing, Kolkata, pp.275-77.

50. Saptam Edward Memorial Hall Catalogue, Arun Mukhopadhyay. Saptam Edward Memorial Prachin Granthagar, Saptahik Bartaman, 29 Dec. 2007, pp.50, Interview with Kanoj Ballav Goswami, Assistant Head Master, Member of the Library, Pabitra Bhusan Sarkar, 70, Retired School Teacher, Member of the Library, Jiban Rakshit, Librarian of the Saptam Edward Memorial Hall Library, dated- 04.02.2016.

51. Garal Gacha public library Catalogue; Simlai, Dipen Kumar. Satabarsher Mukute Garalgacha Public Library, Centenary Volume, 2013, pp.77-79, Subhadip Chatterjee, aged 42, Secretary of the library, Asit Ranjan Roy, aged 70, President, Ex Govt. Officer, Food Dept., Rabindranath Jati, aged 65, Committee Member reported account of the Garal Gacha public library dated- 22.4.2015; We have found another local administrator as patron of library. F.B. Bradley Bart, the district magistrate of Hooghly visited the Garalgacha public library and put up good comment on the library. "I visited the Garalgacha public library and was met by the president, Babu Sashibhusan Mukherjee and many others interested in it. Khan Bahadur Haji Kasimuddin Mollah also meet with me. I am very glad to find so much interest taken in it. There are 95 subscribers and the number of books is 1087.

It is housed in a good pucca building and I trust it will continue to prosper and exert a good influence on the locality. I wish it all success”.

52. Bandopadhyay, Asit. Howrah Saharer Itibrittya. Vol. 2. Howrah Zella Itihas Pranayan, Unnayan o Smarak Samity, 1995, pp.131-132.

53. Bandopadhyay, *Ibid.* pp.125-27.

54. Mukhopadhyay, Pravat Kumar. Bharater Jatiya Andolan, Grantham, Kolkata, pp.125-126.

55. Dutta, Bhupendra Nath. Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, pp.7.

56. Mukhopadhyay, *op.cit.* pp.37, 57.

57. Majumdar, R.C. Bangla Desher Itihas, Vol.4., General Publishers, Kolkata, 1975, pp.550 ; R.C. Majumdar et al, An Advanced History of India, Mac Millan, Madras, 1978,pp.874-875.

58. Majumdar, *Ibid.* pp.529.

59. Calcutta Journal, 6th April 1819.

60. Roy, Arun. Bengal Library Association, Library Movement in India, Granthagar, Calcutta, B L A, 1989, pp.149-152.

61. Kolet, S.D. The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy, (*edit.*) by D.K. Biswas and P.C. Ganguly, Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Kolkata, 3rd (*edit.*), 1962, pp.460; In 1817, Calcutta School Book Society was established. It had a library too. Raja Rammohun Roy was closely related to the society. He was too interested to the library. In a letter in 11.10.1823 to Lord Amherst on western education, he expected that “... and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.”

62. Kolet, S.D. *Ibid.* pp.460; So, Rammohun felt the need of all equipped library in the educational institutions side by side introduction of modern education. He also introduced scientific management in his aided library of Unitarian Society. Mr. Adam was its supervisor. He regularly catalogued the books of the library. In a letter to J.B. Osteen of the Bristol in England on 07.02.1827, he wrote, “... I am

happy to inform you that books which you kindly presented me which were deservedly placed in our library, under the care of Rev. Mr. Adam.”

63. Calcutta School Book Society, 11th Report- President’s Address, 30th April, 1836, pp.7 ;‘Hitherto this reasonable expectation has not been gratified and it is much to be regretted that most who have received an English education, instead of leading the van among the best writers in their own language are generally in the rear, far behind those whom they consider their inferiors. After studying English, some of them have deemed Bengali and Hindustani contemptible and unworthy of their notice and have considered no great disgrace, not to be able to speak or write a sentence correctly in either of them. The welfare of India requires that this sentiment should be abandoned and one of an opposite nature embraced, viz., that whatever acquaintance anyone may have with foreign tongues, it should be considered a disgrace if he cannot write his own correctly. The friends of education ought to inquire, whether sufficient time and attention are bestowed upon their mother-longue and whether it is sufficiently impressed upon them that the object of their education is not so much to make them authors in English as good writers in their own language.’

64. Calcutta School Book Society Annual Reports, 1840-1858.

65. The Bengal Harkara, 9th December, 1844.

66. Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library and Information collected from an article of Rama Kanta Chakraborty who served as Secretary and President respectively to the Sahitya Parishad. quoted in Unish Satake Banglar Granthagar o Granthagarik in Unish Sataker Bangla, (*edit.*) by Alok Roy and Gautam Neogi, Parul Prakashani, Kokata, 2012, pp.157.

67. Natrajan, D. (*edit.*) Extracts from the All India Census Reports on Literacy. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, 1971, Table D., pp.18.

68. Long, Rev. James. Report on the Native Press in Bengal, Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, No. XXXII. 1859, pp. ix; Yet, James Long, an esteemed civil servant in the Bengal Presidency commissioned to write a report on the culture of print in India, documents: ‘Native females are very intelligent, many are now learning to read from their husbands and brothers’.

69. Long, Rev. James. *Ibid.*, 1859, pp. xv; According to Long, even for those who could not read, print was still available: ‘With Orientals, it is a common practice to be read to, and hence numbers who cannot read themselves listen to those who can ... We know a native who was for years employed by a rich Babu to read 2 hours daily to 40 to 50 females in his house . . . women sometimes sit in a circle round a woman which reads a book to them.
70. Long, *Ibid.*
71. Karlekar, Malavika. *Voices from Within Early Personal Narratives of Bengali Women*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991; Vir Bharat Talwar, *Feminist Consciousness in Women’s Journals in Hindi: 1910-1920. Recasting Women. Essays in Colonial History*. Eds. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid. pp.201-32. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and post-Colonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; Priya Joshi, *op.cit.*, pp. 287-88.
72. Ariadaha Association Library and Literary Club Catalogue, Administrator’s views, Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Kaler Jatray in 112nd yearly festive souvenir, 26th February, 1983, pp.1-5; Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar, Secretarial Report, *op.cit.*, pp.18-19.
73. Bagbazar Reading Library Catalogue, Nishith De, Bagbazar Reading Library Itikatha, Golden Jubilee Volume, 1983, pp.35; Dipak Bhattacharya (edt.) *Bagbazar Reading Library Smarak Grantha*, 2008, pp.11, Interview with Anamika Pal Chowdhury, Librarian dated 17.10.2015; Report of the Bagbazar Reading Library for the 19th Year Ending on June 1902, 1903, K.P. Mukherjee & Co., Calcutta. Gaus Miya, Dr. Sk. Bagerhuter Itiash, Vol. I., Bilayet Hussain Foundation, Bagerhut, 2001, pp.287-289.
74. Catalogue of Kumudbasini Pathagar; The First Annual Report of Beadon Square Literary Club and Chaitanya Library 1889 A.D.
75. Devi, Ashapura. ‘My childhood memory allied with Chaitanya Library. It was impossible for my mother to select books to go to library. By browsing catalogue books used to collect by the sons of the family. For mother’s sake, we also became reader of Chaitanya Library’. Smriti Charana and Ananda Bagchi,

Abachetan Chaitanya Library, Chaitanya Library and Bidon Square Literary Club, Golden Jubilee Volume, Kolkata, 1988-89.

76. Mukhopadhyay, Arun. Ei Banglar Satayu Granthagar, Punascha, Calcutta, 2003, pp. 155.

77. Arun. *Ibid.* Report based on discussion with Bhaskar Pal, Librarian with supporting papers on history of library dated 19.03.2015, Mahesh Public Library Catalogue, Reminiscence amanuensis by Somnath Mukhopadhyay, *Ibid.* pp.73; Girija Shankar Mukherjee: Granthagar Prasange Amader Bhumika, Quasquicentennial Volume.1995, pp.3-8.

78. Contai Club Mahakuma Granthagar, Secretarial Report, Contai Book Fair Volume, *op.cit.*, pp.4.

79. Nabadwip Sadharan Granthagar, *op.cit.*, Centenary Souvenir, pp.13-22.

80. Hemchandra Pathagar Catalogue; Interview with Pradip Ghosh, Secretary of the Hemchandra Pathagar , Swapan Bandopadhyay aged 72, Writer and member of the Library, Pradip Dasgupta, Librarian of the Library dated- 30.08.2016, Madhuri Das, Satabarsher Gauravmoy Aloy Hemchandra Pathagar, Amader Pathagar, Pathagarer Sanskriti Pampara, Smritir Chenra Pata , Hemchandra Pathagar executive committee, 2013, Kolkata, pp.6-30 ; Burikhali Public Library Catalogue, Secretarial Report; Interview with Md. Bulbul, Library- in - Charge dated- 26.02.2015.

81. Bainan Public Library Catalogue; Interview with Gopinath Neogi aged 81, National Teacher, Secretary of the Library, Kazi Jamirul Haque aged 62, Retired Professor, Vocational Education, Kalyani University, Altab Hussain Mallick aged 55, Social Worker, Committee Member of the Library and Dipankar Sahu, J.L.A of the Library dated 13.02.2015 ; Interview with Ashok Chandra Pandit aged 89, Retired Head Master Champatala High School, Ex Library Administrator, Palash Kusum Das aged 75, Secretary of the Library, Haradhan Nandi aged 85, President of the Library, Subhas Chandra Bhunia aged 75, General Member of the Library, Amalesh Mishra aged 85, Retired Head Master, Ex Secretary of the Library and Jyanta Panda, Librarian dated- 20.09.2015, Mirzapur Satsahitya Sammilani Library Catalogue, Jayanta Panda, Mirzapur Satsahitya Sammilani Library, Nimai Haldar,

B.D.O., (edt.) ‘Bibartaner Dishay Deshpran Block’ Souvenir, 2004, pp.104 ; Anandapur Public Library Catalogue, Kamakha Ranjan Dutta aged 67, Retired P.W.D. Engineer and Secretary of the Library, Asim Kumar Khatua aged 67, President of the Library, Retired Professor of Panskura Banamali College, Dipak Kumar Bag aged 67, Library Committee Member and Debashis Roy aged 64, Former Anandapur Panchayet Pradhan and Library Committee Member dated- 09.07.2014 ; Ananda Library Catalogue, Interview with Tapan Kumar Dutta aged 68, Social Worker and Secretary of the Library, Radhashyam Ghosal, Librarian of the Library dated- 02.12.2014.

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83. Sonarundi Banawaribad Rabindra Pathagar Catalogue; Interview with Ganesh Chandra Das, Secretary of the Library, Irfan Sekh aged 78, Businessman and Member of the Library, Rashbehari Das, Junior Library Assistant, dated- 25.04.16; Narayangarh Sadharan Pathagar Catalogue; Interview with Gurupada Tung, Social Worker, Secretary of the Library, Nakul Dolai, Junior Library Assistant dated- 12.09.2014.

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