

# Historical Evolution of Public Libraries Development in Colonial Bengal during Pre-Independence Period (1847-1947)

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## ABSTRACT

In the colonial period of Bengal, public libraries were founded in urban and rural areas at the behest of the local populace. Europeans founded and managed supplementary libraries. Colonial officials received an overwhelming number of petitions requesting their assistance in funding or establishing libraries. The majority of British organizers demonstrated their liberal inclinations and furthered the library's aim by enabling accessibility for individuals from all backgrounds. A cohort of twenty-four distinguished individuals implemented the library idea. The only Bengalis represented were Rasik Krishna Mallick, editor of 'Jnananeswan,' and Rasamay Dutta, secretary of Hindu College. Prominent British individuals comprised Marshman, editor of Samachar Darpan; Richardson, a lecturer at Hindu College; and Sir John Peter Grant. In this article, historical evolution of public libraries development in colonial Bengal during pre-independence period (1847-1947) has been discussed.

**Keywords:** Public, Libraries, Colonial, Bengal, Pre-Independence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Westerners introduced the notion of public libraries to India. Although British dominion in India was an anomaly, the principles of the common man were reflected in the literature and philosophy that the British brought to the subcontinent at the century's onset. They were unable to relinquish their English beliefs while in India. Although they did not establish public libraries in our nation, they served as an inspiration. The British attempted to replicate the subscription library model in Great Britain, resulting in the creation of circulation libraries in Bengal.

Europeans established early public libraries, including the Calcutta Public Library, the Fort William College Library, and circulating libraries. The significance of James Long during that period is apparent. Societies have significantly facilitated the sustenance of public library operations. In the nascent stages of public library organizations, women and Muslims were minority groups that significantly contributed. (Das, A. K., 2015) The research objective was to explore the historical evolution of public libraries development in colonial Bengal during pre-independence period (1847-1947).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The systematic approach of addressing a research issue through data collection, analysis, and inference from study findings is known as research methodology.

**Study Area:** Public libraries in colonial Bengal.

**Study Period:** Pre-independence period (1847-1947).

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>):** The public libraries influence in colonial Bengal related to development.

**Research Design:** Research design constitutes the framework of methodologies and strategies selected by a researcher to execute a study. Qualitative research design is a methodology that emphasizes the exploration and comprehension of complicated phenomena. In this research, qualitative research design was used.

**Secondary Data Source:** Secondary data source refers to previously obtained and recorded information by researchers that is not relevant to the current study issue. It is available as data gathered from various sources, including government publications, censuses, organizational internal records, books, journal articles, websites and reports, e-resources, etc. In this research, secondary data source was used.

**Methodology:** The research work based on the secondary data gathered from various sources, including government publications, censuses, organizational internal records, books, journal articles, websites and reports, e-resources, etc. which were enlisted in the bibliographic section. Also, qualitative research design also used for this study. The area wise historical information of public libraries in colonial Bengal during pre-independence period (1847-1947) were also chronicled.

**Tools:** The evolution of educational research has utilized historical research tools more extensively than any other research method. The historical technique of research is sometimes referred to as documentary research, as it utilizes historical documents and various sources. This is about the way of studying history that uses old records, papers, and artifacts to look at modern problems by looking at parts of past life and asking tough questions about what really happened based on what happened in the past. Using historical sources and methods to look at educational issues and come up with universal rules and generalizations can be thought of as historical research tools. Historical study involves the application of scientific inquiry methods to historical issues. It necessitates norms of a meticulous approach and ethos akin to those that define other forms of research. While all individuals possess a form of historical awareness by recalling past events, such recollections do not fulfil the standards of historical study. It must be regarded as a science and must meet certain requirements of excellence akin to other research methodologies. In this research, historical research tool was used.

### **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION TOWARDS PUBLIC LIBRARIES DEVELOPMENT IN COLONIAL BENGAL DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1847-1947):**

During the later part of the eighteenth century, Calcutta witnessed the formation of several circulating libraries, mostly to serve the recreational interests of Europeans. The inaugural English newspaper, the Bengal Gazette, documented that in 1770, an Englishman called John established a circulating library in the historic fort of Calcutta. Andruz, an individual from the same historical fortress, established a circulating library in 1780. On December 13, 1787, the Calcutta Gazette reported that Cock Maxwell and Company established a circulating library in Calcutta. Founded in 1798, the daily publication 'Bengal Harkara' established an extensive circulating library over its lengthy tenure. (Mandal, S., 2021)

In the early 1800s, Europeans founded several circulating libraries in Calcutta. We presume that certain firms would persist for an extended period. For instance, the circulating library located at 127 Dharmatala, created by bookseller T. In Britain, the establishment begun in 1819 by Greenway and Company and the one located at 127 Dharmatala, founded by H.G.C. Gulland. Weston, JJ Fury's circulating library at 87 Kashitola, and Canty & Company's Union Library at 28 Dharmatala are just a few examples of the numerous establishments in Britain. The primary element that facilitated the growth and prominence of circulating libraries was the rising population of Englishmen and other Europeans in Calcutta. The population of Europeans in Calcutta rose from 1,500 in 1750 to 12,200 in 1837. (Roy, P., 2021).

Book advertisements in Hickey's Gazette from 1780 included details such as title, author, dimensions, price, paper quality, and binding specifications. To enhance customer service, retailers swiftly recognized the need to establish circulating libraries alongside book sales. In the forthcoming year, Hickey's Gazette, Calcutta Gazette, and other contemporary newspapers will disseminate a report on circulation libraries. These allusions clearly indicate that the city's residents turned to books for amusement and education, ultimately resulting in the establishment of private subscription libraries.

The inaugural circulating library was established by John Andrews at the old fort in Calcutta in 1770, as reported by Hickey's Gazette. It has been established that a certain Mr. John established a library at the historic Calcutta fort; however, there is no evidence to suggest that it was founded as early as 1770. The elaborately designed bookplate at the British Museum demonstrates, through its link to John Andrews's circulating library from 1774, that he was the first inventor of the system in Calcutta. His designation as a "late librarian" in a Calcutta directory of British European commerce implies that he had no affiliation with the East India Company. In 1787, James Shakell proclaimed the establishment of the 'New Library' in the Calcutta Gazette. James Shakell ascended to partnership at the India Gazette following the abrupt demise of John Hay in March 1787, assuming control of Hay's commercial endeavors, which encompassed the sale of books and stationery. He simultaneously established a bookstore and a lending library. (Barman, M. & Lahkar, N., 2024)

Messrs. Cock, Maxwell, and Company acquired the libraries of Meres, Macdonald & Arnott, and Mr. Shekel in December 1787, subsequent to an announcement in the Calcutta Gazette regarding their new venture. The efforts of Meres, Cock, and Maxwell & Co. were praiseworthy as they expanded their operations beyond Calcutta to include populated areas like Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), Dinajpur (Bihar), and Berhampur (Bengal).

Corporate subscription libraries persisted in operation until the mid-1830s. The growing population of Englishmen in Calcutta required the establishment and upkeep of these libraries to satisfy their desire for recreational and entertainment resources.

During this period in Calcutta, proprietary libraries proliferated alongside libraries associated with educational institutions, literacy organizations, and reading rooms or clubs. In 1784, Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society to advance studies in the arts, sciences, literature, antiquities, and history of Asia. Since its establishment, the group has garnered an exceptional reputation among scholars. Following its establishment, the society received donations of books, documents, manuscripts, paintings, copper plates, and numerous other artifacts, in addition to an extensive collection of library resources and museum items. These endowments established the groundwork for the library's development and subsequently, the museum. Sir William Jones's former office once served as both the club's residence and library. The present location on Park Street in Calcutta was established after a second relocation. This society and its associated library prohibited Indian participation before 1830.

#### **Calcutta Public Library:**

The Calcutta Public Library was officially established on March 21, 1836, in the Grants' residence on Esplanade Row, Calcutta. The library subsequently moved to the former site of Fort William. Metcalf Hall, located on Strand Road, was the venue for the library's move in 1844 to honor Charles Metcalf. Sir John Peter Grant, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, chaired a conference convened on August 31st at the behest of Stock Whaler. During the assembly, Stock Whaler argued that the establishment of a public library would foster cultural affinity among the residents of Calcutta by offering a venue for discussions about books and other literary styles. The meeting unanimously decided to establish a public library in Calcutta for both reference and circulation purposes. The library must be sufficiently large to meet the literary needs of the entire community and accessible to individuals from all socioeconomic strata. The 'Jnananeswan' study requested public financing for the library's establishment.

Piyarichand Mitra succeeded Mr. Starchy, the former librarian who had resigned. His fame incited a surge of literary and intellectual engagement at the Calcutta library. Because of his position, Piyarichand was the managing committee's secretary. The trio of curators established a new committee. In addition to the primary committee, there existed two subordinate committees. The two subcommittees were the House Committee and the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee curated books and periodicals, while the House Committee managed the library's physical layout and associated resources. In 1873, the Library Council assumed responsibility from three distinct curatorial committees. The partners appointed the curators. The enlarged council permitted general members to vote, although partners and members retained their distinct duties. (Bhatt, R. K. & Kandhasamy, K., 2020)

The library primarily depended on share sales and monthly membership subscriptions for its sustenance. We will take standard contributions. Expenses consumed 8,631 of the library's 13,986 rupees in revenue during 1847 and 1848. Books are priced at 650 rupees, but periodicals are priced at 512 rupees. An amount of Rs. 2,710 has been allocated for employee compensation. Membership and revenue both experienced growth in 1857. In that year, the library allocated 5,018 rupees for books and 355 rupees for periodicals. The library allocated a budget of 5,469 rupees for employee remuneration. After a decade, it became apparent that the income had diminished substantially. The library's development and efficacy will primarily rest with its staff. They laboured diligently, and the library thrived in all aspects, despite having a limited staff and receiving minimal compensation.

In 1849, both the ability and efficacy of the personnel experienced an enhancement. Consequently, wage expenditure has diminished. By the conclusion of the Anglo-Indian, starchy librarian's tenure, the salary account had expended Rs 343. Under Piyarichand Mitra's leadership, the workforce decreased from 318 to 316. Starchy had previously received 200 rupees, while Piyarichand had received 120 rupees. The remuneration of the four evaluation librarians ranged from fifteen to thirty-six rupees. The clerk received eight rupees, the two guards received nine rupees, the three pankha pullers received four rupees, and the four Sarkers received six rupees. The cashier earned fourteen rupees. The annual pay expenditure amounted to \$4,224, with an estimated 30 employees in 1873. The workforce was insufficient relative to the scale of the project. The lending portion will commence operations at 9 a.m., although the reading space for newspapers will remain accessible throughout the day. until 0800 hours. Excluding members and stockholders, the library would provide complimentary access to students from low-income households.(Sarkar, R., 2023)

In 1899, during a visit to Metcalf Hall to establish a premier library in India's capital, Lord Curzon saw that the library's services were diminishing. Individuals rarely sought guidance from literature and newspapers. The negligent maintenance of the invaluable manuscripts fascinated Curzon. He obtained stockholder approval prior to expending 500 rupees to acquire the library, which he later integrated with the Imperial Library, founded in 1891 for government employees. Consequently, the Imperial Library at Metcalf Hall results from the amalgamation of two libraries.

#### **Reverend James Long and Public Library:**

In the eighteenth century, Bengali cultural life had a resurgence. Literacy, the arts, culture, education, and society have all profited from the contributions of several erudite and perceptive intellectuals. Both native and non-native speakers were included. James Long was distinguished among the expatriates of his era. In 1842, Reverend James Long (1814–1887) travelled to Calcutta with the objective of disseminating Christianity. The Thakur Pukur region of Behala became his residence. A recent article indicates that certain indigenous individuals and foreigners are eager to see the

continuing development of Bengali. Rev. Long gained considerable notoriety among them. The editor of 'Sambadpravakar' expressed his commendation in the report. (Maity, D., 2018)

According to the 1851 'SambadPravakar,' Reverend Long made several attempts to locate 'BangiyaPustakalaya.' European librarians helped establish eleven libraries. They visited other locations, including Thakurpukur, Calcutta, Agarpara, Bardhaman, Krishnanagar, Chapra, Solo, Ballavpur, Ratnapur, and Karpasdanga. The local Christians of Ratnapur agreed to contribute twelve rupees for the procurement of additional publications. We presented 1,400 Bengali books as donations to these ten libraries.

The distinctive Calcutta library collection has around 400 unique Bengali literary genres. These libraries not only informed Europeans about local matters but also offered exceptional books to indigenous individuals who were unable to read English. Scholars have discovered novel methodologies to enhance library collections via book procurement. Libraries have amassed items from the Christian parliament and historical papers originating from Banga, India, Egypt, England, and Greece. The libraries encompassed various themes, including astronomy, tools and appliances, avian and animal physiology, biographies of notable individuals, and the history of ethics. The options for English speakers included five libraries. "I am pleased to learn that individuals have gained advantages from the libraries," he remarked. Although the Mufassil were unacquainted with literature written in Calcutta, literacy was increasing as individuals engaged in learning during their leisure time.

#### **European Initiative to set up Public Libraries:**

Lord Wellesley served as the Governor-General of India from 1798 until 1805. Prior to dispatching them to India for their assignments, he resolved to instruct the fresh recruits. This purpose motivated his decision on August 18, 1800, to establish Fort William College in Calcutta. The renowned institution sought to stimulate students' interest in Oriental studies to facilitate their acquisition of the languages of the populations they would ultimately govern. Wellesley was resolute in incorporating a library within the college he established.

Provost Reverend David Brown has a profound vision for the university library and exerted considerable effort to establish it as a public resource. The piece was published in the "Calcutta Gazette" on November 20, 1800.

The library's wide collection encompasses manuscripts related to Oriental studies, including Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit literature. Circa 1800, the library received the extensive collection from the Tipu Sultan Library. We meticulously deliberated the judgment of the Governor General. The maintenance of the collection within the institution would benefit both commerce and the progression of literature and information. As the college's resources have expanded, the library's collection has similarly increased. The Tipu Sultan Library utilized a native librarian, but the European library appointed an English librarian in 1805. In 1806, during a speech, Governor General George Hilario Barlow praised the expansion and acquisition of Fort William College.

The library was frequently utilized by both students and the general public. In 1815, the library acquired 41,011 rupees from a total expenditure of 191,124 rupees. In 1827, the college expended 139,636 rupees while only collecting 7,722 rupees. However, upon Bentinck's assumption of leadership in August 1828, the College of Fort William appeared to be a highly dynamic institution. Notwithstanding a reduction in budget, the library maintained its service standards. Unfortunately, the university faced an extended challenge in upholding its ideals after Bentinck dissolved the college council on March 1, 1831.

Unfortunately, the college library did not obtain any support beyond 1830. The college library received a merger allocation of 6,611 rupees in 1830. The library operated for a period without funding, but it was unable to procure new books and could not offer the services that had established its reputation. Since 1835, librarians have been incapable of managing libraries without financial support, leading to the relocation of the library's collection and its subsequent closure. The Asiatic Society library obtained the esteemed collection in 1835. The Calcutta Public Library was established in 1836, the Imperial Library was created in 1902, and the Indian National Library was built in 1947, all of which safeguarded collections from Europe and other nations. (Buragohain, A., 2022)

The Rammohun Library is much indebted to Lord Carmichael and the Martin Company. The Martin Company constructed the Rammohun Library in 1913 under the directives of Rajendra Mukherjee; yet, they incurred financial losses on the endeavour. Lord Carmichael financed the construction of the mansion. The library was inaugurated in 1913 by the Honourable P. Lion, then Minister of Education of Bengal. Administrative and financial assistance, coupled with book donations, enabled the library's spread throughout Europe. In November 1908, Mr. Hudson, the sub divisional official of Contai, donated 49 exquisite books to the Contai Club MakumaGranthagar.

When the old emperor assisted library organizations, our inhabitants expressed gratitude. The 'Nabadwip Public Library' was renamed the Nabadwip Edward VII Anglo-Sanskrit Library in tribute to King Edward VII during the memorial service at Poramatala on May 30, 1910. The Saptam Edward Memorial Hall and Library was inaugurated in Alipurduar in 1917 to commemorate Saptam Edward.

### **Early Society- Libraries:**

Rammohun's revolutionary ideas and perspectives sparked a paradigm shift in Bengali society, exemplified by the Brahmo Samaj of that era. Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Samaj in 1856 during his youth. He contends that a nation cannot cultivate its pride and self-confidence without an effective education system. This is the reason he initially aimed to establish a night school. The Brahma Samaj Library was an initiative aimed toward this objective. Ultimately, the libraries of City College (1881), City School (1889), Brahma Girl School (1890), and Sadharan Brahma Samaj became open to the public.

Two essential elements of the nineteenth-century religious and social movement termed the Ramakrishna Mission (1897) were the synthesis of traditional Eastern and contemporary Western concepts. As a humanitarian initiative and means of enlightenment, it is crucial that its operations emphasize social work as a fundamental element of both. The mission has established multiple dispensaries and libraries for educational institutions and has consistently provided support during critical periods, such as droughts, floods, and other natural calamities.

Sriniketan, a village in the Birbhum district, offers many educational initiatives designed to enhance the quality of life for its inhabitants. This effort encompasses a complimentary health clinic, initiatives to mitigate the transmission of infectious illnesses, maternal services, educational Pathalabs for children, teacher training programs, and adult education initiatives. The department has rejuvenated small enterprises and animal husbandry to bolster the economic development of weavers, cobblers, and associated sectors. Rabindra Nath must meticulously establish the library to actualize the principles. 'Chalantika,' his latest venture, is a mobile library. (Bhattacharya, B., 2024)

The nineteenth century began with the establishment of the Calcutta Library Society in 1818. The institute's library is accessible to everybody for a fixed monthly fee, notwithstanding its private ownership structure. This library stood out due to its independence and lack of affiliation with any specific institution or organization. Regarding contemporary libraries in undivided Bengal and West Bengal, it served as a paradigm. The library, now operating at full capacity, provides users with a distinctive opportunity to read the latest and exceptional papers across all scientific disciplines at a nominal fee. The library's collection comprised approximately 2,700 books and acquired new English-language publications monthly. The Town Hall contains the collections of the Calcutta Library Society. Its inclusion of this aspect illustrates its complete dedication to the notion of a public library. The 'Bengal Directory and General Register' documents its existence until 1832. As a result, we own library records. It endured for around fifteen years; however, no Indian participated in its administration.

### **Female Contribution to set up Libraries:**

Nineteenth-century leaders, predominantly Brahmo, exhibited a fervent aspiration to establish organizations and disseminate periodicals advocating for girls' education. "Paricharika" was edited by Pratap Chandra Majumdar, while "Arya Nari Samaj" was edited by the widow of Keshab Sen in 1879. The members of the "Banga Mahila Samaj" and the "Sadharan Brahma Samaj" convened to establish a craft fair. They founded multiple institutes in Mofussil and Calcutta to facilitate women's progress. Noteworthy among these were the "UttarparaHitakari Sabha," "Bikrampur Sammilani," and "Madhya Banga Sammilany." The objective of Swarna Kumari Devi's "Shakhi Samity" was to enhance vocational training for widows and to promote female education. Sister Nivedita, a committed proponent of women's education in the Hindu faith, joined multiple organizations. The summit's success in its aim originated in its association with libraries. Women attained increased autonomy more rapidly owing to the nation's progressive beliefs and enhanced access to education. Their impact on the establishment of libraries and other educational institutions is undeniable, notwithstanding societal limitations. Nationalism conferred greater authority upon educated women. The three daughters of Swarna Kumari Devi—Sarala, Hiranmoyee, and Bharati—served as editors of a nationalist publication. They participated substantially in the war for independence. Among the Bengali women who attended the 1890 Calcutta Congress were Kadambini Gangapadhyay and Swarna Kumari Devi.

During that time, Kumudbasini Pathagar in the Bagerhat subdivision epitomized reverence for women. In 1888, he established the Kumud Basini library as a tribute to his uncle's spouse, Judge Prasanna Chandra Roy's wife, Nikunj Behari Roy.

Renowned novelist Ashapura Devi asserts that in rural areas, women would get books from the library by having relatives or servants complete the titles and call numbers. In 1988 and 1989, the Chaitanya Library commemorated its centenary with significant solemnity. On this very day, Ashapura Devi composed her letter of benediction. The letter confirms that women have utilized libraries.

The Chandra Saraswati Pathagar in Hooghly received tax-exempt land from Ranu Bala Saha and Durga Debi. The library's diverse social welfare projects were well-attended by the women of Mahesh village. During the renowned Ratha festival organized by the library, they also participated with the chariot. A significant proportion of the Contai Library's clients are women, and the library is aware of this fact. The service first registered 77 users, 14 of whom were female. By 1947, the female population had risen to 26. Rupasi Jana and Sabitri Roy are acknowledged as contributions by the library. (Munshi, S.A., Ansari, M.A. & Barsha, S., 2024)

On February 22, 1907, the committee convened and resolved to create a public library in Nabadwip, Nadia. The committee has permitted Karunanidhan Mukherjee's widow to utilize the vicinity of her Poramatata Road residence as a library without charge.

Located on the lower level of the Hemchandra Library in Khidirpore, Calcutta, is the "Radha Rani Smriti Kaksha" bookstore. Historiography reveals that Bata Krishna Bandopadhyay contributed one thousand rupees to the cash required for the library's construction. His spouse, Radha Rani Debi, made substantial contributions to the library's organization. The region is named for her. Khirad Bala Ghosh provided eight decimals of land for the establishment of the Burikhali Public Library in Howrah in 1932.

The Bainan Public Library has enrolled multiple women as patrons, including Hiramati Debi, Bhagabati Roy, Kalyani Roy, and Ashalata Debi. In 1918, the MirjapurSatsahityaSammilani library comprised 83 members, of whom 5 were women and housed 43 titles, including 2 newspapers. Only two female patrons were permitted entry to the Anandapur Public Library until 1947. According to the documents, Radharani Debi, Namita Sengupta, and Puspa Gupta are the three female members of the Ananda Library in Asuria Village, Bankura.

The complete body of work by C.R. Urmila Debi, Debi's sister, has been acquired by the Motilal Ghosh Library. This acquisition is significant. Birbhum, the administrative hub of Suri District, was the location of the establishment of the Samsujoha Jakia Public Library in 1938. A public library in the Jia-ul-Madrassa district, named after Samsujoha's wife, was a progressive initiative during an era when Muslim women were predominantly excluded from education and Muslim society lacked access to modern educational resources.

#### **Muslim Participation to set up Libraries:**

Until the 1870s, Muslims refrained from embracing the burgeoning Hindu nationalist political ideologies. The principal reasons for their resistance were their steadfast commitment to Christian revivalism and their utter contempt for English education. By working together to create libraries and educational facilities, Bengal's sizable Muslim community overcame these challenges. The Muslim Library in Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri; the Gayesbari Youngmen's Library; the Enayetpur Public Library in Malda; the Samsujoha Jakia Public Library in Najrul Pathagar; and the Saiyad Amir Ali Library exemplify Muslim intellectualism. Muslim revolutionaries, poets, and authors have made a lasting impact on history. The records of the Home Department chronicle the significant sacrifices made during national revolutions, from the Sanyasi movement to independence and the British withdrawal from India in 1947.

The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad acquired renown as a prestigious literary institution following its establishment in 1895. This organization comprised professors and artists from both Muslim and Hindu populations. Esteemed academics Pabitra Gangopadhyay, Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay, Muhammad Sahidullah, and Nripendra Krishna Chattopadhyay were constituents of the Parishad. During that period, Muslim society experienced stagnation due to economic limitations and intellectual deficiencies. Muslim intellectuals and affluent individuals expressed concern at the situation and pursued avenues to advance their literary and social objectives. In 1911, they established the BangiyaMusalman Sahitya Samity in conjunction with the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. Muhammad Sahidullah was the founding secretary of the group.(Munshi, S.A., Ansari, M.A. & Barsha, S., 2022)

In 1918, the literary group commenced the publication of a quarterly titled 'Bangiya Muslim Sahitya Patrika.' Mujammel Haque and Muhammad Sahidullah served as joint secretaries, with Mujaffar Ahmad acting as the assistant secretary. The same corporation also founded the library and published quarterly editions. Upon returning to Calcutta from the war, poet Nazrul Islam resided with Mujjafar Ahmad at his home on College Street. The literary journal "Bangiya Muslim Sahitya" published his poem "Mukti," after which he assumed the role of editor for the publication. Khan Bahadur M.A. Momila, a refined individual of his era, significantly influenced the cultural renaissance of his period. He simultaneously served as president of the Jessore Institute and district magistrate during that period.

In 1938, Samsujoha Jakia founded the Samsujoha Jakia Public Library in the district center of Suri, Birbhum. Samsujoha made a commendable decision by dedicating a public library in the Jia-ul-Madrassa neighborhood to his wife. The project occurred during a period when Muslim women were prohibited from attending school, and the Muslim community was lagging in its pursuit of contemporary knowledge. Gorachand Miana, Satyajil Chatterjee, and Sk. Abdul Salem, Ashis Banerjee, Ahmed Raja, Muktipada Mandal, Ajijul Rahman, Ali Hussain of Edd, Sk. Jan Ali, Kalu, and Muhammad. Mujibar Rahman and Jamaluddin, among others, played a crucial role in establishing the library.

In 1938, the library had 45 paying patrons and received 125 donated volumes. It had 181 volumes and 62 members in 1947. The library's collection presently comprises 300 customers and 700 books. The library obtained a government affiliation in 1986. The library had been conducting several mass mobilization events as part of its extension campaign. Residents of Murshidabad, including Biswanath Ghosh, Satyanarayan Nandi, Pravat Mukherjee, and Irfan Sekh, among others, gathered books for the SonarundiBanwarilal Rabindra Pathagar.

The Muslim Library was founded in Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri, during the years 1923 and 1924. The initial arrangement took place in a section of the Madrasa, with Maulavi Nur Ahmad, an educator from Fanindra Dev Vidyalaya, designated as the librarian. After several years, a house adjacent to Janab Enamul Hussain became its new residence. Maqbul Hussain worked as a librarian at that time. The attainment of independence resulted in the cessation of the library's services. (Kumar, A., 2019)

Mir Najir Ali is a contributor to the Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar. The library and the adjoining pond were owned by Mir Nazir Ali. In 1852, he bequeathed it to Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar. The construction of the BainchiKashipati Smriti Pathagar necessitated the substantial financial support and 1.50 acres of land provided by Abdul Fajul Karim Mandal. We extend our sincere gratitude to Sk Kalu of Raniganj for founding the Raniganj Public Library. We encountered an administrative Muslim in the library. The Taltola Public Library was jointly overseen by Surendra Nath Bandopadhyay and Narendra Nath Sen, alongside Abdur Rahaman, who served from 1882 until 1919. From the above findings and discussion, it can be stated that the "Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>): The public libraries influence in colonial Bengal related to development" has been accepted.

### CONCLUSION

The Bengal Harkara, neither a bookstore nor a commercial entity, founded a significant circulating library at the onset of the nineteenth century. The proprietors of the Harkara engaged in three functions: printing a newspaper, retailing books, and operating a circulating library. There has been a significant increase in interest in ancient literature, and the Bengal Harkara asserts that the library possesses an exceptional collection that corresponds.

The Asiatic Society has traditionally served as a depository for rare and important materials. It ignited academic interest in Indian history, culture, and traditions, serving as a source of inspiration for intellectual endeavors among both Indians and Europeans.

Public library authorities consistently seek methods to enhance the systems for processing, presenting, and augmenting book holdings. Upon entering the ruling council, Bethune aimed to abolish reader reservations for bookshelves. Readers would submit request forms, adhering to the protocols of renowned libraries in Paris and London. In 1853, the Public Library developed 28 major themes, along with other subclasses, for classification purposes. In 1890, the Calcutta Corporation consented to assume control of the library's operations, following a formal representation. Subsequent to its reorganization, the library employed a prominent political figure for its staffing. Pal and Beverage commenced finalizing the dictionary catalog during the political figure's two-year tenure. (Adhikari, G. & Majhi, P., 2024)

Despite establishing a group to create a "public library," the residents' financial conditions required immediate support. The Ahmednagar acting judge informed the Board of the East India Company of the situation in March 1838. He proceeded to solicit government funds to support the group and to obtain duplicates of any available literature in indigenous languages. The Indian government graciously approved our request for a pay-out of 100 rupees, acknowledging the effort as praiseworthy.

Mujaffar Ahmed frequently visits the Literary Club and Library of the Ariadaha Association. Encourage the populace to resist imperialist oppression discreetly via Marxist literature. The support of Muslims for the library transcends just financial contributions. The library consistently gained from their distinguished services. Din Ali Ahmad, a former record keeper for the Jalpaiguri District, served as the inaugural honorary librarian of Radhika Library.

Khan Bahadur Haji Kasimuddin Mollah, the district magistrate of Hooghly, is affiliated with the Garalgacha Public Library in Hooghly. At Balurghat, A.H. Ahmed, the sub-divisional officer of Dakshin Dinajpur, was present at the Zella Granthagar inauguration. The library's patrons include prominent Muslims. Md. is one among them. Kutub Ali Shah Fakir stated that several members of the Chowdhury family, including Ibrahim, Majiruddin, Samsul Haque, Baharuddin, Khatemi Saifuddin, Ajj Muhammad, Abdul Hakim, and others, were present.

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