

Conclusion

It is assumed that first source of writing was clay tablet, which was created according to the need of men. In that age, it was necessary to preserve it in a place and in a process, whatever its shape or class. It was necessary to find out certain tablet within numerous according to particular need. As result, the need of individual and institution were inevitable to collect and process the written materials. These collections might be personal or of social institutions. It was the early history of library and librarians.

Thereafter so many changes have been appeared according rule of evolution. Writing materials, methods, alphabets, and languages has got multifarious development. Writing document has also enriched in both quantitative and qualitative. Written document of men's knowledge and wisdom has increased in incredible rate. It has to be collected and preserved simultaneously. These instances of men's knowledge, wisdom, cognitions were glorious sources of human culture. Library and librarians are inevitable to collect process and disseminate them appropriately. So, libraries were closely attached with human culture and civilization in the past thousand years. It has an inseparable attachment with social and cultural history of men.

Public library is said an institution to spread education by which people can build their fate and become known as good citizen of a country. It is also said that, it is an institution for and by society to fulfil social objectives by providing life- long self- education. That's why, it bears some characteristics such as, it run from public fund, every people of the society, irrespective of caste, creed, sex, age, nationality, language and social status can uses the public library without any entry fee, it is organized as an auxiliary educational institution with a view to providing life- long self- education, it preserves documents to provide bias- free information in different subjects. Every country has its own history of public library with influential leaders. Monarchs, wealthy people, and philanthropists have all made a contribution to society in the form of public library development. India is no exception. Libraries

were established in ancient and medieval India mainly by the patronage extended by emperors, major capitalists, and scholars.

But the accessibility of libraries for common mass had to wait until the British Raj. 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 men with which the whole of Europe was imbued at that time. They could not 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.

During colonial period, public libraries were established in towns and villages in Bengal by the active initiative of common people. Some circulating libraries are found established and rendered service under the assiduity of Europeans. These libraries, although mainly originating with the book trade and despite their proprietary and commercial nature, had the characteristics of public libraries. They started the work book- awareness as well as library- awareness by arranging book-reading, facilitating reading room, lending system, book display etc. In 1770, John Andrews started the work as pioneer and inspired others. Calcutta Library Society had gone ahead by giving scope to public as proprietor and share- holder.

These libraries were the product of the period. Naturally, it had worked within limitations. They became insular or sometime closed due to want of mass participation and mass involvement. Rate of mass literacy was discouraging. So, they were not penetrating to the mass. Still, they sowed seed of awareness of reading as well as library awareness. Here was their success. A lesson was learnt from the commercial, circulating libraries of initial period that without mass participation and mass involvement, libraries could not be survived for long times. Bearing the experience, public admittance was arrangement in Fort William College library and public was found as organizer and reader in Calcutta Public Library. A library was found first by attaching 'Public' appellation in case of Calcutta Public Library. It was well- organized, had a fore sight of future development. It had able to create a readers' community in its about sixty-five years of service. Library of Asiatic Society had fulfilled the needs of scholars and

academics and Calcutta Public Library begun to meet up need of common people in general. It was manifested as an exemplary institution by which society recognized the relevance of library as a unit of culture. In districts of undivided Bengal, gradually public libraries were started by the landlords, intellectuals and middle class educated people after the organization of Calcutta Public Library. The characteristic was achieved from number of cultural forces.

The most important of these forces were the printing press and printed books, expansion of education as well as western education and the idea that the library was a social organisation. Apart from common people, gradually European community, women of all sections, members of Muslim community also forwarded to set up public libraries in Bengal. Contribution of James Long to set up schools and public libraries in the period has demanded special attention.

In nineteenth century, there were 66 Public Libraries in Bengal, present area of West Bengal, such as, 18 in Calcutta, 10 in Howrah and undivided 24 Parganas in each, 9 in Hooghly, 2 in Nadia, Midnapur, Bankura and Rajshahi in each and one each in Burdwan, Murshidabad, Jessore, Bagura, Rangpur, Barishal, Dacca, Sirajganj, Coomilya, Pabna and Khulna. 11 Libraries are found established in East Bengal present Bangladesh in 19th century. It is noteworthy that four libraries, Jessore, Bagura, Barishal and Rangpur Public Libraries in East Bengal were established in 1854 whereas only one library, Hooghly Public Library established in this part of Bengal i.e. present West Bengal in that year.

Special feature of the Public Libraries during 1800-1899 were as follows, most of the libraries during the period were the product of voluntary effort. Subscription from patron was only source of maintenance of libraries. Occasionally charitable organisations, benevolence people donated money, books, furniture etc. Local self-government had no compulsion to provide financial assistance to the libraries, still they provided meagre amount some times.

Most of the libraries were settled in rented house. Sometime, they had received shelter in a part of lordly mansion of the eminent persons of the locality or received a piece of land. Members of the managing committee of the library elected among readers. Representatives would come from the educationists, religious sects,

language group and different professions. Public libraries had rules relating to subscription rate, issue and return of books and periodicals, library hours etc.

There was a scanty book in vernacular in comparison to books in English language as preference of educated class to English, low rate of writing and publication of books in vernacular language.

Libraries were established before introduction of library science training programme. As a result, technical work of libraries during the period was not systematic. Library staff were low paid and library meant a room or building where books and periodicals were lent and returned. Some libraries are found attached with reading room and other with separate.

In addition to create reading awareness and library culture among masses, establishment of libraries in these periods created a market publishing and selling of books. The English publishers were in advantageous position as English books were purchased more than vernacular books and these books were purchased in England.

All libraries during the period lasted for long. Some of them had stable condition even today. A continuous increase in their reading materials, subscribers, issue and returns of library documents has been observed. As a whole a moderate rate of growth and development is found during the period.

Since approach of twentieth century public libraries played vital role in literacy campaign as well as all round campaign for better living condition. Life centric and craft centric education to adult person and obviously students' welfare was provided from public libraries. Magic- lantern lectures on better farming, family planning, proper maintenance of village sanitation and general health etc. imparted from public libraries. Adult education for both men and women has been organized to spread mass education. Public libraries in villages and towns, libraries attached with societies and associations, mobile centres for supplying books have been organized to form socially and culturally prosperous society.

Public libraries were appearing as strong media to preach nationalism by their collection and services in addition to their literacy campaign from beginning of the twentieth century. Readers were respectful on their own history and culture. Self-

confidence, self-respect, and patriotism increased among them. From the last part of the nineteenth century political disturbance and plundering gradually increased in Bengal. In different areas of cities and villages different societies and associations organized in the name of gymnasium, library or religious association. Their object was to form group and increase power. Politicians used to attach with these societies and performed their activities with these organization. These patriotic societies-maintained libraries with collection of books to increase member's interest in radical movements and revolution. Some of books in their collection were already banned by the Government. Apart from the familiar samities, public libraries were also performed duties of samities. Readers' used to study of history of national as well as abroad and religious books for their mental and spiritual development similar to samities. Libraries have to rendered social welfare activities and organized physical exercises following directives of samities. From the decadal development of public libraries during 1901 to 1940 a significant gradual growth and development has been found to meet the demand of time. In Bengal, 81 public libraries were established in 1901 to 1910, followed by 184 in 1911 to 1920. Increasing its strength, 268 public libraries established in 1921-1930 followed by 571 in 1931 to 1940. Comply with the social and political events 133 public libraries were established during 1941 to 1947. Significant incidents are found as in former East Bengal, 47 public libraries established in Bakherganj followed by 46 in Dinajpur and 31 in each in Mymensingh and Pabna.

Both Memory of the World Programme in 1992 and National Knowledge Commission (2006) spelled out their objectives to preserve cultural heritage as one of the object of public library. Colonial public libraries in Bengal are found as preserver and disseminator of cultural heritage mainly in the form of documents, such as, manuscripts, old rare books in different subject, newspaper, periodicals and reports, local histories, patriotic histories etc. which bears the glorious history of past. Collection of patriotic histories was an important side of colonial public libraries. It included books, newspapers, leaflets, posters, manifestos, pictures. Most of the documents were notified as proscribed documents and British police raided time and again in search of banned documents. It is reported that readers were ravenously used banned documents before their proscription. Issue register of the library used to seize and banned documents were frequently taken off. It is

assumed that readers were interested to use these documents. It is also found from the Annual Reports of the Calcutta Public Library, issue- return statistics of Bagbazar Reading Library that readers were more interested to use fiction followed by poem and drama, history, Biography, science etc. But in case of Rajshahi Sadharan Granthagar readers preference were more in drama followed by poem and drama, history, Biography, science etc.

Public libraries were manifested as centre to spread of education when society suffers from low literacy. It is found that, book and newspaper reading, study circle, exhibition, lecture with magic lantern, opera show including literacy campaign used to perform from library to educate illiterate and neo literates. Jatra, kathakata, panchali, kabigan, kirtan and folk- songs, like, jhumur, tusu, bhadu, bhatialy etc. used to perform in library premises to facilitate people to healthy recreation. These were very often appeared as weapon to preach swadeshi messages too. Members used to lend books from door to door or to their office colleagues to meet their reading need. Women were benefitted much in the system as they have little scope or time to visit library. The system was the forerunner of present mobile library. Welfare of women, child, labour class included in purview of its social activities in due course. Gradually public libraries were engaging to village construction work and extended their welfare activities by arranging relief camp at the time of war, cyclone, flood famine and religious festivals. Libraries distributed medicine during plague, cholera and malaria which were inseparably related to Bengal.

The libraries established in the exciting time of swadeshi movement were precarious existence. Many libraries of that time closed due to police interference. Many collected books were notified as proscribed. This trend was continued till early forties of the twentieth century. So, the motivation of the organizer of libraries in second part of the nineteenth century was different to the motivation of the same in early part of the twentieth century.

During former period if the aim of the libraries was to spread education then in later it was to spread nationalistic education. Since first decade of the twentieth century library collection comprised books on regional language.

Since second decade of the twentieth century, patrons of public libraries felt necessity of organized and effective Public library system in Bengal. The

realization or awareness came from the experience of library management in former decades. They realized that, henceforth public libraries would not be used to spread mass education; rather it would be manifested as self-sufficient important social component which will influence other social factors to build society. So, organization and administration of such important social factor, like public library could not be entrusted to some influential persons or groups, rather a forum would be needed to achieve professional expertise and co-ordination to the administration.

In the second part of nineteenth century and early part of twentieth century, effort was made to form Library Association to organize library awareness in the country due to rapid advancement of public library system especially in Bengal. In the meantime, initiation was started to set up library association in British India to organize library awareness. Andhra Pradesh Library Association was established in 1914. Under its effort, All India Public Library Conference was held in Madras in 1919 and All India Public Library Association was established by its decision. Bengal Library Association was established in an extraordinary phase of evolution of Public Libraries in nineteenth century in undivided Bengal. It is found that public library system was introduced in undivided Bengal in nineteenth century. Its development and extension were happened under the inspiration of freedom movement. In 1925, Bengal Library Association was established to materialize the expectation of intelligentsia to spread mass education by founding public libraries. Educated persons of the then Bengal accepted the institution with full regard. The Association had played pivotal role to proclaim the endless importance of public library to spread education and knowledge. In its proclamation, it had able to justify that autonomous institutes, Government including rich people have some duties to establish, develop and expand public libraries. It had advocated for an act to develop libraries in Bengal like developed countries. It had proposed to set up libraries in the areas of union board and municipality areas. Its endless effort covered demand of sufficient financial assistance from Government, introduction of library science course for working library professionals, publication of literatures on library organization and administration etc. It was appeared as public institution though it was started in assiduity of educated peoples of Bengal.

Henceforth the struggle for establishment and development of public library services was converted, more or less, into a struggle for library law. In fact, since

early thirties, the Bengal Library Association was striving hard to enact a public library law for Bengal. Ceaseless efforts to achieve this goal were made. Some more time elapsed and finally, the state of West Bengal became the fifth state in India with library law in the year 1979. Present public library system of both West Bengal and Bangladesh are bearing inheritance of Colonial public library system in many aspects. Consequent upon implementation of the Act a massive change was noticed in respect to the development of public libraries in West Bengal.

After the enactment of the act in 1979, public libraries of all categories of the state have started functioning as government or government sponsored libraries. Public libraries in the state comprises a three-tire system, namely, i) District Library; ii) Sub- Divisional, Town Library and iii) Rural, Primary Unit, Area Library. Number of public libraries in the state, comprising all types of public libraries is 2474, with State Central Library at the apex, and consisting of 12 Government libraries and 2462 government sponsored libraries at different levels. In 1999, Community Library and Information Centre were set up in the Gram Panchayats having no government or government sponsored public libraries of any type. Till 2008-09, 319 such centres were set up.

A significant change was noticed in public library development in West Bengal after enactment of Public Library Act. The Government took charge to establish government sponsored public libraries in different districts, enhanced budgetary allocation for library services and arranged maintenance grants as well, organized book fairs at state and district level, allocated special grants for purchase of books for children, granted better pay and status for library personnel etc. As a result, people at every corner of the state became at least aware of the existence of public library in their locality, running mostly from public fund.

In spite of prospects, public libraries in West Bengal have confined their services mainly in lending and reading room services. They are yet in position to acquire sufficient audio- visual materials, television, films etc. Grants allotted to each category of public libraries in the state are viewed insufficient in comparison to spiralling prices of reading materials. Most public libraries in the state are found running extreme shortage of staff.

The Library Association of Bangladesh, the national association in the field of librarianship was established in 1956. Since its establishment, it has been continuously trying to develop the status of libraries, improve the status and service conditions of library professionals. People of modern Bangladesh have diversified education and information needs to be served by the public libraries. Public libraries in Bangladesh being non-profit organizations get less favour by the government and affluent people as well.

Long before the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, public libraries were set up in the country under the initiative of the government, though its rate of growth was slow. Three government public libraries were established in 1956, primarily under the patronage of the central government's social welfare programme in education sector and comply with the report of Mr. L.C. Key, library consultant of the government of Pakistan. They were central public library at Dhaka and two divisional public libraries at Khulna and Chittagonj.

Foundation stone of central public library, Dhaka was laid down in 5th February, 1954 at present Dhaka University library campus with 10040 books, which inaugurated in 22nd March, 1958. It was manifested as main centre to the growth and development of public library system in East Bengal as well as Pakistan.

Both government and non-government public library system are prevailed in Bangladesh. Non-government public library system was introduced in 1854, by the establishment of three public libraries, namely Bagura Public Library, Jessore Public Library, Rangpur Public Library and government public library system was introduced in 1958 by the inaugurator of Bangladesh central public library at Dhaka.

Government public libraries are run by the department of public library under the ministry of culture. There are sixty-eight government public libraries in the country in different categories, such as, one Bangladesh Central Public Library, five Divisional Central Public Library, fifty-eight District Library and four Branch Library.

Non- government public libraries do not follow any definite principle in their development and management as no authorized body has monitored them yet. There are so many causes behind the lack of definite, planning. As a result, it is

revealed from the Library Directory of Bangladesh National Book Centre that many non- government public libraries are dropped out immediately after set up. So, their numbers are decreased year after year instead of increase. Finally, there are 972 Non- government public libraries are running in Bangladesh.

Collection of non- government public libraries have been developed from the financial assistance of government, members and donation from local philanthropists. Most of the libraries in this category are financially weak, no certainty to survive for long time. Most of the libraries enlisted in the library Directory receive nominal financial grant yearly from the government. So, they have depended mainly on the donation of the philanthropists and subscription of members.

After fifth five-year plan, the Government of Bangladesh has taken three years rolling plan. Government has not yet taken six Five Years Plan. It has brought many reforms for the betterment of libraries in the country. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has already declared the year 2002 as a 'Book year' and the year of 2003 as a 'Library year'. It has created a tremendous impact on the development of library field. Library and Information professionals are encouraged a lot by this announcement, since it is the main aim of the present government to make overall development in the current status of libraries in the country in order to cope up with the environment for the 21st century. In order to extend the reader service government has decided to open the reading hall of the Central Public Library at Dhaka for 24 hours. So accordingly, Central Public Library, Dhaka has extended their service by keeping its reading hall open for the users for 24 hours from 26th July 2003 onwards. In spite of that some projects have been taken from 2003 for the development of library management and better services to the users, such as, application of Information Technology, Fax, Internet and e- mail etc. Apart from these, in order to secure and safeguard the library materials and monitor the library activities close circuit televisions are also invariably incorporated in libraries.

The significant feature of public library system is to provide free library services to people. The UNESCO declaration of Human rights states that it is birth right of every one to access freely to knowledge and wisdom containing in universe of subjects. Free access to accumulated and recorded knowledge not only manifested

perfection of people but also community as well as nation. If democracy depends upon spread of education and culture, then there is no contradiction to provide public libraries of countries the place of pride. Therefore, it is suggested the government of both West Bengal and Bangladesh should undertake proper steps to ensure free and all-round public services in their state and countries respectively to fulfil objectives of public library system.