

Chapter- 6

BENGAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN COLONIAL BENGAL

By virtue of the advancement of public library system in Bengal in second part of nineteenth century and early part of twentieth century in the province, consideration was initiated to form library association to organize reading awareness as well as library awareness in the country. In the meantime, effort was started to set up library association in British India to organise library development programme. 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. An organized library movement in undivided Bengal was started by the establishment of Bengal Library Association in 1925. Indian Library Association was established in the conference of All India Library Association, held in Calcutta in 1933. Second All Bengal Library Conference was held at Albert Hall in Calcutta under the chairmanship of Pramatha Nath Chowdhury (Birbal) in 21st and 22nd January, 1928 where All Bengal Library Association renamed as Bangiya Granthalaya Parishad. Since its inception the Association in working sincerely to create library awareness among people.

ALL INDIA PUBLIC LIBRARY CONFERENCE

All India library conferences were held in different part of India since All India Public Library Conference in Madras in 1919 to 1936. It is notable that four eminent Bengalis were selected as president to the four conferences out of nine. Desbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay, Professor in Economics, Calcutta University, Acharya Prafulla Chadra Roy, and Kumar Munindra Deb Roy were the president of Belgaon Conference in 1924, Madras Conference in 1927, and Lahore Conference in 1929 and again in Madras Conference in 1934 respectively.

ALL INDIA SIXTH LIBRARY CONFERENCE

All India Sixth Library Conference in Calcutta was a significant event due to importance of proposed topics and illustrious presence of dignitaries. It was held at Senate Hall, Calcutta in 26th and 27th December, 1928. Dr. Anne Besant was elected as president in the conference. She was not able to present to conference due to political reason. So, Dr. Sarbapalli Radhakrishnan was president of the conference. Rabindra Nath Tagore was president of Reception Committee. Due to illness, he was not present in the conference, so Hirendra Nath Dutta was perused his written address. This address was published later as 'Librarir Mukhya Kartabya'. In that fine writing, he pointed different aspects of library services in lucid language. Dr. Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay, Minto Professor of Calcutta University and president of All India Library Association was inaugurator of the conference. Many eminent persons were participated the conference. Some of them were office bearer and organizer of Bengal Library Association. Sushil Kumar Ghosh and Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay was secretary of reception committee. Dr. Gurudas Roy was joint secretary and publishing secretary. Nevertheless, to the representations of the different states of India, eminent persons of local level were attended to the conference. They were Dr. Kalidas Nag, Dr. Binoytosh Bhattacharya, Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Dr, Chunilal Basu, Hirendra Nath Duitta, Ramaprasad Mukhopadhyay, Sishil Kumar Ghosh, Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Prof. Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Jotindra Lal Das, Sir David and Lady Ezra, J.V.Menon, Librarian, Asiatic Society and Satish Chandra Guha.

Proposals were accepted in the conference, such as,

- i) Legislative Council of the country was requested to enact Law to set up free public libraries and its preservation.
- ii) Provincial Legislative Councils was requested to grant finance without condition to set up and maintain subscription free libraries in each province.
- iii) Local Board and Municipalities were requested to set up and maintain subscription free libraries in their areas.

- iv) Landlord, Richman and charitable organizations were requested to donate generally to set up and maintain subscription free public libraries.
- v) Countryman's were requested to set up district, sub- division and village-level library association to spread library movement by setting up and preserve subscription free public libraries.
- vi) Universities were requested to spread mass education in village and town.
- vii) Organiser of public libraries were requested to arrange extension programmes to aware both literate and illiterate about library movement.
- viii) University managements were requested to introduce library science course to meet up the need of qualified librarian to organize libraries.
- ix) Government of India was requested to appoint a qualified librarian to the Imperial Library, Calcutta as the present one would be shortly retired.
- x) Imperial Legislative Councils were requested to revise Registration Act 1860, so that public libraries could be exempted to pay rupees fifty as registration fee.
- xi) Government of India was requested to arrange free access of government sponsored reference to all people according to the act of 1867.¹

INDIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

By 1933, existence of different types of library, such as, academic, public and special library were found in India but no national level association was formed where librarians could discuss their professional problems or issues on library development. Though, in the meantime library associations had formed in state level in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Madras and West Bengal. But these associations had not strength to continue library movement in the country. It was resolved in the All India Librarians Conference at Calcutta in 1928, that National Level associations should be formed to look after matter of library. But this discussion had yielded no fruit. In 1931, again the issue was discussed among the representatives in All Asia Education Conference at Banaras but that was also fruit less.

It was mainly an earnest effort of the three librarians, Dr. M.O. Thomas, K.M. Asadullah, S, R. Ranganathan, Indian Library Association was formed at Calcutta in 12th September, 1933. It was a landmark and marked the beginning of a new era in the development and growth of libraries.² Draft constitution was prepared and accepted in 13th September, 1933. Association had mainly three objectives, such as, extension of library movement in India, Training of Librarians, and improvement of status of librarians.³

About 20 resolutions had been taken in the three days conference from 12th to 14th, September, 1933, which included librarians training programme, better pay structure of librarians and union catalogue of science and technology among Indian Libraries.⁴ More two objectives were also included in 1935, such as, scope of research in Library Science and Co-operation with the international Association of same type.⁵

First task of the newly formed association was to form a committee to compile a directory by collecting different libraries in India. The Committee had done excellent work under the leadership of S.R. Ranganathan and succeeded to publish the directory in 1938.⁶ Its second edition was published in 1944. Second conference of Indian Library Association was held at Lucknow in 19th to 22nd April, 1935 under the chairmanship of Dr. A, C, Woolmer, Vice- Chancellor of Punjab (Present Pakistan) University. In his speech, he said that there was the need of greater network of greater libraries at universities provincial capitals with a great National Library for all Indian of which India may proud.⁷ He advised to introduce a system of inter library co-operation to meet the information need of students and schools.⁸

The association had attempted to create uniformity in the curriculums of library science schools of the country but was not success due to non-co-operation from the institutions. In 1942, 5th Conference of Indian Library Association was held in Bombay and proposal had been accepted to include qualified librarians in the appointing committee of library staff in college and universities. Librarian of Imperial library and first secretary of association was guide of the Association from 1933 to 1946. By the joint effort of Asadullah and Indian Library Association, Diploma Course in Library Science was started in the Imperial Library in 1935 which transferred to Calcutta University in 1945.⁹

Indian Library Association had started to publish 'Library Bulletin' a quarterly to aware its member's library news of the world especially in India in 1942. S.R. Ranganathan, the first professional librarian, elected as the president of the Association in 1944. No professional librarian was holding this post before him. The association had reached its highest peak of glory during his tenure. It was able to make co-operation with national and international organizations. In brief under the leadership of S.R. Ranganathan, the association had received a motion in library movement and turned a centre of professional culture of all types of librarians. It must be said that the association did fight for its rights, kept its promises, stood up for its objectives and helped support many library and librarians, including college and universities, in their struggle for expanded libraries, better services, collections and status.¹⁰

In December 1924, conference of Indian National Congress was held in Belgaon in Karnataka. Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das visited Belgaon to attend conference of the National Congress. Third all India Library Conference was held at same Belgaon in 26th December alongside the session of the National Congress. Chitta Ranjan was elected as the chairman of library conference. But he was not present entire time in the conference on account of his busy schedule in Congress session. So, Tulsi Charan Goswami, Member of Parliament and new leader in Bengal conducted the conference by his request. A proposal was raised by the Bengal delegate Sushil Kumar Ghosh to set up library association in each province in India. This proposal may be considered as inspiration of library movement.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION IN BENGAL AND FIRST CONFERENCE

According to the proposal of Third All India Public Library Conference to set up state wise Library Association, a conference was convened at Albert Hall in 15, College Square, Calcutta by the additional secretary of All India Library Association. Many library representatives and followers of different district of undivided Bengal had participated this conference. J.A. Chapman, librarian of the then Imperial Library was president of the conference. Eminent personalities, such as, Prof. Dr. Kalidas Nag, Prof. Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Monoranjan Roy, librarian, Dacca University, Kshitindra Deb Roy and Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, King of Bansberia, Srinivas Acharya of Puri, Maulavi Mujibar Rahaman, Prince

Sarat kumar Roy, Kumar Harit Krishna Deb, Nagendra Nath Roychowdhury, Prince of Rajshahi , Satyananda Basu, Sasadhar Chakraborty, Narendra Deb, Sahindra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Tinkari Sarkar, Dr. P.C. Bidge etc. were present to participate the discussion. Sushil Kumar Ghosh read the address of Rabindra Nath where he supported the movement and put descent its extension and development.

In addition to the speech of the president, Dr. Kalidas Nag delivered speech on library movement in France. Professor Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan read an essay on libraries in Ancient India. Monoranjan Roy highlighted necessity of library movement in an essay. Dr. P.C. Breed narrated his own experience on library movement in Spain. Sushil Kumar Ghosh stated objects to form library Association and read proposals of third All India Library Conference in Belgaon. Following proposals were accepted in the Conference:

- i) All Bengal Library Association would be formed according to the proposal of the third All India Public Library conference under the chairmanship of Chitta Ranjan Das in Belgaon in 26th December, 1924.
- ii) All libraries of Bengal were requested to form district library associations in auspicious to All Bengal Library Association.
- iii) Requested to include All Bengal Library Association in All India Public Library Association.
- iv) District Board, Local Board, Municipality and other public organizations were requested to set up, conserve and expand libraries of their area with sufficient financial assistance.
- v) An Ad-hoc committee of All Bengal Library Association should be formed with a member from each library to materialize objects of the Association.

An Ad-hoc executive committee was formed to organize activities of association from the conference. Rabindranath Tagore and Sushil Kumar Ghosh were selected as president and secretary of the executive committee respectively.¹¹

Bengal Library Association gave priority to develop and expansion of Public Library system from its inception. Organizational power of the Association was limited during 1925 to 1950. Association was managed by few voluntary works. It

had no financial stability. Nevertheless, it had to work within the atmosphere of subjugation. Attitude of foreign rulers to spread mass- education, to develop and extension of public library was unfavourable. Imperialist rulers were extremely angry with the libraries, which attached with or assisted freedom movement. Collection of many libraries was destroyed time and again to preserve revolutionary prohibited literature. In such adverse situation, Bengal Library Association engaged with its whole strength to set up and spread public library system in undivided Bengal. It had to play out some important role during this phase, such as, to analyse accepted proposals of different library conferences in Bengal; to organize library science training programme to administer mainly public libraries; to introduce public library act; to organize public library system in different districts in Bengal.

PROPOSALS OF BENGAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION DURING 1925-1950

It was earlier discussed that All Bengal Library Association was formed in 1925, i.e. 1332 BS. No conference was held during two years of its formation. In its first two years, emphasis was laid down to aware countrymen about mission and utility of the newly set up organization. Publicities had run on library movement and objectives of library association by means of lectures with slides. Sushil Kumar Ghosh, first secretary of association had maintained key role to publicity. Meetings were held in Hooghly, Howrah, 24 Parganas and Birbhum etc. to popular library services especially Public Library services. In 25th September 1927, annual meeting of Association was held at Over tune Hall at 86, College Street in Calcutta. Famous orator and political personality, Bipin Chandra Pal delivered an attractive lecture on 'library use' in the meeting of formerly organized Hooghly District Library Association which had actively participated to contact to the libraries of the districts. In 8th and 9th May, 1926, Second Hooghly District Library Conference was held under the initiation of Uttarpara Saraswat Sammilan. Many eminent personalities were present to this conference. Pandit Haraprasad Shastry was president in this conference and Harihar Seth perused an essay on 'village library'. Prof Pramotha Nath Bandopadhyay delivered lecture on utility of public library. Kumar Munindra Deb Roy perused secretarial report in the District Library Association Conference and it is found from the report that, 57 public libraries were existed in the district at that time and five libraries had their own building. In 10th and 11th September 1927, third Hooghly district conference was held at

Nrityagopal Smriti Mandir in Chandan Nagar. Harihar Seth an eminent personality of Chandannagar was assiduous of the conference. Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan was president of the conference and Charu Chandra Roy, an eminent inhabitant of Chandannagar was president of the reception committee of conference. Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Jnananjan Neogi, Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy etc. had delivered lectures on library and culture and conditions to the development of libraries.

Second Bengal Library Conference

An organized library movement in undivided Bengal was started with the establishment of Bengal Library Association in 1925. In 21st and 22nd January 1928, second All Bengal Library Conference was held in Albert Hall, Calcutta under the president ship of Pramatha Nath Chowdhuri, a famous litterateur. It was resolved in the conference to rename All Bengal Library Association to 'Bangiya Granthalaya Parishad'. An executive committee was formed with Rabindra Nath Tagore as President. Dr. Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Binoy Kumar Sarkar and Sarala Debi Chowdhury hold the chair of vice - president. Tinkari Dutta and Jagannath Ghosh was assistant secretary and Narendra Nath Laha was cashier.

In addition to formation of library association proposals were accepted to collect financial assistance to establish new libraries and preserve as well as extend the olds. Famous Litterateur Pramatha Nath Chowdhury was president of the conference. Kshitish Chandra Deb Roy was president of the reception committee. Sushil Kumar Ghosh perused the messages received for the purpose. Roybahadur Chunilal Basu narrated objects of the conference. Pramatha Nath Chowdhury specially mentioned role of public library to spread education. In addition to the president of conference another four-branch presidents perused the essays, such as, Charu Chandra Roy, chairman, Chandannagar Municipality read library movement in India; journalist Ramananda Chattapadhyay read essay on library administration. Eminent personalities participated to the discussion in the conference, such as, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay, Dr. Probodh Chandra Bagchi, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Prof. Nirmal Chandra Bhattacharya, Jowan Van Menon (Asiatic Society), Nalini Ranjan Pandit, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy and Latika Basu. Saroj

Mohan Sen Baidyasastri, journalist of English daily 'Forward' delivered speech to the many aspects of library movement.

Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Nagendra Nath Sen, Harihar Seth, Rajkumar Chakraborty, Jitendra Nath Chakraborty, Nares Chandra Sen, Panchanan Neogi, Ardhendu Chandra Ganguly, Probodh Kumar Das, Panchanan Ghosal, Dr. Subodh Kumar Basu, Khitish Chandra Chakraborty, Kiran Chandra Dutta, Ray Bahadur Akshyay Bhusan Ganguly, Historian Dr. R.G.Bhandarkar, Scientist Dr. Adharkar, Dr. Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay of Avay Ashram, Gokul Chandra Dhar, Librarian, Chaitanya Library, Haraprasad Shatri, Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar attended to the conference to inspire library movement.

Following proposals were accepted to the conference:

- i) Requested to mass to form library committee to each district and set up library where necessary to run library movement.
- ii) Requested to all landlords, rich man head of monastery or temple, trustees and benevolent persons to donate to set up new libraries and to administer presents.
- iii) Requested to the authorities to provide sufficient financial assistance to the libraries of their own area.
- iv) Requested to the authorities of Municipalities to set up libraries with financial aid to their jurisdiction.
- v) Requested to the authorities of libraries to publicize library movement and introduce different programmes to spread education to both educated and uneducated persons.
- vi) Proposed to spread education with mother language.
- vii) Requested to all member of Bengal Legislative Assembly to withdraw confiscation order of 'Patherdabi' novel of famous litterateur Sarat Chandra Chattapadhyay.
- viii) Requested to all library authorities to preserve rare old books and manuscripts of their area.

- ix) Requested to all library authorities of Calcutta University and Dhaka University to take appropriate steps to organize libraries in their universities.
- x) Requested to preserve books of College and Syllabus in their libraries.
- xi) Requested to the Education Department of government to arrange financial allotment in their budget to assist libraries.
- xii) Requested to the authorities Calcutta Corporation to provide sufficient financial aid to libraries of their jurisdiction.
- xiii) Requested to member of Legislative Assembly to favour in the Assembly to pass acts to organize library movement in the country.
- xiv) Requested publishers of books, newspapers and monthlies to use best quality of papers in their publication to preserve the document for long time.
- xv) Requested to the government of India to give up the idea to transfer Imperial Library from Calcutta to Delhi.
- xvi) Requested to the authorities of District Board, Municipality and Calcutta Corporation to set up child library in the primary and high schools in their area.
- xvii) Requested to the government to take step to send a copy of published books to the Biswabharati Granthagar in Bolpur, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, Bengal Library Association as there was library to preserve all published books of the country.
- xviii) Proposed to rename Bengal Library Association (Bangiya Granthagar Parishad) instead of All Bengal Library Association and minutes of meeting would be written in Bengali henceforth.
- xix) Requested to all Library authorities of Bengal to organize program me, like, Kirtan, Kathakata to save own heritage of Bengal.

The conference announced to organize library movement by setting up the following objects, such as,

- a) Create reading taste among common people
- b) To set up co-operation among activities of libraries in the country

- c) To preserve rare valuable books and reprint them if possible.
- d) To collect historical documents.
- e) To introduce inspecting system to develop the condition of libraries.
- f) To popularize libraries.

It is found from proposals and announcements of second Bengal Library Conference that, leaders of the association were active and thoughtful to the development of public library system in the country from its inception period.¹²

Third Bengal Library Conference

In 18th November, 1931, third Bengal Library Conference was held under the chairmanship of Newton Mohan Dutta, curator of libraries of the Baroda State in Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Building. Prof, Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Prof Manmotha Mohan Basu and Sachindra Nath Mukhopadhyay delivered lectures in the conference. Sushil Kumar Ghosh, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Jitindra Nath Bhattacharya perused Essays on different aspects of library movement.

During post conference period, activities of library association were lost its motion. Re organization work was started in 1933. In 14th September of that year, a proposal was accepted in a general meeting of the member of Association to rename Bengal Library Association instead of Bangiya Granthalaya Parishad. In later period, the name 'Bangiya Granthagar Parishad' too was added in bracket. New formation by law of Association was accepted in a general meeting in 19th August 1935. Some more time this by laws of formation was revised. In 12th June 1946, association was registered according to Society Registration act 1860. Late Pramila Chandra Basu mentioned the period, 1925 to 1933 as the first phase of Association's life. According to him, eminent persons who actively participated to retain position and dignity of the association with Rabindra Nath Tagore as president. Others were Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Sushil Kumar Ghosh, Tinkari Dutta, Sarala Debi Chowdhuri, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Prof Amulya Charan Vidyaabhusan, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Dr. Satyananda Roy, Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Bipin Chandra Pal, Ramananda Chattapadhyay, Jaganth Deb Roy, Dr. Narendra Nath Laha, Dr. Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay, Monoranjan

Roy, J.V.Menon, Prof. Manendra Nath Rudra, Prof. Amulyadhan Mukhopadhyay, Sachindra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Latika Basu, Surendra Nath Kumar, Pramatha Chowdhury, Amrit Lal Basu, Kokileswar Sastri, Tulsi Charan Goswami, Dr. P.C. Basu, Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay etc.¹³

Constitution of Bengal Library Association

Main theme of Third Bengal Library Conference was request to implement library act in Bengal Legislative Assembly. A proposal was accepted, requesting Legislative Assembly to accept the act for the sake of library movement. In a proposal, Universities were requested to introduce library science course.

Bengal Library Association initiated to hold library conference in districts. As a result, first district library conference was held in Faridpur at 6th December 1931. Sushil Kumar Ghosh was president of this conference. To popularize library movement in Bengal, initiation was taken to reorganize Bengal Library Association in 1931. As a result, Bangiya Granthalaya Parishad was reorganized as in the name, Bengal Library Association in 14th September, 1933. A constitution was accepted to manage the association. Public Library aspect was getting top priority in the object of Parishad's (Association) Constitution. In Constitution following aspects were announced as objects of the association:

- i) Expansion of library movement in Bengal.
- ii) Expansion of Culture.
- iii) Co-ordination of libraries and Co-operative administration.
- iv) Assist to receive grants from government and self- government institutions.
- v) To form district Library Committee.
- vi) To train librarians.
- vii) To set up store for library building plan and maps.¹⁴

Annual general meeting of reorganized association was held at Calcutta Imperial Library in 19th August 1935. Kumar Munindra Deb Roy was president of conference. It was requested from the meetings, to prepare a list of libraries in Bengal and to increase financial assistance to libraries. Association also requested

government to take firm policy of fair distribution of funds of libraries in rural areas from Rural Development grant. By the effort of Bengal Library Association, District branch of Association was established in Howrah, Hooghly, 24 Parganas, Dinajpur, Faridpur and Pabna. Development of public library was received top priority in memorandum of association to the then Bengal Education Minister Khan Bahadur Ajijul Haque in 1935.

Fourth Bengal Library Conference

Fourth Bengal Library Conference was held at Ashutosh Hall in Calcutta University in 24th and 25th July, 1937. Fajlul Haque, the then Prime Minister of undivided Bengal took chair in the conference. W.C. Wordsworth, former principal of Presidency College and former Director of Education was president of the reception committee and secretary of the same was Nihar Ranjan Roy, the then librarian of Calcutta University and famous historian. Sanat Kumar Roychowdhury inaugurated an exhibition exhibited for the purpose.

Kumar Munindra Deb Roy reported the steps had taken on behalf of the Association to spread library movement in the country. It was found from the report that, association collected information of 1250 public libraries of undivided Bengal up to July 1937. Apart from this, he reported the steps had taken to implement library act. There were four agenda in the conference, such as,

- i) Survey activities of libraries of Calcutta and Municipality area of Bengal;
- ii) School and Child Library;
- iii) College and University Library;
- iv) Rural and City outs kit Library

It was accepted proposals with much emphasis was laid down on public library. The conference recommended few aspects to the Bengal Library Association, such as,

- i) The Association may create library awareness among people to set up Calcutta Municipality library and four libraries in four areas.
- ii) It may request authorities of Municipalities to prepare two set of plans, one for Calcutta and other for district and sub- divisional town and to materialize them.

iii) The Association may compile a list of libraries containing detail information with the help of collected information of personal member and institutional members of the association.

In the end of the Conference, annual general meeting of the association was held under chairmanship of Munindra Deb Roy. In this meeting, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy was re-elected as president and Tinkari Dutta, Pramil Chandra Basu, Pulin Krishna Chattopadhyay, Biswanath Bandopadhyay were elected as general secretary, joint secretary, assistant secretary, cashier respectively. Proposals accepted to develop public libraries and set up Calcutta branch from the meeting, such as,

i) Indian Football Association was requested to donate a portion of their fund, collected from donation and exhibitions.

ii) All Zilla Parishad and Municipalities were requested to increase the allotment to the libraries and which should be provided to only well organize libraries.

iii) In a reply to the query of honorary general secretary, it was opined that, Calcutta branch should be started and association had been empowered to set up Calcutta and district branches.¹⁵

In the fourth Bengal Library Conference, necessity to form district branches of association was felt. Organized work of Bengal Library Association was creating influence on district library movement. Rules and regulations also framed to start district branch of the association. Gurudas Bandopadhyay in his essay, 'Bange Granthagar Andolan', accounted 19th district branches of Bengal Library Association, such as:

- 1) Howrah - (Secretary) Bijoykrishna Bhattacharya, Shibpur Public Library.
- 2) Dinajpur- (Secretary) Md. Hemayet Ali, Sir Khaja Najimuddin Muslim Hall.
- 3) Noakhali (Secretary) Prafulla Kumar Bhowmik, Noakhali Town Hall Public Library.

- 4) Pabna (Secretary) Rabindranath Bhattacharya, Ananda Gobinda Public Library.
- 5) Malda (Secretary) Roy Panchanan Majumdar Bahadur, Malda Public Library.
- 6) Hooghly (Temporary Secretary) Phannindranath Chakraborty, Shreerampur Public Library.
- 7) Nadia (Temporary Secretary) Anantakumar Mitra, Krishnagar Public Library.
- 8) Faridpur (Temporary Secretary) Pulinbihari Chattapadhyay, Coronation Public Library, Gopalganj.
- 9) Barisal (Temporary Secretary) Roybahadur Gneschandra Dasgupta, Barisal Public Library.
- 10) Raj Shahi (Temporary Secretary) Roysaheb Dharanimohan Maitra, Raj Shahi Public Library.
- 11) Tripura (Temporary Secretary) Shailendra Sen, Coo Milla.
- 12) Darjiling (Temporary Secretary) Shree Sing, Himachal Hindi Bhaban.
- 13) Bankura (Temporary Secretary) Narendra Kar, Bishnupur Public Library.
- 14) 24 Parganas (Temporary Secretary) Tarakkumar Mukhopadhyay, Sir Surendranath Institute, Barackpur.
- 15) Khulna (Temporary Secretary) Dr. Arunchandra Nag, MacPherson Library, Bagerhat.
- 16) Birbhum (Temporary Secretary) Mityunjoy Pal, Jubili Public Library, Seuri.
- 17) Calcutta (Temporary Secretary) Sudhikumar Lahiri, Rammohan Library.
- 18) Jessore (Temporary Secretary) Kumar Gurukram Majumdar, Jessore Public Library.
- 19) Bangura (Temporary Secretary) Shree Chowdhury, Woodburn Public Library, Bangura.¹⁶

Fifth Bengal Library Conference

In 19th and 20th March, 1938, fifth Bengal Library Conference was held at compound of Belly Hall Public Library (Present Raj Narayan Basu Smriti Pathagar) in Midnapore town. It was first Bengal Library Conference outside of Calcutta. Dr. Niharranjan Roy, eminent librarian and famous historian was president of the conference. Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Pioneer of Bengal Library movement and the then president of Bengal Library Association inaugurated the conference. Binoy Ranjan Sen, the then District Magistrate of Midnapore was president of the reception committee. Eminent persons from India and abroad sent messages on the occasion. Message of Subhas Chandra Bose, President of Indian National Congress is worthy to mention.

Following topic were discussed in its different sessions, such as,

First Session- Free Library Service.

Second Session- School and Child Library.

Third Session- Public and Institutional Library.

Fourth Session- Rural and Town Library Services.

Fifth Session- Techniques of Library Services.

In his inaugural address Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy delivered lecture in favour of organization of subscription free library and utility of library act. He said that main function of Bengal Library Association would to form public opinion in favour of free public library and to aware government including voluntary organization from successive years. He emphasised to aware common people that free public library would inevitable like other amenities and right of civil society where common men avail it only by travel. He hoped government, municipality, district and village authority would set up free public library in self or co-operation with others in future. According to him, then only a compact free public library service would be achieved. ¹⁷

Annual General Meeting of Bengal Library Association

After five months of fifth Bengal Library Conference, annual general meeting of Bengal Library Association was held ay Library Building of Calcutta Royal Asiatic

Society in 23rd July, 1938. Following proposals on library services was accepted in the meeting, such as,

- i) Binoy Bhusan Basu proposed to form 'Prison Library' to avail book reading facilities of prisoner.
- ii) Maulabi Md. Kasem Ali Rasul Puri proposed to apply to the government to allot fifty thousand rupees in budget as library grant to the rural libraries in Bengal.
- iii) He also requested to the government to compile a list of prohibited books and supply them to the libraries under the association free of cost.
- iv) Narendra Nath Mukhopadhyay proposed to apply to the government to allot reasonable amount of grant to the association.
- v) Dr. Niharranjan Roy proposed the association, to support the effort to set up Central Municipal Library by some members of Calcutta Municipality and the Municipality will take necessary step to set up library as early as possible.¹⁸

Sixth Bengal Library Conference

Sixth Bengal Library conference was held at Bansberia in Hooghly district under the initiation of Bansberia Public Library in 11th and 12th April, 1941. It was arranged on occasion of completion of fifty years of Bansberia Public Library. Binoy Ranjan Sen, I.C.S., was president in the conference and S.K.Halder, the then commissioner of Burdwan division was inaugurator of the conference. Kumar Munindra Deb Roy was president of the reception committee. Lieutenant Colonel A.C. Chattyapadhyay, the then director of Public Health of Bengal Government inaugurated an exhibition, exhibited for the purpose.

Binoy Ranjan Sen in his inaugural address mentioned the role of Bengal Library Association to spread library movement in Bengal. According to him, it was only creation of Bengal Library Association what he knew as library movement in Bengal. None denied the facts that the association have assisted to supply some trained librarians to organize libraries, to select books, to direct public and institutional libraries to select books, to publish necessary books on library and librarianship in Bengali and to organize a forum to discuss the problems to organize library movements in Bengal in public. Without Government assistance it has

praised worthy to perform such activities depending only institutional and general member subscription. The people of Bengal would grateful to the selfless and whole-hearted service of the association.

According to his opinion the movement could not be introduced and obtained appropriate place in the education system of the country if the government would not attempt heartily and totally co-operate to utilize library as inseparable part of education system.

Dr. Niharranjan Roy pursued an essay on “Unanbinsha Satabdir Pratham Bhage Banglay Mudran Babyastha” (Printing System in First part of the 19th Century). Pramil Chandra discussed in detail on problem of classification and cataloguing in Indian language. Anath Nath Roy perused an essay entitled “Granthagarer Madhyame Bayaska Siksha” (Adult Education through Library). Apart from these, Khan- Bahadur Md. Asadullah, Dr. Panchanan Neogi, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Prof. Amulya Dhan Mukhopadhyay, Tin Kari Dutta etc. participated to the discussion in the conference.

Proposals accepted in the conference, such as,

Bengal government and authorities of Districts and Municipalities were requested for generous allotment of fund to build strong book collection and better management of libraries. It was also requested that, government should seek opinion of association about eligibility to receive grants. The conference also recommended to the government to arrange radio in major public libraries and school libraries as library extension programme. The conference gladly acknowledged activities of Bengal Library Association to develop libraries and spread library movement in the province. It had performed praise worthy work with minimum balance. It was expected that the association will extend its activities to perform its future works efficiently. But the association opined, the work would not be performed except financial assistance of provincial government. So, it requested Bengal government for a generous annual grant to the Association.

Authorities of Calcutta University and Dhaka University were requested to arrange Library Science teaching a programme, so that qualified librarian equivalent to the pay and status of college teachers could appoint to the library to manage it scientifically.

Calcutta University and Calcutta Municipality were requested to provide financial aid to run summer training programme for librarians.¹⁹

Seventh Bengal Library Conference

Seventh Bengal Library Conference was held at Burdwan Raj College in 26th and 27th November, 1944. Kumar Munindra Deb Roy was elected president of the conference. Pramil Chandra Basu conducted the conference due to sudden illness of the president in conference and pursued the written lecture of him to the delegate. Uday Chand Mahatab inaugurated the conference. Nagendra Nath Rakshit was chairman of reception committee.

In his speech, Munindra Deb Roy intended that, modern library would not mere store but educational institution to build to men properly. Books would be used here as material. He mentioned necessity of government's assistance to spread library system and suggested some effective measures to extend library facilities to all in the Post World War period.

In the annual general meeting of the Association in 25th March, 1945, Munindra Deb Roy and Biswanath Bandopadhyay were elected as president and secretary respectively. Proposals were accepted for the sake user, such as, authorities of Imperial Library, Geological Survey of India, and Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal were requested to return their books for the sake of interests of users.²⁰

Eighth Bengal Library Conference

Eighth Bengal Library Conference was held in Ariadaha Kalachand Uchha Engreji Vidyalaya, 24 Parganas in 31st March, 1946 under the initiation and organization of 24 Pargana District Library Association and Ariadaha Association Library and Literary Club respectively. Apurba Kumar Chanda, Director of Education Department, State Government was president of the conference. Anath Nath Basu, Head of the Department of Teacher's training, Calcutta University was inaugurated the conference. Phanindra Nath Mukhopadhyay, editor of 'Bharatbarsha' was president of the reception committee. About 300 library patrons and about 50 representatives from different libraries were present in the conference. Different aspects of library movement particularly extension and development of library

system were discussed in the conference. Famous persons, like, Sushil Kumar Ghosh, Tinkari Dutta, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy participated in the discussion.²¹

Total eight conferences were held from first conference in 20th December, 1925 to 1946 in British India. Apart to this, some District Library conferences were also held in some district. Annual general meetings of Bengal Library Association and its predecessor Bangiya Granthalaya Prishad were also held by this time. Minutes of conferences and meetings were unlikely to preserved. Though, it found from the reports and articles of the paper that, main topic of them was development and extension of Public Library system. How to set up Public Library in village and town, how to develop their services, what programmes should be followed to popular Public Library. Role of Provincial Government, voluntary organization, common men to develop public library system and role of library to continue adult education were the topics of these conferences.

Library conferences and meetings in districts of Bengal

In undivided Bengal, process of formation of library association was started according to the proposal of all India public library conference at Belgaon in 1924. All Bengal library association was formed in 1925, but no conference was held up to two years of its inception. First two years, prime emphasis was laid down to aware countrymen about objective and utility of the new organization, preaching on library movement and objects of association were continued with slide lectures in different places. Sushil Kumar Ghosh, first secretary of the association performed main role in the programme. Meetings were held in Hooghly, Howrah, 24 Parganas, Birbhum and other districts to popularize library service especially public library service. Annual general meeting of the association was held in Over ton Hall at 86, College Street, Calcutta in 25th September 1927. Famous orator and political personality Bipin Chandra Pal delivered an attractive lecture on library use in the meeting.

Probably, enthusiastic persons of Hooghly district first forward to set up library association in their district getting inspiration from the proposal of the same conference. In 28th and 29th March, 1925, first Hooghly district library conference was held in Bansberia Public Library in the district. Hooghly district was founder of library movement as it was first introduced library movement complying with

modern thought. Even provincial institution 'Bangiya Granthalay Parishad' as well as 'Bangiya Granthagar Parishad' was founded few months later of Hooghly district library association.²²

Tulsi Charan Goswami, member of Indian parliament was president in the first Hooghly district conference at Bansberia Public Library and Kumar Munindra Deb Roy was president of Reception Committee. Hooghly library association was formed according to one proposal of the conference. Tulsicharan goswami was its first president. Munindra Deb was secretary. Tinkari Dutta and Amulyadhan Mukhopadhyay was joint secretary. Jadugopal Roy was accountant of the association. It was first example of organized library movement in district wise.²³

It was active up to ten to twelve years to spread library awareness in the district after its foundation. After few months of the Hooghly district conference, in 2nd and 3rd June, 1925, first Rajbari subdivision library conference was held at Balia Kandi in Rajbari subdivision under Faridpur district. Delegates from public libraries under Rajbari sub- division attended the conference. Rajbari sub- divisional library association was formed from the conference. It was the background to set up provincial and district level organization to strengthen literacy culture in the country.

Second Hooghly district library conference was held under the initiative of Uttarpara Saraswati Sammilan in 8th and 9th May, 1920. Many prominent personalities attended the conference. Haraprasad Shastry took chair of the conference. Harihar Seth perused an article on village library in the conference. Pramatha Nath Bandopadhyay delivered lecture on utility of universal library. It was found from the reporting of the Kumar Munindra Deb Roy that there were 57 public libraries in the district at that time and five of them had own building.

Third Hooghly district conference was held at Chandannagar Nrityagopal Smriti Mandir in 10th to 11th September 1927. Harihar Seth, eminent personality of Chandannagar was main organizer of the conference. Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan was president of the conference and Charu Chandra Roy was president of the reception committee. Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Jnanjan Neogi, Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Munindra Deb Roy and other significant personalities delivered

lectures on library movement, literacy and culture and ways to develop libraries etc. in the conference.

Fifth District Library Conference was held at Kishorilal Goswami Memorial Hall in Srirampur in 28th and 29th January 1933. Surendra Nath Mallick was president of the conference. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya was President of reception committee. Many eminent persons were attended the conference, such as, Kshitindra Deb Roy, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Dr. Panchanan Neogi, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Phanindra Nath Chakraborty, Nirmal Chandra Ghosh. Persons, such as, Tulshi Charan Goswami, Kshitindra Deb Roy, Dr. Gurudas Roy, Dr. Panchanan Neogi, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Baidya Nath Bandopadhyay and Tinkari Dutta delivered lectures and perused essays.

An attractive exhibition was organized to this purpose. Khaja Najimuddin, education secretary of Bengal was president of the valedictory Session of conference.²⁴

Calcutta Library Conference

In 1935, executive committee of Bengal Library Association decided to hold library conference in Calcutta. First Calcutta Library Conference was held at Asutosh Hall, Calcutta University in 12th January 1936. Khan Bahadur Asadullah, Librarian of Imperial Library was president of conference. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University was inaugurated the conference. Sir Harishankar Pal was chairman of the reception committee. Eighty representatives of libraries in Calcutta and its adjunct area were participated to the conference. Many renowned persons were present to the conference, such as, King Kshitindra Deb Roy, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, Tin Kari Dutta, Ardhendu Chandra Ganguly , Sukhen Chattapadhyay, Sanat Kumar Roychowdhury, Kshitish Prasad Chattapadhyay, Bhutnath Mukhopadhyay, Kumar Hiran Kumar Mitra, Maniklal Mallick, Swami Chandraswarananda, Prof. Charu Chandra Bhattacharya, Prof. Manmatha Nath Basu, Schindra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Harihar Seth, Satyendra Nath Basu, Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Sachindra Nath Rudra, Naresh Chandra Mitra, Sudhir Basu etc. Proposals accepted to the conference, such as,

- i) Recommended to the Calcutta University, Bengal Government and Calcutta Municipality to arrange scientific training programme to librarians.
- ii) Bengal Government and Calcutta Municipality were requested to provide sufficient financial grant to the libraries in Calcutta to perform their duties to transmit knowledge to the inhabitants of Calcutta.
- iii) Firmly opined to publish a monthly as a mouth- piece of the newly organized Calcutta Library Association.
- iv) Proposed to form Calcutta Library Association with the public libraries Calcutta and its adjunct area and it would be included to the Bengal Library Association.
- v) Proposed to form an Ad- hoc committee with the power to include extra member to prepare a constitution to conduct activities of the association till formation of Calcutta Library Association. The Committee was formed with following persons, such as,

Harishankar Pal, Sachindra Nath Rudra, Sudhir Basu, Charu Chandra Majumdar, Panchanan Chakraborty, Prof. Nasir Ali Khan, J.M.Dutta, M.L.Banerjee, Khan Bahadur Asadullah, Panchanan Neogi, Anath Bandhu Dutta, Dual Chandra Mallick, Sukhen Chattapadhyay, H.P.Chakraborty, S.Chatterjee, Naresh Chandra Mitra. It is expected that the committee will prepare a detail constitution of the Association announcing its missions as early as possible.²⁵

TRAINING PROGRAMME OF BENGAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Bengal Library Association planned to introduce library science training programme to organize libraries scientifically. At the time of reorganization of association in 14th September, 1933, the revised constitution of the association was prepared where training programme was mentioned.

A library science training camp was held in June, 1934 at Bansberia Public Library, Hooghly to organize libraries by trained librarian. Two week long the training programme was initiated and conducted by the association and Hooghly Zella Granthagar Parishad respectively and its responsibility laid down to Pramila

Chandra Basu. Twelve library employees were trained in that first training course in Bengal.

After Bansberia training camp, the association felt necessity to organize regular training programme for employees of public library, school library, college library and libraries of other institutional libraries. In July 1935, a six-month library science diploma course was opened with all India level twenty library employees under the management of government of India at the then Imperial Library.

Khan Bahadur Asadullah, the then librarian of Imperial Library was in charge of that training programme. Mainly graduate employees in libraries all over India had admitted to the course. There was no scope of training of employees of small and voluntarily organized libraries. Bengal Library Association had planned to organize two weeks training camp in districts and introduced library science certificate course in 1937 for regular training.

In 1937, one-month summer Library Science Training Course was initiated under assiduity of Bengal Library Association. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy was coordinator of the course. W.C. Wordsworth, editor of the Statesman inaugurated the training at Asutosh College, Calcutta in 30th April 1937. In this connection, Rabindra Nath Tagore sent benediction dated- 28.04.19 as, He wished the efforts of the Bengal Library Association would success. The association would meet a great demand in the country by training qualified librarians.²⁶

Twenty in - service librarians were admitted out of sixty applicants in first course. Eighteen out of them had succeeded. The then Prime Minister of Bengal, Fajlul Haque distributed certificates to successful candidate in Fourth Bengal Library Conference held at Ashutosh Hall, Calcutta in 24th July, 1937. The training had been continuing since 1937 but remain closed for a year in 1942 due financial constraints of association in period of the Second World War. Dr, Nihar Ranjan Roy, Biswanath Bandopadhyay, Pramil Chandra Basu, Tinkari Dutta, Pulin Krishna Chattapadhyay, Prof. Anath Nath Basu, Prof. Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Prof. Bivas Roy Chowdhury, Kumar Munindra Deb Roy and W.C. Wordsworth were teacher of first year training programme.

Bengal Library Associations certificate course in Library Science and two-week long training camp were able to co-ordinate libraries in Bengal to some extent. In

that sense, its training programme had played a positive role in library movement in Bengal.

In its different conferences and meetings of association, proposals accepted requesting Calcutta University and Dhaka University to start library science training course. As a result, library science diploma course was initiated in Calcutta University in 1945.

PUBLICATION OF BENGAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Development and expansion of public library system was principle object of Bengal Library Association from its inception. In one side, Association had started to laid emphasis on training programme in library science with a view to build well-organize Public Library system, it had too begun to emphasis on publication of document on library science and library movement in another side. It was not possible for the association to publish huge amount of publication in it's the then organizational condition. It is found from bulletin of association that it had emphasized to publish a series of books of a primary character in Bengali on librarianship for the benefit of library workers in rural and urban areas, students of library training classes, Bengali readers interested in libraries and other working areas.²⁷

Some significant publications of the Association during pre-independence period are given below:

- i) Library Andolan o Sikshabistar (Library Movement and spread of Education), 1930, Sushil Kumar Ghosh.
- ii) Bengal Library Association Bulletin, 1937.
- iii) Granthagar- Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, 1937.
- iv) Desh Bidesher Granthagar- Kumar Munindra Deb Roy, 1937.
- v) Granthakarnama- Pramil Chandra Basu, 1939.
- vi) Bengal Library Directory, 1942.
- vii) Bangla Dasamik Bargikaran- Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, 1935.
- viii) Pathagar- Anil Maitra and Nihar Ranjan Roy, edit., 1941-42.28

Observation

In the second part of nineteenth century and early part of twentieth century, effort was made to form library association to organize library movement 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 movement. 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 undivided Bengal. It is found that public library system was introduced in undivided Bengal in nineteenth century. Its development and extension 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, development and extension of public libraries. It had advocated for a public library 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 sufficient financial assistance from Government, introduction of library science course for working library professionals, publication of literatures on library organization and administration etc. As a whole, it appeared as a public institution though it was started in assiduity of educated peoples of Bengal. By 1933, existence of different types of library, such as, academic, public and special library were found in India but no national level association was formed where librarians could discuss their professional problems or issues on library development. It was mainly an earnest effort of the three librarians, Dr. M.O. Thomas, K.M. Asadullah, S. R. Ranganathan, Indian Library Association was formed at Calcutta in 12th September, 1933. It was a landmark and marked the beginning of a new era in the development and growth of libraries.

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3. Bhatia, *Ibid.*, pp.227.
4. Kumar, P.G.S. (*edit.*) *Indian Library Chronology*, New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Company, 1977, pp.119.
5. Majumdar, *op. cit.*
6. Kaula, P.N. (*edit.*) *Library Science Today: Ranganathan Fests. Papers Contributed on 71st Birthday of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, Volume 1*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965, pp.112.
7. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, pp.227.
8. Bhatia, *op. cit.*
9. Bhardwaj, Kuldeep Rani. *op. cit.*, pp.50
10. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, pp.233.
11. Proposals of First Bengal Library Conference dated 20th December, 1925, Calcutta, Albert Institute Hall *quoted in* Krishna Pada Majumdar, Pashim Banga Sadharan Granthagar Byabasthar Prasar o Bangiya Granthagar Parishad, Kolkata, Bangiya Granthagar Parishad, 2008, pp. 33.
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13. Basu, Pramila Chandra. *Bangiya Granthagar Parshader Katha*, Granthagar, Baishakh, 1372 B.S.
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16. Bandopadhyay, Gurudas. 'Bange Granthagar Andolan', Granthagar, 17,12, 1374 B.S. pp.558-60
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19. Proposals of Sixth Bengal Library conference, Bansberia, Hooghly district, Bansberia Public Library, 11th and 12th April, 1941. *Quoted in* Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp.57-59.
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