

EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF CALCUTTA PUBLIC LIBRARY: 1835-1953

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I, Marim Joice, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "Evolution and Transformation of Calcutta Public Library: 1835-1953" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The very existence of libraries affords the best evidence
that we may yet have hope for the future of man

— T.S. Eliot

Libraries have been the repository of knowledge and information, and are among the oldest institutions involved in disseminating knowledge. Since ancient times, humans have maintained libraries for some indispensable reasons. They were the main agencies through which the importance of traditions and cultures percolated down to the newer generations. They also preserved the history of a kingdom, an empire, and other human communities, thereby, served as archives of the generations that have gone by, and at the same time, as chroniclers. Religious texts, which were the sources of knowledge at one point of time in human history, were archived and preserved in the form of libraries, therefore, they became institutions that simultaneously safeguarded and dispensed knowledge.

Over the years, libraries have become an integral part of the education system and a dynamic force for the development of the society. The modern education system encourages independent learning which in turn requires heavy reliance on library for a wider and continuing access to knowledge. As a result, they are now a fundamental part of the present day education system. The role of public library has also changed from being a custodian of knowledge to the disseminator of knowledge, from being a store house to a service institution. These vital roles of providing wide spread and inclusive access to knowledge has been commonly acknowledged. They play a vital role in disseminating information as a local centre of information and learning to being a gateway of national and global information.¹ And with society increasingly dependent on widespread access to knowledge of the past and present, to carry out research and

¹ *National Knowledge Commission, Report to the Nation, 2006, Government of India, New Delhi, 2007, p.8.*

discovery, libraries are considered the greatest resources. Like any other social institutions, libraries have also evolved and developed with time and circumstances. It has evolved in response to the needs of the present day society and it has also been shaped to suit the demand of modern education.

In India, the earliest known libraries to have existed were the ones maintained by Buddhists and Jains. The main commission of these libraries was to preserve valuable hand written manuscript of their religious teachings. These libraries were referred to as *Jnan Bhandars* or 'knowledge warehouse.'² India has been a seat of learning since ancient time and libraries has been repositories of knowledge and information. There was a rich tradition of having libraries in the palaces of Kings, monasteries, temples and at the important centre's of learning but the public libraries are the creation and phenomenon of modern time. Early libraries of ancient India and modern public libraries vary significantly in terms of composition and collection of materials and due to the advent of printing press in the modern era; hence there was a shift in the collections and holdings of library from hand written books or manuscripts to printed books.³

With the advent of European in India, public library was introduced and it closely existed along with educational development policies they followed. Public library as an instrument of mass education is credited to the European when they began to set up public libraries in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and later to different parts of the country. Since then, libraries have acquired a renewed importance, and especially after India gained independence.

The establishment of the Calcutta Public Library (CPL) heralded a new dawn in the history of public libraries in India. Libraries, which hitherto, were privilege of Europeans and elite natives, was opened for everyone irrespective of class, caste and creed for the first time with the establishment of Calcutta Public Library in 1835. The Calcutta Public Library which is now the National Library of India was established with the 'aim to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature.'⁴

² John E. Cort, 'The Jain Knowledge warehouses: Traditional Libraries in India,' in Francisca Orsini's (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, London, ASGATE Publishing Limited, p.55.

³ Ibid, p.16.

⁴ *General Proceedings*, 23 September 1835, No.35.p.760.

It aimed to bridge the gap in Indian society with the promise of imparting knowledge to the society.

A study of the evolution and transformation of the Calcutta Public Library is vital on several counts. Firstly, it is a library which started as a humble public library, and it later proved to be a milestone in the formation of Indian intellectual class and also as symbol of a modern nation. Secondly, it is also an example of colonial institution mediating conflicting interests of the colonial and the native. Lastly, the study of the transformation of this library is significant not just in terms of its relation to the history of National Library of India but also because of the role it played in terms of publishing books, manuscripts, and making knowledge accessible to the masses.

The study on the origin and development of libraries in India is still a less explored area in academic research works. The present work is an attempt to trace the origin and transformation of Calcutta Public Library to National Library of India (NLI). This study gives due importance to the role of the library and looks at its development from 1835-1953 in terms of the administration, management, finance, location, readers, subscribers, its transformation from the Calcutta Public Library to the Imperial Library and finally to the National Library of India, and most importantly its role in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Background of the study

The research on libraries comprises not only their purpose and functions, but also the social set up which made the environment conducive for their establishment. Home to various intellectual movements, Calcutta was the intellectual hub of European India in the nineteenth century where education, western cultures and habits started to progress. Indian intelligentsia living in Calcutta who saw the benefits responded in a most creative way to aspects of western culture that became available to them in the city.⁵ As reading was a part of their culture and a habit they began to work on creating the similar environment after coming to India. They felt the need to establish a library where all the inhabitants of Calcutta could benefit from using it. It was also evident that being the capital city of European India, Calcutta could not be left destitute of the Public Library for long.

⁵ Marshall, P. J, The White Town of Calcutta under the Rule of the East India Company, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (May, 2000), pp. 307-331.

The stimulus for reading in Calcutta largely came with the spread of English education members of the Calcutta intelligentsia showed themselves to be widely read in western literature. Their access to such books was provided by the libraries as bookshops were still rare in Calcutta and had only begun to be opened in the mid 1850s and moreover the English books were literally prized and ‘they were much sought after, extremely expensive, and in fact, hard to come by.’⁶ Bayly notes that Public libraries for English and Indian language books, modeled on the Calcutta Public Library, had sprung up in most North Indian stations before 1857.⁷ Thus ‘the second half of the nineteenth century, saw a rapid increase in the number of libraries and reading rooms in the smaller towns and cities as well as in the Presidency capitals of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.’⁸ Recognizing the importance of library, and the necessity for maintaining libraries in educational institutions, most of the education commissions and committees recommended that every education institution should have libraries of their own. For instance, this importance has been highlighted by W.W. Hunter in the Report of the Indian Education Commission (1882): ‘No plan seems better fitted to encourage students to rely upon their own existence.’⁹ This quotation essentially points out the reliance on library by the students. The report further went on to say that ‘we cannot doubt that the more extensive the library to which a teacher has access the more life-like minded and effective will be his teaching. Nor should the direct benefit of a library to the pupil themselves be altogether overlooked.’¹⁰

The Company maintained one in the old Fort William which was the only library open to the people even though a number of commercial libraries were already in operation in the late eighteenth century, they were not meant for the common people. Unfortunately, this library was closed due to shortage of fund. With the dissolution of this library, the citizens of Calcutta were left without any kind of library where they could satisfy their intellectual thirst. It was at this juncture that Stocqueler, editor of the local daily ‘*Englishman*,’ who had experimented in Bombay in establishing a public library proposed that a public library be established in Calcutta as well. For that he drafted a

⁶ Joshi, Priya, Trading Places: the Novel, the Colonial Library, and India in Abhijit Gupta(ed.) *Print Areas: Book History in India*, 2004, Perminant Black, Delhi. p.17.

⁷ Bayly, C. A, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India: 1780-1870*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1996.

⁸ Joshi, Priya, ‘Culture and Consumption: Fiction the Reading Public, and the European Novel in Colonial India,’ *Book History*, Vol. 1 (1998), p.204.

⁹ *Hunter Committee Report*, 1882, p.116.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.239.

scheme for the establishment of a Public Library at Calcutta in 1835; both Indians and Europeans supported the scheme.

It was unanimously decided and agreed that 'it is expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a public library of reference and circulation that shall be opened to all ranks and classes without distinction and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature.'¹¹ Thus, Calcutta Public Library came into existence by the resolution taken at a general meeting on 31st August 1835 but was formally opened to the people on March 21, 1836.

Just after two decades of its establishment, financial condition of the Calcutta Public Library soon deteriorated with the withdrawal of a large number of Europeans. The decline in the number of subscribers was also attributed to the burgeoning of public libraries and reading rooms in and around Calcutta in the later stage of its existence. Many societies and institutions had also set up libraries and reading rooms in and around Calcutta, by the late 1850's the Calcutta Public Library was going through hard times financially as well as in terms of readers and membership. In spite of numbers of measures taken, the library could not be revived to its former glory, fortunately at this point the library found a savior in Lord Curzon, who came as the Governor General of India in 1899. Curzon, on seeing the priceless treasures in the dilapidated library, expressed his desire 'to create in Calcutta an Imperial Library worthy of the name, and to place at its disposal, as the nucleus of the collection, the Library of books and records now kept in the Home Department.'¹² However, he desired that the library 'should be a library of reference and a working place for students... the future historian of India should come and find their material there.'¹³

Thus, he saved the dying institution by buying off the rights of the proprietors and amalgamated the library to the existing Imperial Library in 1900. Curzon rechristened this library as the new Imperial Library. This library was opened to the people on 30th January 1903. With the opening of this library Curzon remarked, 'I have opened the recreated Imperial Library in the Metcalf Hall, which is now a beautiful place, well

¹¹ Letter from W.P. Grant, Curator of the Calcutta Public Library to G.A. Bushby, Secretary to the Government, 23 September 1835, *General Proceedings*, No. 35.p.760.

¹² *Curzon Paper*, No.73, 1899, 14 March 1899, p.52,

¹³ *Ibid.*

appointed, well furnished, and with a library collection of 100,000 books.¹⁴ Thus, an important landmark was created in the history of Calcutta as well as the libraries in India by setting as an example for the future public libraries to be modeled on this line. To show appreciation and gratitude to his Excellency's work, the *Hindoo Patriot* wrote on 2nd February 1903 that 'the least the resident of Calcutta can do is to abundantly avail themselves of the facilities offered.'¹⁵ Curzon's legacy continues to live till now, however with India's independence the name was changed to National Library in 1948. The change of name and location delayed the opening of this library by five years and finally Maulana Abul Kalam Azad opened the library in its new home to the public on February 1, 1953.¹⁶ With emergence of National Library a golden age of library was heralded in the Indian history.

Other Significant Libraries in India

In 1784, Sir William Jones, a distinguished scholar and linguist founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, but its library was opened only in 1808 after the society moved into its own building. The objective of the Society was to 'enquire into the history and antiquities, arts sciences and literature of Asia,'¹⁷ therefore, collections of the library comprised mainly of books, old and rare oriental manuscript, this makes the library unique and only one of its kinds in this country during that period. The first accession of any importance of the oriental books in this library was a gift from Seringapatam Prize committee, which includes among its collection many old and rare illuminated manuscript of Quran, Gulistan and Padshanama collected from the palace of Tipu Sultan. A large number of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian works mostly in manuscript which were transferred from Fort William College library were kept under the custody of the society. Besides, this library has in their collection several palm leaf manuscript of Burmese, Siamese, Javanese and Ceylonese. Chinese and Tibetan Xylographs were also in the possession of the society. These rich collections of Oriental works make this library a perfect place for scholars who are interested in the oriental studies.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Curzon Paper*, February 5, 1903.p.130.No.165.

¹⁵ *The Hindoo Patriot*, February 2, 1903, No., 164, p.47.

¹⁶ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, February 1, 1953, No.32.

¹⁷ Abulfazal M.Fazle Kabir, *The Libraries of Bengal, 1700-1947*, London, Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987, p.72.

¹⁸ Bimal Kumar Dutta, *Libraries and Librarianship of Ancient and Medieval India*, Atma Ram and Sons, 1970, p. 99.

Indian witnessed a cultural revolution which took place as a result of an interaction between East and West. One of the most important centres of this interaction was Fort William College which was established by Governor-General Wellesley in 1800. Wellesley promulgated the regulation for establishing Fort William College in July 1800.

The regulations clearly spelled out the purpose and objectives of the College and contained a note on the provision of facilities and required premises. The regulations were the following two points¹⁹:

I. A college is hereby founded at Fort William in Bengal for the better instruction of the junior civil servants of the Company, in such branch of literature, science and knowledge, as may be deemed necessary to qualify them.

II. A suitable building shall be erected for the college, containing apartments for the superior officers, for the students, for a library and for such other purposes as may be found necessary.²⁰

Those who came as junior civil servants were boys mostly in the age group of 13-16 and were at a very impressionable age, therefore, soon arriving in India they very often 'embarked upon a way of living which in some cases led to dissipation and physical decline.'²¹ Hence in order to train them in the knowledge and culture of the natives, a course consisted of six vernacular languages, besides Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit was taught. Some of the important English laws were also taught to the students.

Upon establishing the College at Fort William, Wellesley also contemplated to establish a well-stocked and valuable library for the institution. To form the nucleus of this library, he decided to acquire Tipu Sultan's collections, which had a valuable royal library in Seringapatam. At the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the European acquired this library's collections. Hence, the Governor-General decided that in the interest of the Company and for pursuance of knowledge and literature, the collection would serve the purpose better if it were located in the College.²²

¹⁹ Abulfazal M. Fazle Kabir, English Libraries in Eighteenth-Century Bengal, *the Journal of Library History* (1974-1987), Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall, 1979), University of Texas Press, pp. 449-450.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ David, Kopf, *European Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamic of Indian Modernization: 1773-1835*, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, p. 47.

²² Abulfazal M. Fazle Kabir, English Libraries in Eighteenth-Century Bengal, *the Journal of Library History* (1974-1987), Vol. 14, No. 4 (Fall, 1979), University of Texas Press, pp. 449-450.

Gradually this library expanded. In a speech in 1806, George Hilario Barlow, then Governor-General at Fort William, ‘expressed his satisfaction that so extensive and valuable a collection enriched the College library. He said that preservation and augmentation of Eastern manuscripts afforded the only means to arrest the destruction of oriental learning.’²³

The college later on emerged not only as centre for all literary related activities but also a centre for printing and publications. Since there was a focus on printing and publication the college’s collection of books, manuscripts grew by leaps and bounds. In order to house these collections for the use of the students as well as for college faculty, a need for a library was felt and consequently the ‘first institutional library of oriental books and manuscripts in India was founded at the college of Fort William in 1801-1802.’²⁴

In 1805, William Hunter was made college librarian. Upon assuming his duty as a librarian, he immediately set out to reorganize the library. Hunter was largely responsible for the success of the library as learning centre for oriental knowledge. The college library was benefited not only by students and faculty but a large number of enterprising Indians in Calcutta were also borrowing books from the library²⁵ which otherwise was not within the reach of the common people. Perceiving the college library as a public institution, David Brown announced in the press that with the inception of college library a public library was founded and at the same time taking it as privilege to appeal the public to donate books to the library.²⁶ Therefore, the role of library was as important as any other educational institution in imparting and disseminating European culture in India as well as restoring Indian vernacular languages.

The Fort William College’s library continued to cater to the literary needs of the people of Calcutta and this task was made easier for the common people when the private holdings of the college were made available to the general public on 23rd October 1818. This was a historic landmark because for the first time ‘modern India’s first public library opened its door.’²⁷ Unfortunately the life of this library was cut short with the

²³ Ibid., p. 451.

²⁴ Kopf, *European Orientalism*, p. 118.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Abulfazal M.Fazle Kabir, *The Libraries of Bengal, 1700-1947*, London, Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987, p.38.

²⁷ Kopf, *European Orientalism*, p. 119.

arrival of William Bentick as the Governor-General of India; this occurred due to a financial shortage as finance has always been a problem for most public libraries especially in their establishment phase.²⁸ Governor-General Bentick dissolved the college council on 1st March 1831, and with the dissolution of this council, the library also soon dispersed. Fortunately, the collections of the library found a new home in the Asiatic Society's library as 'most of the valuable college-library collections were gradually absorbed into the Asiatic Society's library.'²⁹ Later with the establishment of Calcutta Public Library in 1835, most of the European collection of the library of the college of Fort William was transferred to the new public library which later formed the nucleus of that library. The college of Fort William was officially and completely dissolved by the Governor-General Dalhousie on January 24, 1854.³⁰

Khuda Baksh library was established in Patna in 1876 but opened for the public only in 1891. This library was one of the significant and premier libraries of the 19th century. The library has an excellent collection of Arabic and Persian manuscripts and master pieces of oriental studies. As a result today Khuda Baksh library is the foremost Orientalia manuscript library in India.³¹ In 1969, it was declared under the act as an Institution of National Importance.³² In Madras Presidency, the Adyar library was founded in 1886 with the aim of making a temple of all faith as its founder, Col. H.S. Olcott, intended to be, with collection of the texts and pictures of great religious teachers worshipped throughout the world. The library was opened on 28 December 1888 with a gift of his personal collection of about 200 books. The collections in archaeology, art, history, philosophy and religion are considered as veritable treasures in this library.³³ Realizing the importance of library, Lord Connemara, the then Governor-General of Madras decided to establish a public library. Therefore in 1890, the Governor laid the foundation for the library. The library was formally opened on 5th December 1896. The library so founded was named after him in recognition of his

²⁸ This can also be seen in the establishment and later phases of the Calcutta Public Library.

²⁹ Kopf, *European Orientalism*, p. 233.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 135.

³¹ Mohamed Taher and Donald Gordon Davis, JR, *Librarianship and Library Science in India*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1994, p. 84.

³² Jashu Patel and Krishna Kumar, *Libraries and Librarian in India*, London, Greenwood press, 2003, p. 80.

³³ Jogesh Mishra, *History of Libraries and Librarianship in Modern India since 1850*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1979, p. 38.

efforts.³⁴ As per the Madras public library Act the library was declared as State Central Library in 1950 and become one of the four depository libraries in 1955.

In Tanjavur, the Saraswati Mahal Library is one among the few medieval libraries existing in the world. This library was built by a successive dynasty of Nayaks and the Marathas of Tanjavur. It contains very rare and valuable collections of manuscripts, books, maps and paintings on all aspects of Arts, culture, and literature. Maharaja Serforji assisted the library with funds. The Encyclopaedias Britannica in its survey of the libraries of the world mentions this library as ‘the most remarkable library in India.’ In 1918 this library was made as a public library. The library receives fund from the Government of Tamil Nadu for its maintenance and is funded by the Government of India for developmental activities. The library has the riches collections of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Tamil, Marathi, and Telugu.³⁵

Objectives of the Study

In the nineteenth century Bengal witnessed Cultural Revolution as a result of close encounter with the West. It also became a seedbed for various intellectual movements due to early association with western education. The period between 1835-1953 is characterized by emergence of several important institutions in Calcutta, four epoch-making events marked the year 1835 in India, they were, the establishment of the first Medical College in India at Calcutta on 1 February, declaration of English as the official language of India on 7 March, Liberation of Press in India on 3rd August and establishment of a Public Library.³⁶ The present study attempts to comprehend and analyze factors and reasons that led to the establishment of the first modern Public Library in Calcutta. In examining the forces that spurred the evolution of public libraries in Bengal (Calcutta), the main focus would be to analyze to what extent the establishment of CPL as centre of dissemination of knowledge and information affected in the intellectual development of the local reading population.

The Calcutta Public Library was established on a principle of universal access. This was the first public library to be opened to all class, caste and rank. The study explores

³⁴ Saheb Singh, *Library and Library movement for National Development*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing House, 2003, p. 50.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁶ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library, 2004, p.4.

how far the universal access to the library proved helpful for the general reading population. The CPL was a subscription library; the only source of sustenance was the subscription fee. In the absence of government support, the future of the library was bleak; this eventually led to the decline and amalgamation of the CPL to the Imperial Library in 1902 by Lord Curzon. The study will investigate the objective of Curzon in amalgamating of the CPL and elaborate the fundamental differences in the functioning of the two libraries.

Research questions:

The thesis introspects upon some pertinent questions that will eventually encapsulate the entire research findings.

1. What factors influenced the establishment of (public) libraries in Calcutta?
2. How did the advent of print facilitated the growth of libraries and what was the role of print in the dissemination knowledge?
3. How did Calcutta Public Library motivate reading and in turn helped in the education of the disadvantage group?
4. How did the Europeans use local support to achieve the objective of the library?
5. How Calcutta Public Library helped in bridging the gap between the information rich and information poor society?
6. What was the use pattern in the CPL?
7. Who selected the books for the CPL? Was it based on the taste of the Europeans or on the demand of the larger population of the society?
8. What was the intention of Curzon for amalgamating the CPL to the Imperial Library of India?
9. What was the focus of the Imperial library and was there any fundamental difference in the working of the library from the CPL?
10. Did the focus change after the Imperial Library became the National Library?

Review of Literature

The history of the library of India has not been a favorite area of study for many of the academic scholars. In spite of it being one of the oldest knowledge institutions, the area is relatively less explored, and therefore, the secondary sources on the history of libraries in India and particularly on National Library of India are perfunctory and scant.

Thus the study seeks to explore the prevalent literatures on the development of public libraries in India in general and origin and development of National Library of India in particular. This research analyses the relevant studies that have looked at this area of study. It is necessary for us to look into texts, reports, proceedings and so on to draw a clear picture of or understanding of these vital issues. The work based on the growth and development of the library movement has been historically analyzed and critically explored in this study.

History of libraries in India did not receive proper attention till Subodh Kumar Mookerjee explored the history of the evolution of libraries from ancient times to the modern libraries in his monumental work on development of libraries and library science in India. He traced the important centre of learning in India and also looked at libraries against the backdrop of educational development in contemporary India. He discusses how the establishment of libraries in India was influenced by the introduction of western education. Further the work analyzes the role played by the public libraries in socio-political fields in the 19th and early part of 20th century.³⁷ Also equally noteworthy is the work of A.M.F. Kabir, who traced the historical development of libraries in Bengal. His account on the development of libraries is presented in a phase wise beginning with church library to the emergence of academic libraries. He points out that among other key factors that influenced the development of libraries were spread of education, social growth, and rise and expansion of new communities.³⁸ Notable others like Jogesh Mishra,³⁹ Ohdedar,⁴⁰ Trehan⁴¹ and Khurshid⁴² throw considerable light on the same theme. However, their research mainly focuses on aspects of library history and development from the perspective of librarianship and library science.

In ancient India learning or gaining of knowledge was confined to the Brahmins. Hindus were never committed to writing down their religious text for fearing that the

³⁷ Subodh Kumar Mookerjee, *Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*, the World Press Private Limited, Calcutta, 1969.

³⁸ Abulfazle M.Fazle Kabir, *Libraries Development in Bengal 1700-1947*, London, Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987.

³⁹ Jogesh Mishra, *History of Libraries and Librarianship in Modern India since 1850*, Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi, 1979.

⁴⁰ A.K.Ohdedar, *The Growth of Library in Modern India: 1498-1836*, World Press private Limited, Calcutta, 1966.

⁴¹ G.L.Trehan, *Modern Public Library Movement and Services in India*, Library Literature House, Chandigarh, 1982.

⁴² A.Khurshid, *Growth of Libraries in India*, *International Library Review*, 1972, pp. 21-65.

sanctity of the scripture would be undermined if committed to writing. Knowledge and information was handed down orally and preserved in human mind. How knowledge was transmitted in the pre-print era was critically examined by Ananda E.Wood.⁴³

K.R.Rao argued that it was Jainism and Buddhism who exhorted the art of copying manuscripts, and they were the first to establish libraries in India to preserve and care for their manuscript which became popular and renowned in different parts of the world.⁴⁴ Similarly, R.K Bhatt, also looked at libraries from ancient to modern period and concluded that the early libraries were just a store house of knowledge and contained only of handwritten manuscripts or hand written books, but as modern libraries emerged with the introduction print and western education, there has been a shift in the collection of the library and consequently the role of library changed from custodian to disseminator of knowledge.⁴⁵

Before the introduction of printing libraries were mostly owned and maintained by the wealthy class or by religious institutions. Accesses to these libraries were limited to few classes because of the existence of caste, which had prevented the common people from reading and gaining knowledge. These classes were prohibited by cultural or religious practices from becoming literate. Thus, libraries were the only refuge for them providing access to knowledge and information for improving the quality of life.

Jashu Patel and Krishan Kumar maintained that early libraries were more like a storage warehouses. Modern concept of library being a service institute was missing. Jashu Patel and Krishan Kumar⁴⁶ argue that though several public libraries have come up well during the nineteenth century, however, the irony of the situation was that there was no effective Public Library which provided service to the masses. The services were primarily oriented to serving the thin layers of the society. They further argue that the libraries established during these period cannot be regarded as free public libraries in the true sense as they loaned books for home readings only to their members, who paid subscription fees and also deposited money as a security against loss of books. In fact, the membership was confined to the upper classes of the society only. The admission

⁴³ Ananda E.Wood, *Knowledge Before Printing and After: The Indian Tradition in Changing Kerala* Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1985.

⁴⁴ K.R. Rao, Library Development in India, *the Library Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2, April 1961, p. 137.

⁴⁵ R.K.Bhatt, *History and Development of Libraries in India*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995

⁴⁶ Patel, Jashu, and Kumar, Krishan, *Libraries and Librarians in India*, Greenwood Press, London, 2003.

and services for the common people have to wait till the 20th century, for the arrival of the scholarly Viceroy Lord Curzon.⁴⁷

A.R. Venkayachalapathy has observed that before the arrival of print, reading was limited only to a few sections in the society and the concept of private reading did not exist for the common people. Familiar reasons like the physical disadvantages of palm leaf manuscript and limited social accessibility made it essential to make special effort for them to read.⁴⁸ The introduction of printing brought about a tremendous impact in the growth of public libraries in India. According to Ulrike Stark, the arrival of protestant missionaries following the East India company charter of 1813 paved the way for the burgeoning of print and publishing production in India. It was the missionaries who introduced print and printed text and opened up a space for the interaction between Europeans and the natives through the medium of print. Printed text played a critical role in reaching out to both Hindus and Muslims community as during this period series of restriction on the mingling of different castes were existed. She claimed that natives first come in contact with printed text through the missionary tracts and school books as there was no any printing press before the arrival of the missionaries.⁴⁹

The power of print in the diffusion of knowledge was highlighted by Stuart Blackburn. He remarked that ‘no scholar can ignore the influence of print, especially its power to cast oral traditions in new forms, to new audiences, across linguistic and geographical boundaries.’⁵⁰ But this idea was contested by Anindita Ghosh, who argued that although print literature reached larger audiences but its spread was limited in important ways and the availability of the multiple copies did not lead to the demise of communal reading. Manuscript publications continued to exist alongside print texted.⁵¹ Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakraborty also argued that introduction of print did not provide equal access to everyone; access to literature was regulated by factors such as caste and

⁴⁸ A.R.Venkayachalapathy, Readers, Reading Practices, Modes of Reading, in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, U.K, Ashgate publishing company, U.K. 2013, p.318.

⁴⁹ Ulrike Stark Benares Beginnings: Print Modernity, Book Entrepreneurs, and Cross-Cultural Ventures in a Colonial Metropolis, in the ed. Book of Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty, *Founts of Knowledge*, Delhi, Orient Black Swan, 2016.

⁵⁰ Blackburn, *Print, Folklore*, p.1.

⁵¹ Ghosh, Anindita, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society: 1778-1905*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006.p.36.

gender.⁵² It was through the medium of public libraries which provided access to literatures available in the library to all classes in the society that afforded the chance to come in contact with books especially those who had never had acquaintances with books. According to Priya Joshi, public libraries function at times as an extension for schools and at other times as their substitute. As a result 'libraries became almost immediately visible within the colonial landscape with more established libraries often helping to start a newer institution in their cities, thus increasing the numbers of libraries substitute.'⁵³

But public libraries as an agent of mass education were introduced by the European. P.T. Nair, chronicled the account of the first modern public library established in Calcutta in 1835, the first public library to be opened to all classes of the colonial society which went on to become the National Library of India after independence in 1948.⁵⁴ The establishment of the Calcutta Public Library was considered as the landmark in the history of public libraries in India. This paved the way for library movement in India. The year 1903 was a watershed because the government for the first time took responsibility of providing free library services to all. Lord Curzon opened the Imperial library on 30th January 1903 which was an amalgamation of the CPL and remnants of East India Company Library and number of secretariat libraries known as the Imperial library formed in 1891 to all classes for free.

The modern library movement started in India at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to A.K. Dutta, there were three important forces which led to the library movement in India. The first was the introduction of western education, the second force was the wider use of printing press to publish books right in India, and the third was coming of the steamship and railways making it possible to obtain books cheaply and quickly from England. He further points out three aspects of library movement namely, establishment of a chain of public libraries, having trained personnel in libraries and finally securing proper status for the library staff.

⁵² Gupta and Chakravorty (ed.), *Founts of Knowledge*, p.7.

⁵³ Priya. Joshi, *Reading in the public Eye: The Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries:1835-1901*, in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*. 2013, London, Ashgate Publishing Company, p.438.

⁵⁴ P.T. Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, 2004

Dutta claimed that the establishment of Calcutta Public Library gave a great thrust for the establishment of similar libraries throughout the country especially where English education spread first. It became an agent to promote the reading habit of the people and also highlights that one of the most potent impacts it has on the society was that it invoked the growth of nationalism. While most of the collections of the library were Bengali translation of books about the great freedom fighters in the world and literatures of nationalist leaders, these books were mostly proscribed by the Government and these books were instrumental in fostering the growth of nationalism in India.⁵⁵

But, according to N.C. Chakravarty the first library movement was introduced in India by Prince Sayajirao Gaedwak of Baroda, who made free and compulsory education in his state. To enlighten the masses he chose public library as an agent to provide lifelong education and he linked primary school with free public library with the help of American Librarian, W.A. Borden in 1910.⁵⁶ Soon, the movement spread in three presidencies including provincial capitals such as Delhi, Punjab, and many districts and towns also witnessed similar movement through government initiatives.

Kesavan,⁵⁷ studied the role played by Lord Curzon in turning the Calcutta Public Library into a real cultural centre for everyone. The library which was exclusively hitherto enjoyed by the privileged few only was opened to all for the first time in 1903. He argued that prior to the arrival of Lord Curzon; there was hardly any library which was worth the name to be called public library in the true sense of the term. By amalgamating Calcutta public library into Imperial Library, Curzon rechristened it as Imperial Library and it was so designed that it should be a working place for students and a repository of materials for future use. He argues that due to the historical tradition of lending practice since the time of Calcutta Public Library, an anomaly is found to be prevailing in the National library; that is the existence of lending section in the National Library as no national library in the world has this system of lending out books to the readers. Since one of the roles of the national libraries throughout the world is to allow readers access to books the Calcutta Public Library was a pioneer in terms of its lending practice.

⁵⁵ Ashin Kumar Dutta, The public movement in India, in K.M. George. (ed.), *India Libraries: Trend and Perspectives*, Orient Longman Ltd., Calcutta, 1985.

⁵⁶ N.C. Chakravarty, *Library movement in India: An Introductory Essay*, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1962.

⁵⁷ Kesavan, B.S, *India's National Library*, National Library, Calcutta, 1961.

Library movement gained a wide recognition after India's independence in 1947. The Imperial Library was transformed into National Library in 1948. P.N. Venkatachari and M.N.Nagaraj⁵⁸ argues that with the formal opening of the National library in 1953, the golden age of library was heralded in the Indian history. This phase was marked with the phenomenal increased in the collections of the library which they argued that no libraries in the world would achieve such a feat within a short span as accomplished by the National Library of India. He argued that prior to the arrival of Lord Curzon; there was hardly any library which was worth the name to be called public library in the true sense of the term. By amalgamating Calcutta public library into Imperial Library, Curzon rechristened it as Imperial Library and it was so designed that it should be a working place for students and a repository of materials for future use.

But this observation was criticized by P.N. Kaula⁵⁹ who argued that the mere change of name of the then Imperial Library to National Library after India's independence in 1948 did not bring any changes in the working of the library. It still functions like a big public library. The National Library also fails to provide its national services as it is intended to. He therefore urged for a reappraisal of functioning and a more active role to be considered worthy for a true National Library. He opines that unless there is change in the location of the library, the main problem will continue to remain the same and the institution will continue to have unequal towards its responsibility. The National Library of India right now has dual functions, as National Library as well as public library that stemmed all anomalies in the functioning of the library. Another anomaly of present national library is that it is not situated in the national capital because of this accessibility is quite an obstacle. National Libraries all over the world are situated in the national capital of the country.

Public libraries have come a long way in India, according to K.M. George there has been tremendous revolution in the library development from the clay tablets to the microfilm down the centuries, and therefore, one of the main problems of today's libraries is how best to serve and help the readers. George argues that despite having large collection of information material of various kinds, it is undoubtedly the print media which constitute the bulks of library collections. He further points out that the

⁵⁸ Sen, N.B, (Ed.), *Development of Libraries in New India*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1965.

⁵⁹ Kaula, P.N, *The National Library of India: A Critical Study*, Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1970.

Renaissance in literature, the national resurgence and the spread of education in the 20th century were all responsible for the escalation of print media and all these factors contributed to the establishment of new libraries and expansion of the existing ones.⁶⁰

Mohamed Taher and Donald Gordon argues that by 19th century the appearance of public library in many parts of the country started and the sense of public library was already felt but low level of literacy and lack of financial support led to the stagnation of the growth of libraries during this period. After India's independence in 1947 the development in science and technology received a great impetus which had a great impact on the development of libraries in the country and therefore all types of libraries came into existence in the country. However, despite of their adequate appearances, these libraries needs to catch up with the best library system practice elsewhere in the world. Taher and Davis further claimed that the reasons for the stagnancy in the growth of the libraries in India have been mainly due to the lack of participation from the government side.⁶¹

From the perusal of the available literatures on the theme, it emerges that scholars who worked on the history of libraries in India are mostly cursory in nature. They traced the history of India chronologically and looked at from the perspective of library and information science and librarianship. Therefore, studies dealing on the history libraries from the educational perspective are yet to be explored. Therefore, this study opens up new vistas to locate a larger discourse of library in the educational perspective in the historical narrative.

Rationale of the Study

One of the primary reasons why a study on Calcutta Public Library was taken up is because of its significant character of being the first public library established in India. The rationale behind taking the time period 1835-1953 as the period of my present study is because this period is considered as the golden period in the history of public libraries in India. The establishment of Calcutta Public Library heralded the establishment of other similar public libraries all over the country and the library which

⁶⁰ George, K.M (ed.) *India Libraries: Trend and Perspectives*, Orient Longman Ltd., Calcutta, 1985.

⁶¹ Taher, and Davis, *Librarianship and Library science in India: An Outline of Historical Perspective*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994.

was hitherto enjoyed by the privileged few of the society was opened to all for the first time in 1903 by Lord Curzon.

The year 1835 is significant. Some factors helped in shaping the establishment of the first public library in this continent, which are the establishment of the first Medical College in India at Calcutta, the ratification of English Education Act of 1835 and the Liberation of the Press in India. These factors coupling with the absence of any public library in this continent were reasons that gave impetus to the founding of the Calcutta public library. By 1835, Calcutta had produced many educated natives in good numbers. Many educational institutions of higher standard were functioning from the city. The Hindoo College (1817), The Sanskrit College (1823), the Madrassa (1781) and several schools were already in existence in Calcutta.⁶² Since these institutions were devoid of libraries attached to the institutions, a need for library was felt which resulted in the increasing demand for books and reading materials to enhance their understanding of the subject taught in the class.

The intent of this study is to expand upon the of history of the CPL. The institution therefore acted as both locus and agent for dissemination and production of knowledge. This library served as a centre for the encouragement and development of scholarship among the native students. It also served as an extension of educational institution and imparted continuous learning by giving access to books to those who had left schools and colleges. In addition to benefitting upper classes it also served to open the doors of knowledge to poor students 'whose means do not afford them opportunities of purchasing books.'⁶³

The study gain pre-eminence, with an aim at exploring various measures taken up by the pioneers of the library with respect to its educational policies and programs. Within the growing body of literature of library history one finds that scholars are focused merely gathering the historical events rarely focusing on their functions. Although some literatures on the history of this library exist, it has many imbalances and gaps. The scholars are dispersed in their interests and aspect of looking at the historical accounts of the Calcutta Public Library. While the study of education with the emphasis on the contributions of missionaries have drawn the attention of the historian of India in recent

⁶² Nair, *Origin of the National Library*, p.5.

⁶³ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, October 1835, p. 277.

times, history of libraries and its educational role is relatively neglected area. This study uncovers the important role of the institution both as locus and agent of dissemination and production of knowledge.

Sources and Research Methodology

The study has applied historical method of analyzing the documents. The historical research drew heavily upon primary sources, archival material, and related published documents. This study is primarily empirical by nature, and as a result, it has to depend mostly on the primary sources in crafting history for a sound historical research. To trace the historical background of the origin of Calcutta Public Library, apart from personal private letters and correspondences which convey raw and reality of events, various archival documents like proceedings of the Home Department (Education Branch, Public Branch and other Miscellaneous Branch), proceedings of the Finance Department at the National Archives of India, proceedings of the Municipal Department and dispatches from the Directors and relevant papers at the West Bengal State Archives provided valuable information. Reports on various education commissions and committees and Annual Reports of the Calcutta Public Library, Imperial Library, and National Library of India would throw light on the nature and policies regarding the functioning of the libraries would be very important for the proposed study.

Apart from these sources/materials available in various repositories in India, the substantial amount of material collected from the India Office Library which is a section of European Library in London proved to be of major contributor for this study. The private papers of Lord Curzon, letters and correspondence between person from India and persons in England preserved in the European Library formed as core of the study which helped in the understanding of the objectives behind the establishment of the Calcutta public library and administrative policies pursued in amalgamating the Imperial library with the CPL.

Contemporary Journals and Newspapers accounts are a great of primary sources which provides reality of historical events. Some important ones are: Amrita Bazaar Patrika (February 1, 1953), Calcutta Monthly Journal (October 1835-1840), Calcutta Review, Reformer, The Bengal Hurkaru (July 1838-February 1861), The Dawn, The Englishman

(1835-1852), The Friend of India, The Hindu Patriot (1865-1903), The Star of India (21st April, 1947), The Statesman (July 1, 1948- February 2nd, 1953) etc. Besides the above journals, the Native Newspapers translated into English are also used to get an idea of the natives' responses to the proposed establishment of the Calcutta Public Library and in understanding the sentiment/reaction towards its amalgamation to the Imperial library in 1900 and to the Transformation of National Library of India in 1948. The Reports and proceedings collected from the National Library and Central Secretariat Library have been useful in exploring the process and functioning of the library. Contemporary (news) papers and Journal are other archival sources to substantiate my thesis.

As with any other studies, the used of secondary sources, like published books, articles and newspaper reports were incorporated in this study also.

Limitations of the Study

The study limits itself to the origin and transformation of Calcutta public library. It is limited to a particular time period that is from 1835 to 1953. The study does not cover the recent development of National library of India. Also the study focuses primarily only on Calcutta Public Library and its subsequent transitions to the Imperial Library and does not deal with other public libraries. The access to primary resources was difficult due to the condition of the handwritten documents and other data related to the time period. Some documents though available could not be issued because it has become too brittle to be handled. Due to the humid weather as well as lack of proper preservation many documents were unreadable and many a time these documents were made inaccessible by the library administration. Another limitation is the lacked of unpublished documents such as the letter of correspondence between persons in India and abroad, like Curzon and secretaries of state for India which are shelved abroad. Yet another limitation of the present study is that it focuses only on the evolution of Calcutta Public Library and its subsequent transformations the National Library of India, and it does not look at other types of libraries, partly because inclusion of other types of libraries would have divert the focus and may be too wide a scope to be effective. Therefore, the study has to be seen in the light of these limitations.

Framework of the Study

The study has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces to various dimensions of the study such as the objectives of the study, the research questions raised in the study, the rationale behind undertaking the study and methodology followed in this study. The chapter evaluates the context of the evolution of Calcutta Public Library and locates historically important questions related to its role and its impact on the society. The origin of the libraries in India has been explained in detailed as a background to the establishment of the Calcutta Public Library. The reasons for probing into the genesis of the public libraries are to offer some background for understanding the process of development of public libraries in India.

Chapter Two - Pre-Print Culture, Introduction of Printing and Growth of Libraries in India

This chapter discusses the concept of library and modes of transmission of knowledge in the pre-print culture. How printing of books facilitated in the growth of public libraries in general and Calcutta Public Library in particular. This chapter also examines the advent of printing press in India, the role of printing in the proliferation of libraries and the easy access provided to books which were hitherto inaccessible to the masses, the role that printing played in the dissemination of knowledge is also a major focus of this chapter. Printing has been a tool of learning, the preserver of knowledge and the medium of literature and was the great means of communication.⁶⁴ Introduction of western technology of print was a great boon for the human civilization through which disseminations of knowledge was made possible in all nook and corner of the world. Through this, knowledge is easily available to all classes in the society transcending boundaries of caste, class and creed. Thus, it is undeniable that printing serves equally the rich as well as the poor class and it was rightly termed as ‘divine art’ for the urban rich and ‘poor man’s friend’ for the humble rural people.⁶⁵

Chapter Three -Evolution of the Calcutta Public Library

⁶⁴ Warren Chappel, *A short history of the printed word: New York Times*, Andrew Deutsche , A Grafton Book,1972.p.3

⁶⁵ Elizabeth L. Eisenstien, ‘Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought : A Preliminary Report, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol.40, No.1 March 1968, Chicago University press,p.5.

This chapter documents the establishment of the first modern public library in India, the Calcutta Public Library in 1835. The establishment of CPL was a landmark on several counts, and first of all, it was the first modern public library to be established by concerted effort of the European and the Indian communities. It was the first public library to be opened to all ranks and classes in the colonial society and its eventual absorption to become the Imperial Library in 1900 and finally following country's independence CPL was transformed into the National Library of India in 1948. The chief factor that contributed to the growth of the CPL was the active participation of the native elites the largest contribution to endow was from prince Drwarkanath, who became the first proprietor of the library in 1835. However, in spite of the robust support of the public, CPL started to face decline in its membership. The reasons for the decline will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will provide an elaborate description of the socio and cultural context of Calcutta in the period of interest. The introduction of English education and its impact and consequently the demand for public libraries is focused in this chapter.

Chapter four -Transition of Imperial Library to the National Library of India

The transition of Imperial Library to the National Library of India was examined. Curzon amalgamated the Calcutta Public Library to the then Imperial Library of India in 1900 and transformed it into a Library worthy to be at the capital of Indian Empire. When Curzon came to India as the Governor General in 1899, he was very disappointed that there were no libraries where he could study about India. As an avid reader, he was a regular visitor at European Museum, London. He, therefore, decided to amalgamate the two dysfunctional libraries and create a library worthy for the capital. Hence, rooted on the commitment with which Curzon acted to attain his objective, the CPL merged with the old Imperial Library in 1900, and formally opened it to the public on 30 January 1903. The establishment of the Imperial Library was considered as the first library movement in India because this was the first public library in the real sense of the term with no membership subscription fees at all. The Imperial Library became a reference and repository of material for the future historians of India, in which so far as possible, every book written about India at any time can be seen and read. Curzon's cherished dream of establishing a 'state library worthy of the capital of an empire'⁶⁶ had

⁶⁶ Home, Public-A, 28 February 1899, No.96-D, p1.

finally been realised with the transformation of Imperial Library into a National Library in 1948.⁶⁷ Curzon's legacy continues to live on even today in a new avatar as the National Library since 1948.

Chapter Five- Emergence of National Library and Post Independence Development, examines the post-independence developments of the National Library of India in the context of its post colonial rule and the growth of the library through its vicissitude and the turmoil following the country's independence in 1947. The National Library of India came into existence, symbolizing the nation's commitment to collecting, preserving, and disseminating of knowledge by giving access to its entire citizens in the pursuit of knowledge and information. Various government policies and programs implemented by the Government are also discussed. It also deals how Imperial Library was changed into National Library after India's independence and gives more light on the role of National Library in the development of the public libraries in India.

Chapter Six is the conclusion. It will summarize the entire findings of the research

⁶⁷ *The Statesman*, 1 July 1948.p3.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-PRINT CULTURE, INTRODUCTION OF PRINTING AND GROWTH OF LIBRARIES IN INDIA

This chapter provides a historical background of the early indigenous concept of libraries and the modes of transmission of knowledge in the pre-print culture. What were the roles of the libraries in diffusing printed words? What were the modes of transferring of knowledge? Who can access those printed materials? And what was the impact of printing on the growth of libraries? These are some of the pertinent questions that will be probed into and discussed in this chapter.

Consequently, the conclusion of the above discussions will be applied to find how the advent of printing facilitated the growth of libraries in general and Calcutta Public Library in particular. The chapter will also examine the advent of printing presses in India and its role in proliferation of smaller libraries in and around Calcutta. The objective is to explore the pathways and the institutions involved in providing access to printed books which hitherto, were inaccessible to the masses. This has resulted in providing the backdrop to the proliferation of public libraries, and the dissemination of knowledge, which is a major focus of this chapter. In India, the history of Library is incomplete without exploring the history of print. It is the underlying character of this dependence that will form the focus of this chapter.

Printing, the innovative technology of the west, had been a vital agent through which Indian society underwent massive transformation in respect to dissemination of knowledge. Through this technology, mass production of texts was made possible and libraries became the medium through which the pattern of reading was inculcated. In other words, libraries have bridged the gap between books and readers and made learning easier.

In the later decades of nineteenth century, Calcutta witnessed a surge in book markets and the rise of indigenous printing presses. This however, did not provide the privilege for the masses to afford and own books. This is where libraries filled in the gap, by providing materials for general readers from different socioeconomic strata for free. In

the absence of materials to read, newly acquired skill of reading would be useless, and education will render no help in elevating a person's ability to develop. Therefore, libraries began to fulfill responsibilities in areas of education as much as formal schooling catered to intellectual development of a person.

Libraries have existed in India since ancient times. Early libraries known to exist were maintained by Buddhists and Jains. According to a Svetambara Jain tradition, the first libraries were built in the late eight century in order to preserve valuable handwritten manuscripts of Jain knowledge. The libraries were referred to as Jnan Bhandars or 'knowledge warehouse.'¹ Manuscript writing had been practiced by Buddhists and Jains as part of their religious culture. Similarly, Stuart Blackburn also propounded that, 'writing, in the form of Brahmi script was probably first brought to south India by Jains and Buddhists during Ashoka's reign in the third century before Christ'² and to preserve these collections, libraries were built. Subsequently, it was believed that Buddhists were the first to built libraries in India. Buddhist universities' libraries such as in Nalanda, Valabhi and Vikramasila had collections of thousands of valuable handwritten manuscripts which were consulted and also copied by teachers and students not only from India but also from abroad. This was one of the reasons why Chinese scholars spent months and years in Nalanda copying religious texts and other works of Buddhism,³ which was one of the integral parts of the course of study.

The Historical study about the origin and purpose of such knowledge institution is very rare and still in gestation period. Like any other social institutions, libraries have also evolved and developed with time and circumstances. To understand the evolution of such knowledge institutions it is important to trace their historical background. It is even more important to unearth their history when the study is about the keeper of our past, culture, and the origin of a nation's reservoir of knowledge.

Oral Tradition, Writing, and Manuscript

Since ancient times, India has a long standing indigenous tradition of learning and dissemination of knowledge. When written records were unfamiliar to humankind, the

¹ John E. Cort, 'The Jain Knowledge warehouses: Traditional Libraries in India,' in Francisca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, London, ASGATE Publishing Limited, p.55.

² Stuart Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India*, Delhi, Permanent Black, 2003. pp.19-20.

³ T.M. Thomas, *Indian educational reforms in Cultural Perspective*, New Delhi, S. Chand & Co, 1970.p.77.

main mode of transmitting both religious and secular knowledge was through oral narratives- people lived in a traditional society where knowledge was handed down orally by the previous generations to the younger generations.⁴ They were considered as the most important treasure trove of knowledge.

Although writing was known in India since 3rd or 2nd century B.C., it did not become a prevalent art because of the prohibition in writing down religious scriptures. Indians were also aware of the art of writing on paper which was introduced by the Muslims invaders around 11th century A.D.⁵ In spite of possessing knowledge about the newly introduced art which could help in the transmission of instructions and knowledge easily and help in the wider diffusion of knowledge, Hindus were never committed to writing down their teachings. The tradition involved a strict disciplinary regime in the reproduction and transmission of religious knowledge orally and through performances. There were many modalities in literary transmission through performances which required special attention and effort to personally ensure that the details of forms were correctly maintained.⁶ The same strenuous practice had to be followed by the recipients for the maximum accuracy of the forms from the transmitters. Besides involvement of many technicalities in the process of transferring of traditional knowledge and wisdom through oral medium, the sources could not be treated as analogous to written document as Sturges and Neill argued 'for although documents may be open to a variety of interpretations, each interpretation is capable of justification on the grounds that it is based on equal access to the full written text of the original document.'⁷

The major drawback associated with oral method of transmitting a messages lies in the fallibility of human mind as the longer the distance it travels, the greater will be the error⁸ because human memory has its own limitation. Rogers and McChesney also argued that 'no instrument is able to survive the immediacy of the spoken words or the memory of several generations of individual, word of mouth is soon subjected to omissions, modifications and, quite frequently, the introduction of error and makes

⁴ Ananda E.Wood, *Knowledge Before and Printing and After: The Indian Tradition in Changing Kerala*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1985, p.1.

⁵ *Reminiscences of the National Library*, Director National Library of India, Kolkata, 2006.p.11.

⁶ *Ibid*.p.3.

⁷ Paul Sturges and Richard Neill, *The quite struggle: Library and Information in Africa*, London, Mansell Publishing Limited, 1990.p.9.

⁸ Raymond Irwin, *The Heritage of the English Library*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964.p.16.

personal memory imperfect.’⁹ Another disadvantage of oral tradition is that the secret knowledge and wisdom that a person possess perish with the death of the person. However, despite various drawbacks associated in the literary transmission through oral medium, it still predominate the Hindu society. As a result, print culture could not pervade in the Hindu society for a long time despite its long years of existence. A close study of the cultural history of ancient and medieval India enables us to understand the factors that worked against introducing the art of printing in India.

It was believed that in Hindu tradition, texts were not written down because of the Brahmins’ apprehension of losing their monopoly over knowledge. They not only prohibited the non-Brahmins from reading the scriptures but also proclaimed that the sanctity of the scripture would be undermined if they were committed to writings.¹⁰ In the same manner the cultivation of memory that was central to the Vedic tradition also discouraged the practice of writing for the reason that learning Veda in concrete form, text or artefact by means contrary to reason, such as from a written text could never achieve the efficacy of the Veda learned in the authorised way, but believed that the only way to achieve the efficacy was by ‘repeating precisely what has been pronounced in the mouth of the teacher.’¹¹

The role of hearsay and memory art continued to be practiced in transmission of all forms of knowledge in Hindu tradition for a long time in spite of strict discipline regime required in maintaining it. Thus, Hindu religion’s practices who believed in the sanctity of oral transmission of knowledge was a deterrent to the change brought by a print as a result manuscript and scribal culture remain impermeable to print which was brought to India by Christian missionaries.¹² Conversely to Hindu practices, monastic libraries took an active interest in the development of the new technology and promoted its use and growth as a means to serve the needs of the scholar community in the early era of printing.¹³

⁹ A. Robert Rogers and Kathryn McChesney, *The Library in Society*, Colorado, Libraries Unlimited Inc. 1984, p.8.

¹⁰ K.R. Rao, Library Development in India, *the Library Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2, April 1961, p. 137.

¹¹ Sheldon Pollock, Literacy Culture and Manuscript Culture in Pre-colonial India, in Francisca Orsini (ed.), *The History of the Book in South Asia*, 2007, p.5.

¹² Francisca Orsini, introduction, in Francisca Orsini (ed.), *The History of the Book in South Asia*, p.xii.

¹³ Barbara Halporn, Libraries and Printers in the Fifteenth Century, *Libraries and Culture*, 1981, p.140.

However, heterodox religions like Jainism and Buddhism which revolted against Hinduism exhorted the art of copying manuscripts and strongly maintained that preserving knowledge in memory alone was precarious because of the fallibility of the human mind. Such realization led to gradual relaxation of the tradition among the learned Hindus.¹⁴ Written copies of manuscript have long played an important role in Jain intellectual, ritual, and community life. In the absence of any enlightened teachers according to Jain cosmological doctrines, texts containing the teachings of Mahavira are essential for the guidance of Jain community.¹⁵ Same as Jainism, Buddhism was also committed to writing its religious teachings. Different writing materials were used before paper was introduced in India which include palm leaves, metal plates, wooden boards, and prepared clothes. The method of writing changed with the advancement of scientific technology. One such writing material which sustained for centuries both in North and south India was the talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) till it was replaced by paper.¹⁶

It was believed that manuscripts were mainly of religious teaching as stated by David Wyatt, ‘certainly 90 percent of the manuscripts are religious but that still leaves ten percent which covered just all about every subjects, from poetry to other literature to law and medicine, History and veterinary science,’¹⁷ but manuscripts in these monasteries libraries comprised of various *sastras* embodying philosophical, religious, and allied discourses of both Brahmanism and Buddhism. According to K.R. Rao, the Buddhists were the first to establish libraries in India, which became popular and renowned in different parts of the world. Foreign scholars and travelers came for learning and access these libraries. Nalanda University had a splendid library known as Dharma-ganja or the ‘mart of knowledge’ which was situated in three huge buildings called as Ratnasagra, Ranodadhi and Ratnaranjaka.¹⁸

Whether to recognize those monastic university libraries as ‘library’ in the true sense of the term requires Gordon’s elucidation. According to him, ‘in modern terminology the very first collections would probably be classified as archives rather than as libraries,

¹⁴ K.R. Rao, Library Development in India, *the Library Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2, April 1961, p. 137.

¹⁵ Jon E. Cort, The Jain Knowledge Ware Houses: Traditional Libraries in India, in Francisca Orsini (ed.), *The History of the Book*, p.86.

¹⁶ Blackburn, *Print, Folklore*, p.21.

¹⁷ Joshua Christopher Mika, *Discriminating Taste: Editing Siam’s Patrimony and the Birth of the National Library 1905-1925*, Unpublished Master Thesis University of Hawaii 2012, p.39.

¹⁸ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Delhi, Isha Books, 2014(reprint) 1934, p. 268.

since they were primarily records of rulers and business transactions. But libraries in the sense of collections of science, literature, medicine, religion, and the like are apparently almost old.¹⁹ He further enunciated that libraries seem to have come into existence not long after the invention of writing itself.²⁰ And with the discovery of the magic of the art of writing that wisdom of the community were written down and preserved for the future generations to learn. It is thus, for the care of these records that libraries emerged.

The advent of mass produced printed books elevated libraries into a new position altogether. A library is no more simply a store house of books but a service institution and with this responsibility; libraries have also assumed a greater role and responsibilities in the society. The role of libraries in providing widespread and inclusive access to knowledge has been widely acknowledged today and as a result, libraries are at present expected to 'serve as a local centre for information and knowledge and to be a gate way to national and global knowledge.'²¹ After the advent of printing, dependence on oral systems of transmission has diminished to the point until they become no more than trace element in language and value.²²

Introduction of Printing and the Growth of Libraries

Printing has been the tool of learning, the preserver of knowledge, the medium of literature, and a great means of communication.²³ Introduction of western technology of print was a great boon for the human civilization through which disseminations of knowledge was made possible in all nooks and corners of the world, through which knowledge became easily available to all classes in the society transcending boundaries of caste, class and creed. Thus, printing serves equally the rich as well as the poor class, and it was rightly termed as 'divine art' for the urban rich and 'poor man's friend' for the humble rural people.²⁴ Stuart Blackburn has highlighted the power of print when he remarked that 'no scholar can ignore the influence of print, especially its power to cast oral traditions in new forms, to new audiences, across linguistic and geographical

¹⁹ Williams R. Gordon, 'The Role of the Library in the Growth of Knowledge.' p.58.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ National knowledge Commission Report to the Nation 2006, Government of India, New Delhi, 2007. p.8

²² Francis Robinson, 'Islam and the impact of print in south Asia in Nigel Crook (ed) Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. p.62.

²³ Chappel, *New York Times*, p.3.

²⁴ Elizabeth L. Eisenstien, 'Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol.40, No.1 March 1968, Chicago University press, p.5.

boundaries.’²⁵Printing also enabled certain text and information to transmit faster and widely than previously possible by speech or writing and greatly facilitates in the proliferation of public libraries.²⁶

The culture of publishing texts was, like most other items of everydy modernity, introduces into India by Europeans.²⁷ Printing was brought to India in 1556 by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries when they set up the first printing press in Goa,²⁸ and was initially used for missionary’s enterprises. It was the Christian missionaries who appealed for printing presses to be dispatched to the mission stations for evangelizing purpose. Printing press was needed for multiplying of the Bible and other Christian literatures and also for translating in different Indian languages. For missionaries realized that translation of gospel in their own languages would be more effective in understanding the gospel in the most meaningful and in a personal way. Through printing text, the gospel was spread to wider social class. It could pervade to places where physical presence was not possible at times owing to various reasons. Printing thus, became the most vital instrument in spreading the gospel among the Indian natives.

The arrival of printing in northern part of India was marked as the important landmark in the history of printing in India. Though print was already introduced much earlier in southern part, it came to this part of the country only after the arrival of William Carey, a Baptist missionary in 1793. Driven by zeal to translate the New Testament into Indian languages as he acquired mastery over 15 languages already including Sanskrit, Carey bought a wooded printing press in 1798 for this mission. The arrival of wooden printing press by boat at Madanbati in Bengal was received with great jubilation by William Carrey and his colleagues convincing villagers to believe that it was the idol of the Europeans.²⁹

²⁵ Blackburn, *Print, Folklore*,p.1.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁷ Tapti Roy, Disciplining the Printed texts: Colonial and Nationaist Surveillance of Bengali literature, in Partha Chatterjee (ed.), *Texts of power emerging and diciplines in colonial Bengal*, Calcutta, Samya, 1996, p. 30

²⁸ Ulrike Stark, ‘The coming of the book in Hindi and Urdu, in Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, p.183.

²⁹ Ibid. p.190.

The establishment of the Serampore Mission Press, started by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1800, may be considered a watershed in the movement from scribal to the printed word.³⁰ In the same year, the Fort William College also established printing press for printing texts for the young officers of the East India Company to learn the local languages.³¹ Thus, began a fertile period for publishing, fostered by Governor General Warren Hasting and led by Sir William Jones and his generations of great Orientalist.³² Even though it was the missionaries who introduce printing and the books to the Indian, it was the Colonialism which eventually got credited for the novelty of this innovation.³³ However, the 'crucial role missionaries played everywhere in India in the establishment of printing presses and the creation of fonts for Indian languages and script, in early prose writing, Bible translations, and Textbooks fostering in a religious culture through their large production and distribution of polemical tracts is undisputed.'³⁴

Scarcity of printed books in the initial years of printing era often meant books were not for reading but to stand as respect of artifact signifying authority.³⁵ In the absence of book shops in Calcutta till the last decade of the nineteenth century³⁶ printed texts were very hard to come by. Due to the limited availability of printed artifacts and restricted literacy on account of social factors such as caste, class, and religion, a printed book was quite novel,³⁷ and admired for their novelty value and used for decorating bookshelves in living room of prosperous households.³⁸ Besides these factors, other reasons that contributed to make printed text dearer in the initial years were the pricing policies followed by Paternoster row which controlled and regulated the book market. This was coupled with the issue that nascent publishing industry rendered books either

³⁰ Rita Kothari, Publishers' Perspective, in Orsini (ed) *The History of the Book*, p.531.

³¹ Tapti Roy, Disciplining the Printed Texts: Colonial and Nationalist Surveillance of Bengali Literature, in Patha Chatterjee (ed.) *Texts of Power Emerging and Disciplines in colonial Bengal*, Calcutta, Samya, 1996, p.30.

³² Gramham Show and John Randell, 'From Conversion to Subversion: 250 years of printed book in India, John Randell, *Book Of Asia*, UK, 2015, p.III.

³³ Stuart Blackburn, *Print, Folklore*, p.9.

³⁴ Francesca Orsini, 'Introduction,' p.XVII

³⁵ Venkatachalapathy, A.R, 'Readers, Reading Practices, Modes of Reading' in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book*, p.311.

³⁶ Tithi Bhattacharya, *The sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848-85)*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.148.

³⁷ Ibid, p.312.

³⁸ Ghosh, 'Power in Print', p.182.

to be too expensive or too elusive for purchase.³⁹ As a result the usefulness of the print could not be realized in the early period of print.

The power of the print could be best realized only when the printed books were duplicated and circulated for public readings by making easily accessible to all for public consumption. However, this idea ran contradictory to the Hindu traditional practice of limiting access to only certain classes of the society. Eisenstein also maintained that ‘the notion that valuable data could be preserved best by being made public, rather than by being kept secret, ran counter to tradition, led to clashes.’⁴⁰ The printing text gave the people a wider access to knowledge which in turn helped in the spread of literacy. But, the nineteenth century literacy was not synonymous with the literacy acquired through formal schooling, which Orsini strongly suggest. However, books of entertainment reproducing oral forms were crucial in bridging the transition to print and instilling a habit of reading.⁴¹

The dynamic power of print was most effectively used by the Christian missionaries in India to further their religious interest. The missionaries needed the press for evangelical purposes in propagating their faith with the objective to translate and popularize the scripture in Indian languages.⁴² Print was not only a key to spreading the gospel and Christian propaganda, but it was also crucial to the missionaries’ mission of proselytizing through education. Print also further helped the missionaries to bring about a propagation of a religion in a more personal and easy way because the printed word could pervade easily to any individual or group. At times when the missionaries faced barriers in spreading the gospel in certain Indian society due to class existence, printing by multiplying texts struck right at the heart of person to person in the transmission of Christian knowledge.⁴³ Nevertheless, missionaries became the pioneers of vernacular printing in India. The first book printing in India was in Tamil in 1577 by the Portuguese. Books such as catechisms, confessionary, and the lives of the saint were

³⁹ Joshi, Priya, ‘Reading in the Public Eye: The Circulation of Fiction in the Indian libraries, 1835-1901,’ in Francisca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, 2013, Ashgate publishing company, London, p.433.

⁴⁰ Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Revolution in early modern Europe*, 1983, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.81.

⁴¹ Francesca Orsini, *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India*, Delhi, Permanent Black, 2009, pp.231-232.

⁴² Kesavan, *History of Printing in India*, p.190.

⁴³ Francis Robinson, ‘Islam and the impact of print in South Asia in Nigel Crook (ed.), *Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. p.69.

produced and the same was true of the books printed by the protestant in the eighteen century.⁴⁴

Printing received a momentous boost when Charter Renewal Act of 1813 opened India to missionary activity. Until 1813 it forbade the initiation of missionary activities within its territories. Prior to that, it was only in the Danish enclave of Serampore that the Baptist missionaries like William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward could engage in proselytization and start to spread the gospel in printed form. Opened in 1802, the Serampore mission soon grew into the largest printing press in south Asia, inaugurating a period in the history of Indian language printing that was dominated by missionary activity.⁴⁵ The removal of the press law by the Governor General Lord Metcalf in 1835 was the opening of flood gates of printing for the native printers. The first publication issued from this pioneering press was the Carey's translation of Gospel of Mathew in August 1800 printed in 125 demi-printed pages. The mission press was involved in two kinds of printing; Biblical literature and text books for the Fort William College, and elementary vernacular school.⁴⁶ Accordingly, a large number of people first encountered the printed word through missionary tracts and school books. Tithi Bhattacharya had pointed out the power of print to immortalise all literary and knowledge. The technology of print thus found the required compatibility with the idea of print as a devise for civilizing.⁴⁷

The advent of the print in India was followed by unprecedented growth in the printed word which was once unreachable to many in the Indian society. From the new culture, created by the coming of the print, emerged an enthusiastic class of reading group who had never had an access to written book before the advent of print since reading practices were restricted only to a limited class such as Kayastha and Brahmin in the Hindu society. Religion prohibition coupled with the scarcity of manuscript during these periods led to even more limited diffusion of literary ideas to other classes. However, barriers of all kinds hindering to access to reading were removed by the arrival of print and the rapid spread of literacy. Thus, the availability of cheap print

⁴⁴ Blackburn, *Print, Folklore* p.9.

⁴⁵ Urike Stark, *Hindi and Urdu*, Francesca Orsini's '*The History of the Book*,' p.37.

⁴⁶ Ghosh, 'Power in Print,' p.110.

⁴⁷ Bhattacharya, '*The Sentinels of Culture*,' p.148.

technology made for a much broader social initiative and participation in the production of literatures which led to setting up of a number of libraries.⁴⁸

The impact brought about by the print culture is observed by the *Friends of India* in 1821:

the multiplication of printed works as has excited a taste for reading hitherto unknown in India...compared with preceding years when manuscript alone existed, books are now exceedingly common men of wealth and influence begin already to value themselves on the possession of a library .Even among the inferior gentry, there are few who do not possess some of the works which the press has created.⁴⁹

Rapid spread of literacy to the wider social group led to a ‘substantial rise in neo-literate readership in Calcutta and its neighborhood in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Their reading appetite needed food,⁵⁰ but outside libraries their access to books was limited as books during the nascent period of printing were not only expensive but seldom found in the shop. A visit to libraries was the only solution for this class of people who wants to read but could not afford to purchase books. Orsini also pointed out that though rural folks were also benefited from the printed text with a little literacy, books, novels, which were marginally more expensive, were mostly borrowed from public libraries. And books mostly for pleasure reading, like novels were absent from the lists of popular book sellers, while they feature prominently in public libraries.⁵¹ Thus, she argued that, public libraries became important spaces for the circulations of novels.⁵² Public libraries, thus, became a vital social instrument to bridge the gap between the people/reader and the printed material. Books and other reading materials which were far beyond the reach for ordinary people were provided by the libraries and thereby providing access for wider popular exposure to the text.⁵³ In this context, Calcutta Public Library was one through which most Indian readers who could not afford benefited, and so also many British at least through 1920s.⁵⁴ Libraries which were once in the private domain of the priests and the rulers and mostly housed

⁴⁸ Ibid.p.152.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Sumanta Banerjee, ‘Popular Education in Colonial Bengal and its Legacy: An Examination of a Nineteenth Century Bengali Broadsheet, in Sureshchandra Shukla and Rekha Kaul (eds.) *Education Development and Underdevelopment*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1998, p.41.

⁵¹ Francesca Orsini, *Print and Pleasure*,p.32-33.

⁵² Ibid, p.232.

⁵³ Rimi B. Chatterjee, *Empires of the Mind: A History of the Oxford University Press in India under the Raj*, New Delhi, Oxford,2006,p.8

⁵⁴ Priya Joshi, ‘*Reading in the Public Eye*,’ p.433.

handwritten manuscript turned into a public institution serving all classes of people. As a result Libraries became both the benefactors and beneficiaries of the new art called printing.

Before the arrival of print, reading was limited only to a few sections in the society and the concept of private reading did not exist for the common people. Familiar reasons like the physical disadvantages of palm leaf manuscript and limited social accessibility made it essential to make special effort for them to read.⁵⁵ Therefore, reading for all genres emerged as a consequence of the spread of printing technology whereby, religious reading practices were extended to the common people. Post printing, concern over proper and correct reading not only remained the focal point, there emerged pressing anxieties as print technology created the potential of readily available all kinds of texts for literary consumption.⁵⁶

The practice of reading within indigenous educational systems such as tols and pathsala were also closely associated with memorization. The culture of reading was to read out loud for which there were more or less specifically defining arena- students read under the tutelage of teachers, scholars read in monasteries.⁵⁷ The handiness of printed volume that allowed individual readers to use them at times and places of their choice without having to assemble at a predetermined time,⁵⁸ and spread of literacy to less privileged social group made it possible to read leisurely and at their convenience. Thus, easy access to books led to an emergence of a significant reading population and resulted in increased demand for reading. As a consequence the few existing libraries that were freely accessible to the public were quite unable to supply.⁵⁹ And there were not many enterprising publishers willing to cater to the needs of those who having been taught to read and were eager to make use of their newly acquired accomplishment. During the years when development of libraries was still nascent, the arrival of printing marked the beginning of a prosperous era for the growth of libraries in India. The growth of libraries was hampered by the non existence of adequate written literature before the

⁵⁵ Venkayachalapathy, 'Readers, Reading Practices,' p.318.

⁵⁶ Varuni Bhatia, Six Blind men and the Elephant:Bhavagita in Colonial Indian, Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (eds.), *Founts of knowledge* .p.110.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 319.

⁵⁸ Dan Lacy, 'Dissemination of print' in Conant (ed.), *Public Library and The City*, Cambridge,MIT press,1965.p.115.

⁵⁹ John Minto, *A History of the Public Library movement: In Great Britain and Ireland*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. and the Library Association, 1932.p.17.

advent of printing. This paved the way for a renaissance in library movement with remarkable extensions and innovations, both in building and in service. The public demand and appreciation of libraries increased enormously, and in response, old methods were revised and new ones introduced.⁶⁰

Library provides access to various texts for those who could not afford, and libraries function at times as an extension for schools and at other times as their substitute.⁶¹ And thus, 'libraries became almost immediately visible within the colonial landscape with more established libraries often helping to start a newer institution in their cities increased the numbers of libraries.'⁶² For instance, Calcutta Public Library enabled many societies to establish means for public benefit by donating duplicate periodicals and books for institutions such as Howrah Institute and Sailor's Home. Besides helping these institutes, Curators of the Calcutta Public Library assured that they will be provided duplicate periodicals and books, to the village libraries within the vicinity of Calcutta, from time to time as it was considered important that libraries should be multiplied in and out of the city.⁶³ The Fort William College (1801-1802), the Asiatic Society Library (1808), and the Calcutta Public Library (1835) were some of the earliest libraries established under the patronage of Europeans in Calcutta.

A need for library arose in effect of the newly emerged print culture. However, library in the modern sense emerged with the advent of the European educations and cultures in India. The British East India Company had a tradition of providing reading materials to their servants. 'Books were originally sent on the early voyage with the intention that they be left in India for the company's employee so as to provide them with some form of recreation'⁶⁴ and books were also brought by Britishers coming to India and very often donated to circulate in libraries or schools. Later missionaries took initiatives to start schools and colleges with libraries attached for the teachers as well as students. Books provided by these institutions were the only sources for them. Since books were not easily available outside these libraries, especially English books, they were imported from England and were therefore, sold at exorbitant prices. The absence of public

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ PriyJoshi, '*Reading in the Public Eye.*' p.438.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Report on the Calcutta public Library, 1850*, p.19.

⁶⁴ Sharon Murphy, 'Imperial Reading? The East India Company's Lending Libraries for Soldiers:1819-1834,' *Book History*, vol.2(2009),p.76.

library in Calcutta was a grave anomaly given the importance of the location, and the residents who were mostly Europeans and the literate natives. The inconveniences caused due to absence of public library were raised by J.P Grant, in the public meeting of the inhabitant of Calcutta in 1835:

I believed this is the only society of the same extent which has no library of some description: at the cape at Bombay, they are better provided, and Madras has its literary society, but here in Calcutta, we are without the means of reading, except by purchasing books... is a very great inconvenience.⁶⁵

Emma Roberts, a writer on India also echoed the same problem. She said, in Calcutta 'English books were literally prized...they were much sought after, extremely expensive (even for the British) and hard to come by.'⁶⁶ In the absence of book shop in Calcutta till the last decade of the twentieth century, hawkers as we have mentioned, before were the most common agent for distributor.

The effort to encourage students to use school and college libraries had been in practice since the time of Lord Auckland's governorship in India. Students were encouraged to develop reading habits through the use of library. In 1839 Lord Auckland gave away prizes to those students who greatly benefited ensuing from the use of the school or college library.⁶⁷ The same practice was followed by Council of Education in 1848 with slightly modified rule of selecting the deserving student for awards for thorough understanding of the subject.⁶⁸

The importance of libraries in the schools and colleges had also been highlighted in the *Hunter commission Report of 1882* which states, 'We cannot doubt that the more extensive the libraries to which the teachers has access the more the life-like minded and effective will be his teaching, nor should the benefits of a library to the pupil themselves be altogether overlooked.'⁶⁹ The report further goes on to say that 'school cannot be regarded as properly equipped without a library.'⁷⁰ The report later observed and concluded that since the establishments of libraries in the schools and colleges, a

⁶⁵ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Public Library Meeting, October 1835, p.277.

⁶⁶ Priya Joshi, 'Trading Places: The Novel. The colonial Library, and India.' In Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (eds.), *Print Areas: Book History in India* 1992, New Delhi, Parmanent Black.p.17.

⁶⁷ Subodh Kumar Mukherjee, *Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*. Calcutta, the world Press Private Limited, 1969.p.23.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *Report of the Indian Education commission 1882*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1882, p.231.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

perceptible taste for general reading had sprung up among the students though, confined to a very narrow range, being almost entirely limited to the books which have some bearing on the subjects of examinations.

The commission recommended that a small grant be made for the formation and maintenance of libraries in all the high schools and colleges in all the provinces.⁷¹ Therefore, following this recommendation there was an increase in the number of establishment of libraries in the educational institutions. But it was not so in the case of earlier universities in the three presidencies of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras which were established in 1857. Libraries of these universities came long after their establishment. Bombay University was the first to have library in 1872, followed by Calcutta University in 1879, and in Madras University the first library was opened after a gap of 50 years from its inception in 1907.

Readers and their Reading Taste

With the establishment of schools and colleges, and many institutions following the wide spread introduction of English education, demand for library surged to a new height. There was substantial increase in the number of literacy and members from the lower classes constituted in no significant measure to the literacy rates.⁷² The newly literate class having acquired minimum literacy at least to understand the content of the text started putting their interest in books and their confidence in libraries as educational institution.

Calcutta was then an intellectual hub of the British Empire and being the capital city of British India, it was a transit point where any European coming to India had to halt, and in their brief sojourn prefer to spend their time in the library. According to the Report of Imperial Library, 'it has become the custom for native visitors in Calcutta from all parts of India to visit the library and in most cases to use it also during some parts of their stay',⁷³

⁷¹ *Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, p.116.

⁷² Sumanta Banerjee, 'Popular Education in Colonial Bengal and its Legacy: An Examination of a Nineteenth Century Bengali Broadsheet', in Sureshchandra Shukla and Rekha Kaul (eds.) *Education Development and Underdevelopment*, by, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1998, p.41.

⁷³ *Annual Report of the Imperial Library*, 1906, No.231, Calcutta, the 15 February 1906, p.3.

Following the introduction of English education in the early nineteenth century, there was growing administrative, political, and economic opportunities available in Calcutta.⁷⁴ Many of the educated youth from the nearby villages came to avail the opportunities offered by this city. They were from diverse backgrounds who responded to the opportunity opened to them. This newly liberated class made up a sizeable reading population of the Calcutta Public Library in particular because other libraries like Asiatic Society Library were limited only to its member and library of the Fort William was closed down by the time Calcutta Library was established in 1835.

Readers of the Calcutta Public Library in the nineteenth century comprised of mixed background ranging from Governor General to the poorest native students. The Governor Generals were normally appointed as patron of the library. They were much willing to be part of the CPL; an overwhelming instance in 1856 was that, on the departure of Dalhousie, the office of Patron of the library became vacant. Shortly after the arrival of Lord Canning, an application was submitted to him to do the honour for filling the vacant office, to which he replied,

I willingly accept the proposal you have made to me to become the patron of the Calcutta public library and I request you will have the goodness to place my name on the List of the proprietors of the institution.⁷⁵

It had been the tradition of CPL to appoint governor generals as patron of the library since its inception till the time when CPL was put under the management of Calcutta Municipality Corporation. Rest of Europeans settled in Calcutta for various reasons and purposes were also associated with Calcutta Public Library in different capacities. Study from the reports of the library indicates that majority of the library subscribers were Europeans and they were mostly male with the exception of three European females who probably were admitted in the place of their late husbands who were proprietors of the Calcutta Public Library. There are no records of native female readers in the reports. However, it is believed that native females also had access to printed books as female education started picking up during this time through their relatives who were male readers of the library, as proprietors and subscribers, they can have books issued to them in their houses.⁷⁶ Number of native subscribers in the CPL was not as encouraging

⁷⁴ Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society: 1778-1905*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2006, p.155.

⁷⁵ Report of the Calcutta Public library for 1856, Calcutta, P.S.D'Rozario & Co., Tank Square, p.5.

⁷⁶ Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for the year 1950, Appendix-G, p.xxvi.

as their European counter part in spite of marked increased in the literacy among the native by this time. But by 1850, there had been steady increased in the numbers of native subscribers. In any case, the Curators were of the opinion that:

this augmentation is by no means commensurate with that of the educated portion of the native community. It also to be regretted that there are many natives (ex students of the metropolitan college students and schools) who are employed and in public offices and or engaged in other pursuits, who apparently consider READING unnecessary or useless. It must be well known that subscription to this library is extremely low; and, while there is but one public library in this metropolis, it is a reproach on native character that the institution should not receive more extensive support from the native population.⁷⁷

Apart from the record of the books consulted in the reference collection, analysis of various other reports of CPL reflected the taste of the reading public. Though the taste varied from time to time, but Literature, Law, and History remained one of the favourite subjects amongst library readers. Examining the reader's type of consumption from the early reports of the Calcutta Public Library, it emerged as a complex or rather startling revelation on the choice they made in the selection of books for their use. The pattern of readings between the Europeans and the Indian significantly differed from each other. Most Indian readers' choices were made driven by the desires to enhance their knowledge to read from a superior work available in the library which they could not afford to possess otherwise. However, it was not so in the case of European readers. The Europeans mostly consumed prose work of imagination and some light readings. The application of natives' Curators of the Calcutta public library was the perfect testimony proved to this effect. Thus:

One of the great objects of formation of this institution is the dissemination of European literature and science in this country. As the promotion of real interests of India and we may add the real happiness of the inhabitants, mainly depend upon the successful prosecution of those efforts which have been made for some years past to foster a taste for elegant literature and sound knowledge of the west. It may be consider a duty incumbent on every Englishman, whatever may be his station, in furthering this object.⁷⁸

From the above statement, it became quite clear that for natives, their aspiration was to secure knowledge from the collections of the library. Unlike the Europeans who used the library for recreational purposes, for the majority of native Indians the CPL was the only recourse where they can derive knowledge. Therefore, they appealed to the

⁷⁷ Ibid.,pp.6-7.

⁷⁸ *Report of the Calcutta public Library for the year 1850*,p.xxvi

Curators of the library to make available of those books which can add to their knowledge of sciences and literatures of the west within their reach. Soon enough there were significant increase in the number of those books pouring in the library 'as several learned societies of Great Britain responded to the application made to them for their transactions and journals.'⁷⁹ The native's preference for 'a taste for elegant literature and sound knowledge of the west' prevailed in the collections of the library. The objective of the Europeans, as remarked by Minchin who was a member present in the meeting, was that 'the institution of this library, not only so far as the community of Calcutta concern are but as society likely to benefit the natives of this country generally for by extending to them the literature of England we induce them to cultivate the knowledge of our language and afford them the means both of improving their literature and their moral.'⁸⁰

However, considering the nature of the library which was intended to be a 'general library combining the advantages of reference and resort with those of circulating library,'⁸¹ it was perceived incomplete without the collection of fictions and novels in the library holdings. There were complaints regarding the 'paucity of fictions in the library'⁸² from the readers. Report of the Finances of the Calcutta public library pointed out the existing disparity:

It has been shown in previous paragraph that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the circulation consist of Novels and Periodicals, while it appears here that nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of the books purchased in 1870 and 1872 consisted of a graver reading, so that the purchase did not harmonise with the prevailing taste.⁸³

The measures to improve the collections were taken up and were duly noted. The instructions regarding selection of books were also revised by the book selection committee, 'with the view in meeting increased demand for works of the most popular novelist, the committee has ordered...'⁸⁴

When the holdings of the public library did not reflect the reader's taste it was inevitable to expect drastic fall on the membership. This called for immediate attention of the Curators of the Calcutta Public Library to take measures concerning the issue.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.15

⁸⁰ *Calcutta Monthly Journal* October 1835, Public library meeting, p.278.

⁸¹ *Report of the Calcutta public library for the year 1850*, p.9.

⁸² Ibid,

⁸³ *Finances of the Calcutta public library, Report of the Sub-committee appointed on the 10th of February, 1873*, Calcutta, office of Superintendent of govt. printing. p.21.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

The subcommittee, appointed by Finance committee suggested for a favourable solution to this problem. According to the subcommittee;

a mere increase of fund for buying books will however be of little avail in making the library popular, unless the taste of the subscribers, who in fact, support the library are consulted by allowing the subscribers to be fully represented in the governing body, as required the selection and purchase of books.⁸⁵

Ultimately, various measures taken up by the Curator's yielded in the increase of membership as found in the later Report of the Calcutta public library 1873. 'The percentage of Indian members increased three-fold from a low of 10% total subscribers in 1873 to almost 30% in 1893 when purchasing trends converged with reader demands for fiction.'⁸⁶

Rise of the Readership in the Library

With the spread of education to a wider social class, there was rise in literacy among the rural folks, who were till then belonged exclusively to the 'hearing public.' They started to put their interest in reading with limited knowledge of writing and reading altered the literary culture of nineteenth century Calcutta. The literary culture which was once enjoyed only by the upper classes of the society permeated to other classes with the coming of the print. The new literary practices enhanced by print contributed to the rise of the reading population and that of readership in libraries as well. Rossini claimed that 'the commercial success of the detective novel may be linked not to a widening habit of book-buying but to a more intensive use of public libraries.'⁸⁷ The easy access to printed materials which were made available in the Calcutta Public Library was recourse to their poor background, for most of the newly literate were from the lower strata of the society. Visits to libraries perhaps provided vicarious satiety to readers who wanted to possess books but did not.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *Finances of the Calcutta public library, Report of the Sub-committee appointed on the 10th of February, 1873*, Calcutta, office of Superintendent of govt. printing.p.20.

⁸⁶ Priya Joshi, *Reading in the Public Eye: The Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries:1835-1901*, in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*, .London,2013,Ashgate publishing company.p.447.

⁸⁷ Francesca Orsini, *Print and Pleasure:Popular Literature and entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India*, Delhi,Permanent Black,2009. pp.231-232.

⁸⁸ Venkatachalapathy ,A.R, 'Readers,Reading Practices,Modes of Reading'in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*. 2013,Ashgate publishing company,London, p.329.

With the opening of Imperial Library in 1903, the number of readers doubled to that of CPL. Being the first public library directly managed by the government it was more attractive in terms of its collections as well as its building. Every citizen who sought for knowledge was welcome in the Imperial Library for free. Therefore, with the growing realisation of the usefulness of the library, the native readers appealed to the Governor General of India for the relaxation of the cast iron rule of the library to 'enable the reading public to reap unhindered the benefits of the treasure of knowledge stored up therein.'⁸⁹ Taking consideration of the native reader's request various measures were taken by the proprietors and Curators of the library to encourage the native readers to use the library and seize the opportunity to fully explore the knowledge which is within their grasp and thereby expand the horizon of their knowledge. Besides other measures, a special attention was also given to the Oriental Department for the benefit of natives whose numerical strength has increased gradually in the library.⁹⁰

The significant increase in the number of readers testify to the liberality of the pioneers and Curators of the library in extending the usefulness of this institution to the natives, a majority of these people were those who have received their education in the vernacular. To ensure that everyone gets equal advantages from Calcutta Public Library, collections in each department was taken care of, and special efforts were initiated to look into the collections in the oriental sections for native readers. When the addition in the oriental section was reported, it was believed that it would enhance the usefulness to those who received their education in the vernacular. Hence, in 1950, Report of the Calcutta Public Library Stated that, 'the collection of vernacular book has increased and the library is therefore useful also to those who are not English scholars.'⁹¹ Individual's role also greatly contributed to the usefulness of the library, effort of J.Macfarlane was one such example. J.Macfarlane, the librarian of the Imperial Library occasionally translated passage from French and German books relating to India for the benefits of students- latter demand had sprung up for instructions in those tongues.⁹²

In spite of remarkable increase in the number of readers, Curators of the library expressed their concern over the ill representation from a certain section of the

⁸⁹ *Report on native papers in Bengal for January –June 1905*, Vi-Miscellaneous, Sl. no.725. p.213.

⁹⁰ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1847-1848 to 1855*. Calcutta, Sanders and Cones & CO.,p3.

⁹¹ *Report on the Calcutta public library for 1850*. Calcutta, Sanders and Cones & CO.,p.6.

⁹² *Report of the Imperial Library*,3 February 1904,No.27, *Letter to the Secy to the Government of India*, Home Dept., from the Librarian, J.Macfarlane,p.2.

community in the library namely, the educated natives. It appeared that the habit of reading for the natives was yet to be adopted as second nature unlike the Europeans. Number of native subscribers in the CPL was not as encouraging as their European counter part in spite of marked increase of literacy among the native. By 1850, there had been a steady increase in the numbers of native subscribers, nevertheless, to the Curators, the increase was not substantial. Consequently, in the Report of the Imperial Library, 1904, the librarian had remarked;

this augmentation is by no means commensurate with that of the educated portion of the native community. It also to be regretted that there are many natives (ex students of the metropolitan college students and schools) who are employed and in public offices and or engaged in other pursuits, who apparently consider READING unnecessary or useless. It must be well known that subscription to this library is extremely low; and, while there is but one public library in this metropolis, it is a reproach on native character that the institution should not receive more extensive support from the native population.⁹³

The Calcutta Public Library was established with the objective to benefit all classes of the community, by no means excepting those young men, natives of this country, who are most meritoriously pursuing their studies and whose means do not afford them opportunities of purchasing books.⁹⁴ The advantages ensued from the Calcutta Public Library benefited all sections of the society, and especially the disadvantaged class. The easy accessibility of books has resulted in cultivating a taste of reading among the common people, for which it was also attributed to the affordability of books fostered by the Calcutta Public Library. Having access to printed materials has innumerable benefits to the native citizens not only in acquiring knowledge about the literatures and sciences of the west but also improved the mental habits and attitude entailed by access to printed materials.

Commenting on the benefit of reading, Samuel Smiles said, ‘amongst those who read, unquestionably there had been an improvement in their habits or order, temperance and character generally.’ He further argued, ‘give a man an interesting book to take home with him to his family, it is probable that the man will stay in his house to read in preference to going out and spending his time in dissipation and or in idleness.’⁹⁵ The advantages of reading and its effects on the reading public was also described by John

⁹³ Ibid. pp.6-7.

⁹⁴ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Asiatic News, Public Library Meeting, October 1835.p.277.

⁹⁵ W.J. Murrison, *the Public Library: Its Origin, Purpose and Significance*, London, George G, Harrap &Co.LTD.p.33.

Imray, an advocate of the library movement; 'Have you known persons apparently came with habits of disorder gradually reclaimed, in consequence of reading in the library, to habit of order? I have known men of from 20-30 who, when they came, in the school room, smoked their pipes in the school room, overturned the forms, and did all mischief, and now they are perfectly quite and orderly, and they dress better; instead of rags, they came with whole clothes(though of the poorest kind), and they sit down in the library with the greater quietness and decorum and read the book.'⁹⁶ This is an ample proof of their interest in books and their confidence in the efficacy as educators. It is commonly accepted that next to school, the greatest influence is that of the public library.⁹⁷ The need for more libraries was a sign of the growing usefulness as educators and dispensers of knowledge.

Printing has revolutionised the world of literati, reading, and writing, and by which mass production of books and other reading materials were made possible for wider access. Without the print, the purpose of library would have been rendered useless and would not have had the profound impact as have witnessed in modern days. The growth of libraries in other parts of the country soon became a popular landscape in the colonial India.

The introduction of print articulated the concept and the emergence of public library. As already mentioned above, before the invention of the printing press, libraries were in private possessions of the monarch or the religious institutions mainly due to scarcity of books and in the absence of printed books, there was no activity in the library. The role of libraries were just confined to safeguarding and acted as a repository house of the collective human memory. It was only with introduction of printed text that put libraries into action, and when there is activity in the library there is development. In India access to literary and sacred books were regulated by some crucial factors such as caste, class, sect, and gender.⁹⁸ But with the introduction of printing, every barrier in the path of literacy was mitigated and through public library, access to reading and knowledge became attainable for every individual. The aim of the public libraries is to 'promote knowledge, education and cultural activity by providing books and other suitable

⁹⁶Ibid. pp.36-37.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p.155.

⁹⁸ Gupta ,Abhijit and Swapan Chakravorty (ed.), *Founts of Knowledge: Book History in India*, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi,2016,p.7.

material free of charge.’⁹⁹ And moreover, in the use of the library, there is no feeling on the part of the student that he is under an authority which sets him the pattern of study, and accordingly there is engendered in him a feeling of independence which in turn inspires self-confidence and self-discipline.¹⁰⁰

Library Movement in India: Towards Mass Education

Libraries play an important role in the education of millions of people. The library movement is by far the most important movement in the modern age. It represents the important revolutions in the field of communication. It could be rightly said that the first revolution took place when human beings began to communicate with his fellow being through the spoken word. The second evolution marked the era when the spoken word was reduced to writing and books began to be printed. A library movement brought a tremendous revolution in the field of education and human knowledge. A library is a real source of real knowledge and no education can be regarded as complete in the absence of libraries. Thus, a library is a key to the world of knowledge.

The modern library movement started in India in the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Ashin Kumar Dutta, there were three important forces which led to the library movement in India. The first was the introduction of new education, the second force was the wider use of printing press to publish books right in India, and the third was coming of the steamship and railways making it possible to obtain books cheaply and quickly from England.¹⁰¹ The year 1808 is considered a landmark in the history of public libraries in India when for the first time Government initiated responsibilities for the development of libraries in India. Then, the government initiated a proposal to register libraries which would receive free copies of books published from the ‘Funds for the Encouragement of Literature.’¹⁰² It was in the year 1835 when the Calcutta Public Library was established with the help of the Europeans, that the modern library movement gained momentum.

⁹⁹ As quoted by W.J.Morrison, in his book ‘*the origin of public library*’ p.157.

¹⁰⁰ W.J.Morrison, *The Public Library: Its Origin, Purpose and Significance*, London, George G. Harrap & Co. LTD. p.159.

¹⁰¹ Ashin Kumar Dutta, Trends and perspective: Library Movement.

¹⁰² V.K.Thomas, *Public Libraries in India: Development and Finance*, Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd, 1997, p.24. See also, Jogesh Mishra, *History of library and librarianship*, Delhi, Atma Ram and Sons, 1979, p.19. Bimal Kumar Datta, *Libraries in Ancient and Ancient Medieval India*, Atma Ram & Sons, 1970, p.100.

The establishment of CPL was a milestone in the library movement which brought in the concept of public library system based on the western lines to introduce modern methods. Another watershed in the history of library movement in India developed on the work of Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, the ruler of the princely state of Baroda, who built village libraries and travelling libraries.¹⁰³ Maharaja Sayaji Rao brought W.A. Borden, an American librarian from New Haven, Connecticut, to organise an elaborate library system composed of central library, village libraries, and travelling libraries and an agency to impart visual education to the illiterate masses. Borden, a pioneer of library movement in India, introduced many distinct features in the professional scenario. His contribution to the development of public libraries and more specifically in making public libraries accessible to masses was the most innovative.¹⁰⁴ Borden also started the first library classes on 6 March 1911.¹⁰⁵ Commenting on the historic achievement, the Report on Public Instruction for the year 1910-11 remarked that 'nowhere in India has there been up to now a single library class attached to any of the libraries where young men and women could be trained in the most up to date requirements of Library economy.'¹⁰⁶

In Madras, S.R. Ranganathan, who is regarded as the father of Indian library movement, endeavoured to give it a proper shape when he started a certificate course in library science in 1929, under the auspice of Madras Library Association which was founded in 1928. What Ranganathan started as certificate course in library science blossomed into a degree course in 1947 when he was invited by Maurice Gwyer, Chancellor of the Delhi University, to start library services at Delhi University and to set up a separate department of library science. Thus, Delhi University became the first university where degree course in library commenced.¹⁰⁷ William Alanson Borden was also instrumental in establishing the Baroda Library Club and its journal called Library

¹⁰³ Sahib Singh, *Library and Library Movement for National Development*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 2003, p.43; Also mentioned in V.K.Thomas, *Public Libraries in India: Development and Finance*, p.25.

¹⁰⁴ Mohamed Taher and Donald Gordon Davis, JR, *Librarianship and Library Science in India: An Outline of Historical Perspectives*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1994, p.79.

¹⁰⁵ K.Ramakrishna Rao, Library Development in India, *The Library Quarterly*, Vol.31.No.2 (Apr., 1961), p.141.

¹⁰⁶ As quoted by Murali Lal Nagar in *Foundation of Library Movement in India*, Ludhiana, Indian Library Institute and Bibliographical centre, 1983, p.69.

¹⁰⁷ Jogesh Mishra, *History of library and librarianship*, Delhi, Atma Ram and Sons, 1979, p.155.

Miscellany in 1912.¹⁰⁸ With all his initiatives and contributions, library movement in India advanced.

The movement also spread in three presidencies including provincial capitals such as Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, and Punjab, and many districts and towns also witnessed similar movement through government initiatives. The establishment of Andhra Provincial Library Association in 1914 was the outcome of the library movement which gave impetus to the growth of libraries in Andhra. Similarly, many regional library associations were also formed. What William Alanson Borden had accomplished in Baroda, Asa Don Dickinson, an American librarian, also did the same in Punjab. Asa Don Dickinson, inspired by the success in Baroda under the stewardship of Mr. Borden, founded the Punjab Library Association in 1915 and published 'the Punjab Library Primer' in 1916, the second library science publication in India.¹⁰⁹ Asa Don Dickinson, like his counterpart in Baroda introduced professional training program at the university level in Punjab University in 1915.¹¹⁰ The Bengal, library association was founded by Manindra Dev Rai in 1927.

The turning point in the library movement was the formation of the Indian Library Association (ILA) in 1933, mainly due to the effort of Khan Bahadur Asadullah. With the birth of ILA, library workers found a status and a voice. Following this, other provinces also set up their associations.¹¹¹ One of the remarkable developments that took place resulting from the library movement was the coming out of the Report of the Library Development Committee, Bombay 1939-40, headed by Sri A.A.A. Fyzee, in which it put forth a scheme of developing libraries in the provinces in six stages:

1. Setting up of Central and 3 regional libraries,
2. Added 15 District libraries,
3. added 167 taluka or peta libraries and 100 libraries in town,
4. added 979 libraries for villages of populations 2,000 and more

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Patel and Krishan Kumar, *Library and Librarianship in India*, London, Greenwood Press, 2001, p.10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.11.

¹¹¹ V.K.Thomas, *Public Libraries in India: Development and Finance*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1979, p.26

5. added 2696 libraries for villages of 1000-2000 populations and final stage

6. added 17753,libraries for villages below 1,000 population.

To implement this scheme, the government of Bombay fought shy of the financial implications, resulting in partial implementation in the latter four stages.¹¹² Another milestone during this period was the founding of the Delhi Public Library (DPL) in 1950, as India-UNESCO pilot project. The library was opened by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru 1951. Its main purposes were to give public library services using modern techniques with special emphasis on the problem of service to new literate and less educated class.¹¹³ It is one of the largest public libraries in India. DPL is also one of the depository centres of the four national depositories in India. As a depository library, it receives a copy of each books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals published in India for free.

Library movement gained wider recognition after India's independence in 1947. The Development of Library Legislation after independence has made an impact on the history of libraries and their growth and development. According to Bhatt, 'the legislation is an essential need in any country because it puts structure, management and finance of library system on proper footing.'¹¹⁴ Post-independence, the Madras Public Library Act was passed in 1948. This was the first legislation of its kind in India. Soon after Madras, other states also followed suit. However, there are many states which are yet to enact library legislations. So far only 18 states have passed the library legislations. Ranganathan avowedly advocated for the enactment of public library legislations in every state, because it is a vital instrument in setting up of a net work of public libraries in the country and a public library system derives its strength from the state library legislation, therefore states that have enacted library legislation have been comparatively more successful.¹¹⁵

Notable major event after independence was the appointment of National Library Committee in 1947 by Sir John Sargent, the then education advisor to the government

¹¹² *Report of Advisory Committees for Libraries*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1959.p.3.

¹¹³ Frank M Gardner, *The Delhi Public Library: An Evaluation Report*, Paris, Unesco, 1957.p.13.

¹¹⁴ R.K.Bhatt, *History and Development of Libraries in India*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995, pp.-115-116.

¹¹⁵ Jashu Patel and Krishna Kumar, *Libraries and Libraianship in India*, London, Greenwood Press, 2001.p.103.

of India with Ranganathan as one of its members. This was followed by another important landmark when University Education Commission was formed in 1948 under the chairmanship of S. Radhakrishnan. The importance of libraries in higher education was accorded in the Report of the Commission on University Education (1948-1949); 'Libraries is the heart of the University's work directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work which derives its life from research work. Scientific research needs a library as well as laboratories, while for humanistic research the library is both library and laboratory in one.'¹¹⁶ In 1948 the Radhakrishnan Commission reported on the unsatisfactory condition of the university libraries, 'it was distressing to find that in most colleges and universities the library facilities were very poor indeed.'¹¹⁷

Various committees and commissions were also appointed to examine problems and to adopt measures for the development of libraries. University Grants Commission was appointed in 1953, to assist and advice the UGC in matters relating to libraries, review committee headed by Ranganathan was appointed. From its inception, UGC has been extending financial support for the development of university libraries. In the same year in 1953 the Secondary Education Commission, also known as Mudaliar Commission was appointed for the development of school libraries. It recommended that the 'library should be made the most attractive place in the school, should be adequately supplied with properly selected books, and periodicals, and should have the service of a highly qualified and trained librarian.'¹¹⁸ In 1957, the government appointed the Advisory Committee for Libraries to strengthened development of public libraries in India.¹¹⁹

At the dawn of independence and the democratization of the educational system, government of India started to take keen interest in providing public services to the masses. As a democratic country, every citizen has right to education/learn and to be informed of happenings around him/her. To meet this end, democratisation of knowledge through books, newspapers, periodicals, visual aids etc. should be made

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.51.

¹¹⁷ Jashu Patel and Krishna Kumar, *Libraries and Librarianship in India*, London, Greenwood Press, 2001, p.51.

¹¹⁸ Arabinda Biswas and Suren Agrawal (eds.), *Indian Educational Documents since independence : Committee, Commissions, Conferences*, edited by, New Delhi, The Accademic Publishers, p.452.

¹¹⁹ Jashu Patel and Krishna Kumar, *Libraries and Librarianship in India*, London, Greenwood Press, 2001, p.12.

freely available in the libraries. Libraries alone can serve this purpose and it is the duty of the government to maintain libraries and to make it an effective public institutions.

Public library in particular is the product of political democracy and belief that self education based on the free flow of information through books is an essential feature of democratic way of life.¹²⁰ Unless, education are provided to the masses through public libraries by giving free and equitable access there cannot be real democracy. Therefore, growth and development of public libraries should be given due emphasis. The objective could be realised only with the help from the government. This point has been suggested rightly in the Report of the Library Committee, Bombay, 1939-40 as, 'if the movement is taken up by government, it will certainly be a success.'¹²¹

For the first time, central government was directly involved in the development and growth of public library after gaining independence by including the scheme for the 'Improvement of Library Service' in the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956). This was considered an important landmark in the history of public libraries in India. During the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) the emphasis were given on the improvement of library services for the educational development. The objective was to set up a national central library, a state central library in each state. The scheme targeted every area selected by the government for intensive educational development. The experimental project was meant to monitor the impact of the number of educational institutions in area covering 100 villages. Each area was to have five model community centres, plus a main library with branches to distribute books to 20 villages. This project was implemented in 29 areas in the country.

By the end of the First Five Year plan, nine states had prepared plans for setting up their State Central Libraries and eight states had either set up or were in the process of setting up District Libraries of the requisite pattern in hundred districts.¹²² It was also proposed under this plan to set up a National Central Library and one Central library in each state. Some of the important achievements during this plan were the establishment of Delhi Public Library in 1951 and INSDOC in 1955 with the joint efforts and assistance from

¹²⁰Subodh Kumar Mookerjee and Benoyendra Sengupta, *Library Organisation and Library Administration*, Calcutta, World Press Private LTD., 1977, p.48.

¹²¹ *Report of the Library Committee, 1939-40*, Bombay, Government Central Press, 1941, p.5.

¹²²G.D.Bhargava, Public Libraries in India-a Review, in N.B.Sen (ed.), *Development of Libraries in New India*, New Delhi, New Book Society of India, 1965, p.254.

the government of India and UNESCO. In 1952, Government of India initiated the community development program in which social education was assigned an important role. Gradually, the pattern of the social education programme took a clear shape and libraries including circulating libraries occupied an integral place in this programme. The community development programme thus gave a fillip to rural libraries.¹²³

In 1954, the Delivery Books Act was passed and later the Act was amended in 1956 to include newspapers. The Act obligated every publisher in India to deposit a copy of its publication with the National Library in Calcutta, the Asiatic (Central) Library Bombay, Connemara Public library, Madras, and the Delhi Public Library. On the basis of books received under this Act, a National Bibliography is prepared by the central Reference library in Calcutta which was set up in 1955.¹²⁴ Government continued to support for strengthening of public library services in the country by implementing various schemes in the subsequent Five Year Plans. However, in recent past, many of the public libraries in the country are in pathetic condition due to paucity of funds from the government.

Until conditions of public libraries are improved, literacy of the masses could not be improved. As according to Murrison, next to school 'the greatest influence is that of the public library on the people.'¹²⁵ He further quoted from the Report of the Third Interim Report of the Adult Education Committee, Libraries and Museums, on their shared responsibilities of schools and libraries that 'The schools, libraries and the museums are an allied institutions, each of will fulfil its responsibilities and realized its aim through the development of others.'¹²⁶ Although libraries were not sufficiently equipped to take the place of an educational agent in India, nevertheless, their educational role cannot be totally overlooked.

Conclusion

Before the introduction of print, libraries were just a store of house of knowledge. The roles of libraries were just confined to collection and preservation of the written records. The absence of printed text rendered libraries just a store house of knowledge. These

¹²³ *Report of Advisory Committees for Libraries*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1959.p.5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ W.J.Morrison, *The Public Library: Its Origin, Purpose and Significance*, London, George G. Harrap &Co.LTD.1971.p.155.

¹²⁶ As quoted by W.J.Murrison in his book , *The Public Library: Its Origin, Purpose and Significance*, London, George G. Harrap &Co.LTD.1971.p.82.

libraries were mostly owned by Royals, priestly classes, and religious institutions and monasteries. Therefore, common people could not get access to the early libraries and there were not many libraries due to the non-availability of books. It was only after the introduction of printing in India that common people came in contact with printed books and functions of libraries assumed dynamic. The modern concept of public library as a service institution started due to the introduction of print and subsequent proliferation of printed text led to the establishment of several public libraries in the later period. Thus, the significant importance of libraries as educational institutions came to be recognised only with the introduction of print.

The introduction of printing by the Christian missionary in India was a boon especially for the ordinary classes. Before the introduction of printed, manuscript reading or reading of any kinds of books was limited to only upper classes for reasons such as caste and paucity of printed text. The mass production of text made it possible by print resulted in the demand for establishment of public libraries to have access to those printed text. Even though books started to appear in the market in abundance after 1857, especially when vernacular presses were established, the exorbitant prices of books were beyond the reach of common people. Visits to public libraries were the only solution to their problem. Therefore, Calcutta public library was established to meet the literary needs of the inhabitants of Calcutta. There is no doubt that Calcutta had become the epicentre of the print industries, education, and cultural centre in the later period.

Public libraries in India have come a long way. What began as a storehouse of preserving written religious texts has now become the dispenser of knowledge to millions of Indians, both young and old. At one time the perennial issue of caste had prevented the common people from reading and gaining knowledge. But the advent of colonial rule brought massive revision in the existing format of dispensing knowledge in India.

The introduction of printing mobilised the flow of writing and producing books, which in turn benefited institutions which maintained the books. Then the cycle continued to benefit the people who relentlessly desired to read or gain more knowledge. In the later years, the need to formally institutionalise such establishments became a necessity for easy access to knowledge without any prejudices and discrimination against any group of people or community or gender. The books, which were considered rightfully

belongs to the rich and powerful, became affordable and accessible for every individual, barring divisions of the society, with the foundation of public libraries.

As a consequence of these developments, public libraries began to grow and flourish not just in the major cities but also in small towns, across the country. Simultaneously, when the British introduced Western education, it became imperative to generate ample of texts for the students. Once this educated young people become professionals, it created a faction in the society who wish to continue reading. The only impediment that thwarted the growth of public library during those years was the scarcity of funding to maintain the libraries. In subsequent years, measures were introduced and decisions taken to address and redress the issues, and to make public libraries an epicentre of dispensing knowledge for every individuals who thirst to read and seek more knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE

EVOLUTION OF THE CALCUTTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

This chapter documents the establishment of Calcutta Public Library (CPL), the first modern public library in India, and its transition from a modest public library to its amalgamation to the Imperial Library in 1900. The chapter also examines various challenges that confronted the library in the initial stage of its establishment and also its later stage of existence when most of the Europeans withdrew their membership. It investigates the role of library's administrators in the growth of the CPL. Important themes like how this institution functioned, how it was managed, and what were its contributions to the society are also being discussed. Since the successes of any institutions depend mainly on the objectives of its establishment, therefore, in order to realize the objective of the CPL the roles of founders are examined. The study also looks at the transfer of Calcutta Public Library to the Hall and its eventual decline which led to its amalgamation to the Imperial library in 1902.

1835 was a landmark in the history of public libraries in India for it heralded a civic and institutional ideology beginning to be practiced throughout India.¹ Before 1835, libraries were mostly owned and maintained by rulers and higher caste in India, and they were mostly private possessions. Public were denied access to the written record for various reasons. It was meant only for a few classes of the society and for the Europeans. The establishment of Calcutta Public Library in 1835 altered the history of public libraries in India. This establishment symbolizes the dawn of the modern public library in India and it became a cornerstone for Indian intellectual and a hallmark of civilized nation growing into a modern age.²

¹ Priya Joshi, 'Reading in the Public Eye: The Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries: 1835-1901', in Francesca Orsini (ed.) *The History of the Book in South Asia*. 2013, London, Ashgate publishing company, p.443.

² Joshua Christopher Mika, *Discriminating Taste: Editing Siam's Patrimony and the Birth of the National Library*, 1905-1925, Master thesis, University of Hawi'i, 2012.p.39.

Calcutta Public Library: Historical Reflections

In the early nineteenth century, Calcutta was a trade centre- a commercial city and the capital city of British India. Maximum Europeans were concentrated in Calcutta for many reasons and purposes. The city under the British rule continued to expand and flourish. With the coming of British and other Europeans in the city, they brought with them their culture and practices and introduced them in the city. They also adopted Indian cultures and traditions. The cultural exchange between the natives and Europeans became quite inevitable as they worked in close proximity. One of the habits of Europeans which they fervently exercised even in a foreign land was leisure reading. However, reading was an expensive leisure as books were not easily available in India and the books which they brought along with them were insufficient to quench their thirst to read. There were no public libraries where they could borrow or read books. By this time, reading population increased because of the introduction of English education. Demand for books also increased simultaneously.

The newly literate citizens were not only interested in reading but were also pompous to show off their newly acquired skill of reading and also to retain reading practices. For many poor students library was their only refuge. Because of poverty they were unable to buy books, and they began to use this library for their studies and made the best opportunity to exploit the knowledge present therein. But in the absence of public library in this part of the country they had no means for reading except to purchase books which was exorbitantly priced and therefore, beyond their means. This inconveniences caused due to lack of public library were raised by many of the inhabitants of Calcutta. In relation to this problem, J.H. Stocqueler, the editor of the local daily '*The Englishman*' suggested in the public meeting of 20 August 1835, to establish a public library where everybody would be welcome to take advantages it offers. The matter was further raised by J.P Grant in the next public meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta on 31 August 1835:

I believed this is the only society of the same extent which has no library of some description: at the cape at Bombay, they are better provided, and Madras has its literary society, but here in Calcutta, we are without the means of reading, except by purchasing books... is a very great inconvenience.³

³ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Public Library Meeting, October 1835, p.277.

J.H. Stocqueler had earlier set up Bombay General Library before venturing into Calcutta as the editor of the local daily *The Englishman*. Bombay was also deficient of public library before Stocqueler founded General Library and Reading Room on 15 November 1830 which was opened to all ranks, classes, and castes without distinction. A respectable character, a decorous demeanour, and strict adherence to the rules constituted the only requisites for admission to this library.⁴ The library, under his patronage prospered, but unfortunately, after his departure it was never heard of. Stocqueler, coming to Calcutta in January 1833,⁵ noticed that not even a single public library in Calcutta existed to which all classes might have equal access. Also, unlike other presidencies, Calcutta had maximum English educated Indian natives. It was considered that the time for establishing a library was conducive as the population of educated natives were also numerous to constitute a reading public. Apparently, Stocqueler had brought forth the same project before to Calcutta, but had not succeeded in his first attempt. He therefore, suggested the public meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta to discuss how to commemorate the emancipation of Indian press by Lord Metcalf, the then Governor General of India. The Public meeting of the inhabitants was organised on 20 August 1835, to establish public library in Calcutta. Stocqueler presented the scheme in the meeting as:

a considerable inconveniences is sustained by almost all classes of the community of Calcutta, owing to the absence of anything like General Library, combining the advantage of Reference and Resort with those of Circulating Library, it is proposed to take measures of immediately establishing such institution, upon scale commensurate with the interest and wants of the reading population.⁶

There was overwhelming respond to the proposition of establishment of public library in Calcutta. The scheme was well appreciated by both Europeans and the Indian natives, and people believed that 'it will be highly advantageous to the inhabitants of Calcutta.'⁷ A unanimous decision regarding the establishment of public library was thus adopted in the meeting and hence, in the next public meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta held on 31st August 1835 it was resolved that.-

It is expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a public library of reference and circulation that shall be open to all ranks and classes without

⁴ P.T. Nair, *Origin of National Library: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library of India, 2004, p.8.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Public Library Meeting, October 1835, p.277.

distinction and sufficiently extensive to supply the ones of the entire community in every department of literature.⁸

By this resolution, the Calcutta Public Library was established in 1935. Thereafter, 'in the same meeting a Committee was appointed to consider of the best means of accomplishing the objects stated in the first Resolutions to frame a set of Rules and Regulations for the management and to report the same together with their opinion to a meeting to be called as soon as they are prepared with their Report.'⁹The Committee requested the Bengal government to allow the use of William College Library's collections. This was 'in consequence of the government having resolve to discontinue the keeping up of the Fort William College, there is a probability that the library belonging to that institution will be disposed off, and we ventured to ask of the government to allow, under such rules as it may approve of the subscribers to the projected library to enjoy the use of such books of the college library.'¹⁰

Our aim is not to supplant other public institutions but to create one we shall supply a want which is daily felt by the public here, and which as existing institution has the means of supplying and we trust that the government will think it not an unworthy application of public property to commit the care of it to those whose only object to make it as exclusively useful as the necessity preserving it will allow.¹¹

The government of Bengal willingly consented for the use of the college library's collections having full confidence that the books in their disposal would make a difference in the lives of the common people by giving unrestricted access to those in need. It was reported that 'the governor of Bengal being desirous of rendering the college library as extensively as useful as possible will be prepared to make over to the proposed library society.'¹² With the college library's collection as the nucleus, a newly established library was formally opened to the public on 21 March 1836.¹³

Mr. Stoqueler was fortunate to have revived it at a time when society was starting to realize its true interests and when the rights of men were more readily recognized and

⁸ Letter from J.P. Grant to G.A. Busby, Secretary to the Government of India, *General Proceedings*. No. 35. Dated Fort William. 23 September 1835, p. 760.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *General Proceedings* 23 September 1835, No. 35, Letter from W.P. Grant to G.A. Bush, Secy. to government. p. 760.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 761.

¹² *General Proceedings* 7th October - 30th December, 1835, No. 15. p. 188.

23 September 1835, No. 35, *Letter from W.P. Grant to G.A. Bush*, Secretary to government.

¹³ K.N. Dhar, *The Imperial Library Calcutta*, *The Calcutta Review*, 1920. Vol. No. p. 68.

better appreciated.¹⁴ Establishment of Calcutta Public Library was watershed in the history of public libraries in India. The administrators of the CPL had high confidence that it will be highly advantageous to the inhabitant of Calcutta, and through its free access, will yield in the promotion of literacy of the masses.¹⁵ Initially the Calcutta public library did not have its own habitation,¹⁶ it was the generosity of Dr. Strong who offered the lower part of his house to use as library for the 'present reception of all works that may be purchased or presented'¹⁷ and to use as storehouse for any books that might accumulate in future until a proper place was ready for them.¹⁸ The offer was accepted by the library committee and thus, CPL continued to function from there till July 1841.

After a successful establishment, a provisional committee was appointed to consider for the best means of accomplishing the objects and to frame rules for the management of the library.¹⁹ The committee was formed with persons drawn from various backgrounds representing interest of various whose experience and attachment to literature and science would help in rendering the most important services, and enable each particular section to have its own representative. Thereby, it might be considered, congress of the republic of letters-gentlemen who are acquainted, and familiar with each section and from we may hope that the institution will derived the most beneficial result.²⁰

A Provisional Committee was formed with the following as members, Edward Ryan, J.P. Grant, Mr. W.H. Macnaghten, C.W. Smith, Colonel Dunlop, The Rev. H. Fisher, Dickens, Dr. Ranken, The Rev. James Charles, J.C. Marshman, John Bell, Ruseekrishen Mullick, W.P. Grant, The Rev. Dr. St. Leger, James Kyd, Capt. D.L. Richardson, Capt. Thomson, James Princep, W.M. Wollaston, R. Scott Thomson, B. Harding, W. Carr, Wale Byrn and Russomoy Dutt.²¹ The members in this provisional committee were

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, October, 1835.p.277.

¹⁶ K.N.Dhar, *The Imperial Library Calcutta*, The Calcutta Review, 1920. Vol.No.p.68.

¹⁷ *General Proceedings*, No.33, Letter from Stocqueler to Prinsep, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 1835, 7th October to 30th December, p.188.

¹⁸ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, October 1835.p.278.

¹⁹ *General Proceedings* 23 September 1835, No.35, Letter from W.P.Grant to G.A.Bush, Secy. to government.p.760.

²⁰ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Asiatic News, October 1835, p.279.

²¹ Ibid., p.278.

further divided into sub-committees of four or five persons, each sub-committee taking different sections, striving towards the prosperity of the library.

Soon the library began to prosper with donations of books pouring in from various individuals for the use of the library and thereby, making it popular for its usefulness. The testimony of its usefulness to the people were published from the collective report of the library beginning from the year 1836 to 1839 which reads, ‘with respect to the occasion of subscribers, the circulation of books and the collection made in every month, the operation of the last year, exhibit a decided superiority, and cannot but be gratifying to those who are interested in the prosperity in the institution.’²²

In order to establish the correctness of this remark, the following tabular statement, collected from the reports furnished at the different annual meetings had been sub joint.

Table 1: No. of Subscribers and subscription amount received

Year	No. of subscribers	Amount received per month (in Rs)
1836	5	22
1837	38	200
1838	59	310
1839	100	498

Source: Calcutta Monthly Journal, 4 March 1839, p.142.

²² *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, 4 March 1839, p.142.

Table 2: Amount of Subscription collected during 1835-39

Year	Amount of Subscription collected		
	C. Rs	paise	Anna
Sep. 1835 –Feb 1839	2193	0	0
19 th Feb 1837-10 th Feb 1838	3325	0	0
11 th Feb 1838- 31 st January 1839	5211	0	0
Average monthly collection of 1839	453	2	1
Average monthly collection of 1838	277	1	1

Source: Calcutta Monthly Journal, 4 March 1839, p.142.

Table 3: Circulation of Books and Journals 1837-1839

Item	Period of circualtion	No. of Volumes
Books	Feb 1837 to Jan 1838	8700
Periodicals	Do.	1127
Total		9827
Book	February 1838 - January 1839	14995
Periodicals	Do.	1721
Total		16716

Source: Calcutta Monthly Journal, 4 March 1839, p.142.

Not having a permanent accommodation of its own was a major setback to the growth of the library. Therefore, to solve this problem the Curators of the Calcutta Public Library, W.P.Grant, H.M.Parker and W.Carr at a meeting of the Curators held on 13th January 1839²³ discussed a proposal received from W. Carr, on behalf of the committee of subscription to the proposed Metcalf Library Building. The proposal indicates ‘desiring to know if the proprietor of the library had any objection to place their books in the Metcalf library building when it would be completed.’²⁴ As it appears to the curators, that ‘there is nothing in the constitution of the public library to prevent its establishing itself in the Metcalf Building’ that in their opinion that it would be a great

²³ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, January 1839, p.90.

²⁴ *Board Collections*, 1838-1839, Vol.No.1768,F/4/1768,p.22.

benefit to the institution to have the use of such a building upon the terms contains in the resolutions as communicated to Mr. Carr.²⁵

The Metcalf Hall: Home of the Calcutta Public Library

Metcalf Hall was built in perpetual memory of Charles Theophilus Metcalfe for liberating the press of India, Charles Metcalf was appointed provisional Governor-General of India from 20 March 1835 to 4 March 1836, immediately upon joining the office as acting Governor-General; he removed all restrictions on the press in India. 'The freedom of the Indian press having been recognised by law under the government of Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalf,'²⁶ the government in recognition of his immeasurable effort in giving freedom to the Indian press, erected a building from public subscriptions. The building was named as 'The Metcalf Library' after the name of the Provisional Governor General of India, Charles Theophilus Metcalf. The building was appropriated for the accommodation of the existing two most useful institutions then, viz., the Calcutta Public Library and the Agro-Horticultural society of India, which had no local habitations of its own.²⁷ The Agri-Horticultural society having learnt that Calcutta Public Library would be occupying the upper room of the Metcalf Building, were also considering of sharing the same roof. The advantages that would ensue from coming together of these societies were highlighted in the following:

having been mention at a meeting of our General Committee that it is in contemplation to erect a building for the use of a Public Library and that the committee of the Horticulture Society is similarly disposed was suggested and concurred in by a considerable majority of the members that as our institution had come to a light resolution, and union of the three societies might enable each to effect its object much more economically and at the same time obtain for all more advantages than could be accomplish by anyone separately.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.,p.21.

²⁷ *The General Proceedings*, 1April –24 June 1840,No.19.p. 180.

²⁸ *Bengal Harkuru*,July 1839,p.68.



Plate 1: Metcalf Hall Calcutta (source: British Library online Catalogue)

Besides the above mentioned benefits, the coming together of three societies would enhance its usefulness and it would also considerably save the time of people as three societies would be located under together under same roof. It also appeared that 'the frequent meetings of the members of three such important institution under one roof would doubtless also increase the attraction and popularity of each to a degree advantages to all, besides which many other mutual benefits and interchanges of reciprocal accommodation must occur to you.'²⁹ Considering the advantages that would be ensuing from coming together, outweigh the decision to favour them.

The meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta held on the 20 August 1835, proposed by H. M. Parker, and seconded by Babu Dwarkanauth Tagore, resolved that the public subscription be opened to provide for the erection of a building which shall be called the 'The Metcalf Library.' It was also decided that the building which shall be ornamental and commodious be offered free of rent and in trust for the reception of a public subscription library to be formed in a scale and conducted in a liberal manner worthy of the metropolis.³⁰ The Committee comprising J. Pattle, H.M. Parker, T.E.M. Turton, W.N. Forbes, J. Sutherland, J. Prinsep, Baboo Drwakanauth Tagore, J. Kyd, Russomoy, W. Carr, and T. Dickens, were appointed by the resolution at the meeting on 20 August 1835 'to collect the subscriptions and arrange the details and superintend the construction of the building and to carry into effect the object.'³¹ This committee applied to the government of Bengal, on 14th July 1836, for the grant of the 'enclosure north of the Tank in the Tank Square' for the erection of the Metcalf Hall. However, the site proposed was objected by the family members of Richard Barwell as the legal title to the vacant land to the north of the Tank in the Tank Square rested with the family.³²

The family members of Richard Barwell reacted on learning that application had been made to government for the assignment of a piece of ground within the enclosure of the north side of the tank square to be appropriated to the erection of a public library thus, induced the Government not to grant the assignment in question.³³ Considering the legal entanglement with the proposed site which was deemed inappropriate to part away for

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.,p.20.

³¹ *Board's Collections*, 1838-39, Vol.1768, 17 September 1836, p.22.

³² P.T. Nair, *Origin of the National of India: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library of India, p.51.

³³ *General Proceeding*,4 January-29 March 1837,No.49.p.465.

the aforesaid purpose was dropped. The committee was granted an unsullied ground on the other side of the Tank square- ‘the right Hon’ble the Governor General of India in council consents the ground in Hare Street where the Seller’s home is now standing to the societies.’³⁴ The conditions the government desire to meet in regard to this grant was:

That the edifice to be erected shall be ornamented and substantial and that on failure of its being maintain in repairing the ground shall revert to the government or at least that the building shall not without the consent of the government be alienable to other purpose than those set forth in the present correspondence.³⁵

The given conditions laid down by the Bengal Government was found favourable to the joint committees of the Agri-Horticultural society of India, the Calcutta Public Library, and the subscriber of the Metcalf testimonial and the Metcalf Library Building. With the acceptance of the conditions, the foundation stone with the suitable inscription of the Hall to be known as ‘Metcalf Hall’ was laid down with Masonic honours on 19th December, 1840, by Dr. James Grant, Grand Master of Bengal, in the presence of the Governor-General and all the members of the council, and the large number of public. The work of construction was completed by Messrs Burn and Co., in 1844. Thus, the Metcalf Hall became an abode of the CPL from 1844 till it was amalgamated in 1902 but it continued to exist in Metcal Hall as Imperial library till 1923. The design was taken from the Portico of Winds at Athens by K.C. Robinson, the Architect. The Metcalf Hall had two storeys, the ground floor was assigned to the Agri-Horticultural society and the first floor was occupied by the Calcutta public library.³⁶

Rules of the Calcutta Public Library³⁷

1. The library is a public library of reference and circulation, open to all ranks and classes of community.
2. The property of the library is vested in trustee, for the benefit of the proprietors.
3. The books are circulated among subscribers as well as proprietors under rules herein after specified.

³⁴ *General Proceeding*, 1 April-24 June 1840, No.21, p.184.

³⁵ *General proceedings*, No.553, Letter from, Busby, Secretary to Government To, L. Clark, Secretary, Metcalf Hall Building, 27 May 1840, p.184.

³⁶ K.N.Dhar, *The Imperial Library Calcutta*, The Calcutta Review, January 1920, Vol.299, p.69.

³⁷ *Report of the Calcutta Public Library for the year 1850*, Appendix-B, p.II.

4. Upon all pecuniary questions, and questions related to proprietary rights, each proprietor is entitled to one vote for each share held by him. Upon all question which are not pecuniary or relating to proprietary rights, each subscribers of the first class and one year standing has one vote.

Constitutional Structure and Management of Calcutta Public Library

The success of any institutions greatly depends on three factors such as the constitutional structure sound management and diligent executives. The causes for adverse times that CPL went through in the later stages, emanated from the flawed in constitutional frame work. While framing the constitution of the CPL, the founders had overlooked the importance of financial aspect in the long run. The framers failed to clearly mention as to where the library would be receiving its pecuniary assistance for its sustenance or on whose support the library would operate. There was no mention of any sources from where regular income would be generated, or assurance of financial assistance from any individuals or organisations. In the absence of meticulous planning, a ruinous future was predicted for the institution. Thus, CPL was marred by lack of funding and other ambiguities with regard to its future. The Library was established purely through the contributions of some individuals for which they were given privileges of managing the library's affairs as proprietors or shareholders.

As per the Constitution of the Calcutta Public Library, the properties of the library were to be vested in the trustees for the benefit and use of shareholders. The trustees were the curators of the library. But who were the Curators? The curators could be either a proprietor or a shareholder of the library. They were elected by proprietors or first class subscribers of one year standing. Initially, it was agreed that the management of the library was to be entrusted to seven curators for a period until the first general meeting was convened, to decide whether to expand or to reduce the number of persons to be in the committee.³⁸ For this purpose, seven persons were elected as provisional curators for a period until the first general meeting was held. The curators were Edward Ryan, W.P. Grant, Charles Cameron, J.C. Marshman, T. Dicken, H.M. Parker, and J.R. Colvin. However, in the later meeting held on 8th March 1836, it was resolved to reduce the number of curators to three persons for constituting the committee. The three

³⁸ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, December 1853, p.336.

member Curators, W.P. Grant, Col. Dunlop, and J. Kyd, were elected for a period of one year.³⁹

Curators were entrusted with the responsibility to address matters relating to pecuniary questions and also questions relating to proprietary rights. Curators, by virtue of office, were entitled to a vote whether he himself was a proprietor or not. Curators were also responsible for all matters relating to administration of the library. From 1873 to 1901, on the recommendation of Rogers Committee, the Committee of three Curators was replaced by the Council of 15 members headed by the President. But in 1902, a proprietor was elected by the proprietors and First class subscribers of one year's standing. The president from 1890 to 1891 was the Chairman of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation as its nominee.⁴⁰

Power of the Curator

The constitution of the library was vested upon the committee of three curators elected annually. They were empowered to make bye-laws for the management of the library in consistent with the rules. The curators also had the power of altering or annulling any such byelaws. In situations where any proprietors or subscribers were found guilty of violating of rules or byelaws of the library, the curators had the power to suspend them from their privileges. The Curators had power to issue tickets of admission to poor students and others tickets of admission to the Library for such period as may be thought advisable and such tickets not to be transferable. The Curators were also empowered to incur expenditure up to Rs.1000 without referring to the general body meeting. Besides the above responsibilities, the curators were required to convene meetings by giving a 7 days prior notice. The proceedings of the curators shall be entered in a book, which shall always be on the table of the library, for the inspection of the proprietors and the subscribers. The Committee of Curators was later changed to the Council.

³⁹ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Vol.2, March 1836, p.100.

⁴⁰ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library of India, 2004, p.119.

Proprietors⁴¹

1. A payment of companies Rs 300 in one payment or in three payment of 100 Rs each, 100 Rs being paid down and the 200 in equal instalments in six and twelve months, constitute remaining constitute parties commencing such subscription within twelve months from 31st August 1835, a proprietors of the library, after which time no person can become appropriator without paying 400 Rs.
2. Proprietors may not have more than 10 shares each.
3. All shares are transferable on payment by the purchaser of a fine of Rs 100 per each share transferred.
4. The share of proprietors, who leave India or die, which are not claim and the claimant's title thereto duly recognise by the curators within 5 years from such death or departure from such expiry of such five year, revert to the library.
5. In the event of any proprietor who has not claim his share returning to India at any time the curators have power to restore to him his share.

Subscribers

1. First class subscribers pay an entrance fee of 20 co's. Rs for the first every month and 6 co's Rs every succeeding month, or 8 co's. Rs for without entrance.
2. Second class subscribers pay an entrance fee of 16 co's. Rs for the first every month and 4 co's Rs every succeeding month and 6 co's. Rs for without entrance.
3. Third class subscribers pay 6 co's. Rs every month. 2 co's Rs every succeeding.
4. Any subscriber is at liberty to become subscriber upon making up his contribution to the sum Rs 400 Rs.+ with interest at the rate of five percent per annum from time of commencing his subscription.
5. All subscriptions are collected in advance monthly.
6. Subscribers, who choose to pay a year's subscription in advance, are allowed a deduction of ten percent on such advance.
7. No subscriber failing for one month to pay his subscription is allowed to make use of the library until he receives permission to do so from the curators.
8. Subscriptions are not receive for broken parts of a month, and are held to run as from the first of the month in which the subscribers are enrolled.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. iv-v.

9. Subscribers quitting Calcutta without communicating in writings to the curators their intention are required to pay their subscription until their intention is so communicated by them. And failing so to pay ceases to be subscribers and cannot be readmitted without a special reference to the curators.

Lastly, the forgoing rules are the fundamental rules of the institution, and can be altered only at the general meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose by public advertisement, in one or more of the daily newspapers in Calcutta, with not less than seven days notice, and in which shall be expressed the object of the proposed alterations.⁴² Persons who donated books and others were also duly acknowledged for their contributions by nominating them as honorary members on the recommendation of the committee, in a general meeting of the proprietors.⁴³

Council of the Library

In the formation of the constitution of the CPL, there was no mention of committee of council. The administrative and other powers were vested in the hands of the committee of three curators. But, when the financial stability of the library was gradually weakened, Finance Sub-Committee headed by A. Rogers, R.H Hollingbery, Joy Gopal Sen, and Cally Prossonno Dutt was formed in 1873, to look into the situations and to suggest ways for its improvement. After spending considerable time in examining various issues responsible for the decline, the Sub-Committee recommended for a larger governing body for the effective management of the institution. Therefore, the committee of three curators was abolished and was replaced by the Council in which the three curators would be the President, and the Vice- Presidents of the council and to include other 12 other members.

Out of the twelve members, five would be proprietors and the other seven would be first or second class subscribers of one year standing. From the elected council, two committees would be formed, the Finance, and the Correspondence and House Committees for the selection of books, periodicals and other publications and the preparation of catalogue. The president and 2 vice- presidents would be the members

⁴² *Report of the Calcutta Public Library for the year 1850*, Appendix-B,p.xi.

⁴³ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Asiatic News, October 1835.p.278.

and ex-officio of these two committees.⁴⁴ This recommendation was accepted by the proprietors and subscribers of the Calcutta Public Library at a meeting held on 12th May 1873. J.A. Crawford was elected as the first president of the CPL in 1873 and subsequently, J.B. Knight and Raja Ramanath Tagore were elected as the first vice-presidents. The Council consisted of members Juggodanund Mookerjee, T.D. Ingram, J.Martin, J.B. Roberts, Joy Gopal Sen, J.C. McGregor, G.W. Barclay, E.W. Kellner, W. Biss, A. Mackenzie, and Jadunath Ghose.⁴⁵

Consequently, the management of the library was placed in the newly formed governing body of council, with immense hope that the condition of library will once again be revived. In 1877, when Raja Narendra Krishna was appointed as president of the Council, he became the first native to hold the post of president. However, the structure of the library underwent several changes after the reorganisation when the management was jointly shared with the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. The management of the library came under the new council consisting of 6 members representing the Calcutta Corporation, and 6 representing the proprietors and subscribers of the CPL. H. Lee from the Calcutta Corporation and Raja Narendra Krishna from the Calcutta Public Library were elected as the first President and Vice-President respectively.⁴⁶ The Corporation finally withdrew from the joint management of the library in 1902⁴⁷ when Calcutta Public Library was transferred to the government for the amalgamation to the already existing Imperial Library.

Decline of the Library

The Calcutta Public Library was a self-supporting library with its management solely supported by subscriptions. The rate of subscriptions for different class varies. Proprietors paid the highest, followed by the First Class, the Second Class, the Third Class, and the Fourth Class. Following the formation of Fourth Class in 1849, many subscribers transferred their subscription to this class. This incurred loss to the library revenue leading to its steady decline ever since. Subscribers in the Fourth Class enjoyed the same privileges as that of Third Class but, by paying lesser than those in that class.

⁴⁴ *Finance of the Calcutta Public Library*, Report of the Sub-committee appointed on the 10 February, 1873, office of Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, Appendix, pp.24-25.

⁴⁵ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata National Library, 2004, pp.120-121.

⁴⁶ Subodh Kumar Mookerjee, *Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*, Calcutta, the World Press Private Limited, 1969, p. 25.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 121.

The effect on the Third Class subscribers greatly impacted the pecuniary condition of the library. The library, as the name import was also open to the public free of charge, so that anyone may have access to any of the books and papers contain in it.⁴⁸

Besides, Calcutta Public Library being a public library of reference and record to which the public have free access, the CPL also functioned as a circulating library for amusement and entertainment for those who contributed towards its funds, either as proprietors or as subscribers. Therefore, the library was obliged to meet the demand of the contributors, and at the same time, perform duties of a public nature without having any public income to meet the charges.⁴⁹ Thus, in event of subscribers quitting/withdrawing their membership, it directly affects the administration of the library. It was reported as early as in 1849 that, 'the decrease in the number of subscribers since December is in a great measure attributable to commercial disaster which obliged several parties to withdraw.'⁵⁰ A similar reason which led to the drastic declined in the subscription emanated from annual shifting of government of India to Simla. This caused military officers who came from Europe to cut short of their stay in the presidency and thus, missed the opportunity to get acquainted with the library.

Another factor amounting to large scale withdrawal of subscribers in 1872 and 1873 were the section of people who resented the library's action to stop their allowance of books, until they clear up arrears of subscription.⁵¹ The decline in the number of subscribers was also attributed to the burgeoning of public libraries and reading rooms in and around Calcutta in the later stage of its existence. Many societies and institutions had also set up libraries and reading rooms, such as the formation of libraries under the Government Education Department, India's Mudie's Library, and the Calcutta Reading Club in the North part of the Town.⁵² Among other factors, as pointed out by Finance Committee instituted in 1873, a major reason was that the books purchased did not conform to the taste of the subscribers and readers. Paucity of books was certainly a

⁴⁸ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1888*, Appendix-H, Calcutta, P.S. D'Rozario & Co.,12,waterloo street, 1889, pp.1-2.

⁴⁹ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1888*, Appendix-H, Calcutta, P.S. D'Rozario & Co.,12,waterloo street, 1889, Letter to the Secretary of Government of Bengal, from the president of the council, CPL,23 March 1885,pp.9-10.

⁵⁰ *Report of the Calcutta public library for the year 1847 &1848 to 1855*,Calcutta,Sanders,Cone & Co, No.7.Mission Raw,1848,p.8.

⁵¹ *Finances of the CPL Report1874 :Report of the Sub-Committee appointed 10 February 1873*,Calcutta , Office of Superintendent of government printing press,p.15.

⁵² *Ibid.*,p.14.

major drawback in running the library since the main objective of setting up a library, which was to provide reading materials according to the needs of subscribers and readers, could not be met.

The scarcity of books which were generally in great demand such as prose work of imagination were limited as compared to books which were rarely consulted like books of 'useful knowledge', the natural sciences and mathematics, geography, history, dictionaries, English language guide and encyclopaedia.⁵³ Some subscribers like the upper class Anglo-Indians held a selfish notion that the CPL was chiefly of use to natives, therefore, should support it, however, this argument did not hold true because about a third of the proprietors were Europeans and Eurasians and the majority of the subscribers belong to this class.⁵⁴ Their disinclination towards the library growth was also a cause of the fall of CPL. It was also observed that in the formation of the library committee, who were to represent different classes of society, the mercantile community was totally ignored, who could have extended their help and support to the institution. The committee therefore, appealed to the men in business;

Feeling assured that the claims of such an institution to public support need only be brought prominently forward to engage your attention; we beg to submit a copy of our rules and rates of admission.

In doing this we earnestly entreat you to consider that although your time may not allowed you either take at present any active part in its operation or draw largely upon the literary resources, you can render a most important service by contributing towards its solid establishment and future support, and we confidently hope that you will at least afford this testimony of the interest you feel in the prosperity of a public depository of knowledge and recreation which to every individual at some time or other must prove useful.⁵⁵

Lacked of support and co-operation from the mercantile community was a discouragement to the library because in most of the European countries the original sponsors were wealthy business men who supported the public libraries. But in Calcutta, such financial support from this community was absent. CPL as a social institution depended greatly on generous contributions from philanthropies started to decline eventually in the absence of such support. If the business community had

⁵³ Priya Joshi, *Culture and Consumption of Fiction: The Reading Public and the British Novel in Colonial India*, The John Hopkins University press, 1998, p.205.

⁵⁴ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library, 2004, p.158.

⁵⁵ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, March 1837, p.198.

extended their support and co-operation to the library, many underprivileged native students and youths could have benefited from the library. In the words of Black Burn Knight 'there has been great decline of subscription which formed the chief support of the institution, the means for the purchase of books has been curtailed, and the usefulness of the institution has been seriously impaired.'⁵⁶

As a consequence of the unsatisfactory state of the library, the Calcutta Public Library was rendered useless to the 'town generally, and of little use to subscribers. It cannot afford the arrangement, and establishment's necessary to the full utilization of its store of admirable works of information and reference. It is hopeless to expect that under private management, it can ever develop sufficiently to take the place which might occupy an educational agent in the capital of India.'⁵⁷ Therefore, it was considered that unless the library resort to some financial assistance from the Government, it would be difficult to restore to its former self again. To save it from further declining, curators of the Calcutta Public Library led by Hon'ble J.E.D. Bethune, Major G.T. Marshall and Willis Earle appealed for financial aid to the Deputy Governor of Bengal on 18 July 1849. This application for the financial assistance was turned down without specifying any reasons on 30 July 1849.⁵⁸ Lack of sponsorship and fund had its direct impact on the expenses in procuring books which compelled the library to curtail many of its services and curb expenditures on buying books which otherwise, on healthier state, would have been made available to the readers.

To find solutions for the deteriorating financial condition of the library, a finance sub-committee was appointed on 10 February 1873. The sub-committee suggested several remedies such as to 'reduce the expenditure, increase income and curtail the extravagant privileges of proprietors and subscribers.'⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the suggestions could not rectify the existing financial condition of the library. After resorting to all possible help for its restoration, the council finally conceded their inability to bring any improvement in the financial position of the library. The committee also concluded that unless the income improved or it receives substantial aids from the Government it will be

⁵⁶ James Burn as quoted by P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, 2004, p.156

⁵⁷ Letter from Mackenzie, one of the proprietors, CPL, to Maharaja Narendra Krishna Bahadur, president of the council of CPL, 23 December 1884, General Department, p.7.

⁵⁸ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library: Days of Calcutta Public Library*, p.155.

⁵⁹ *Finance of the Calcutta Public Library*, Report of the Sub-committee appointed on the 10 February, 1873, office of Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, Appendix, p.28.

impossible to maintain the library efficiently for any length of time.⁶⁰ Having no other means but to turn once again to the government, the council under Maharaja Narendra Krishna, president of Calcutta Public Library, approached the government on 9 March 1880. Maharaja Narendra Krishna earnestly entreated the Lieutenant Governor for the consideration of financial support to CPL by citing the following reasons:-

in most civilize countries, public library are subsidized if not wholly supported by the Government or municipal bodies of the towns of those countries. In this presidency, however, no such support is given to the only institution of its kind. A large portion of the present proprietors consist of natives, and the library affords the only means by which the majority of natives can peruse or study standard European works not procurable anywhere else in the country.⁶¹

To assess the situation of the library Ashley Eden, who was a patron and Lt-Governor of Bengal, visited the library room to fully acquaintf with the problem. He observed that the main fault was the way the library function, which led to its disqualification for the government aid. Ashley Eden remarked that nature of the library was purely public and it carried on as circulating library of light literature.⁶² The Governor opined that the ambiguity in the management of library emanated from excessive spending on establishments and nonconformity with respect to taste of subscribers in the selection of books. The government decision with regard to this effect was communicated to the committee of the CPL:

In view of the unsatisfactory features in the management of the library..... the Lieutenant Governor does not think that the Government would be warranted in giving aid to the institution from public funds while it continues on its present footings.⁶³

Consequently, the Bengal Government made a proposal on which terms financial aid and support of any kind would be provided to the library. The conditions under which the Government agreed to extend its financial support to the library were, ‘firstly, to reform the management of the library thoroughly and secondly, that the Government

⁶⁰ *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1888*, Appendix-H, P.S. D’Rozario & Co.,12,waterloo street, Calcutta, 1889, p. 9.

⁶¹ Letter from Narendra Krishna president Calcutta Public Library to H.H. Stanfield, private secretary to Governor of Bengal, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1888*, Appendix-H, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1889, p. 1.

⁶² P.T.Nair,*Origin of the National Library :Days of the Calcutta Public, National library of India*,Kolkata,2004.p.155.

⁶³ Letter from A. Mackenzie, Secretary to the Governor of Bengal, General and Revenue Department to Gopee Kissan Mitter, Secretary and Librarian Calcutta Public Library, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1888*, Appendix-H, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1889, p. 4.

were given a potential voice in its administration.⁶⁴ Besides these conditions other terms in the proposal included:

if the proprietors and subscribers were willing to place the management in the hands of a small board, consisting of the director of public institution as president with two members nominated by Government, two by the proprietors and one by the subscribers, and the lieutenant governor would be willing to give substantial aid, and assist the board in placing the institution on a proper basis, and making it useful to all classes of the community.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the conditions on which the government proposed to extend its support to the library were not acceptable to the council of the Calcutta Public Library as accepting those condition would be detrimental to the fundamental constitution of the library.⁶⁶ Not willing to compromise with the fundamental constitution of the library, the Council regretfully informed that they 'cannot accept the conclusion at which His Honour Lieutenant Governor General of Bengal has arrived, especially as regard the management, and beg most respectfully to withdraw their application for the government grants.'⁶⁷

Coincidentally, Mackenzie's scheme for the re-organisation of the library, and which the same was placed before the proprietors and subscribers at the general meeting of 22 December 1884, was found to be considerably acceptable. He proposed that the library be converted into a Free Public Library with financial support from the Municipal Corporation. 'Maintenance of the FREE Library is, a Municipal duty,'⁶⁸ therefore, under this scheme the old proprietors would continue to enjoy the existing privileges, besides the privileges to take out books and periodicals without further payment, the right to elect representatives to the council of management, and take part in general meetings.

Mckenzie's Scheme proceeds proposed that⁶⁹:

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library of India: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, Kolkata, National Library of India, 2004, p.155.

⁶⁷ Letter from Gopee Kissan Mitter, Secretary and Librarian, Calcutta Public Library to A. Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General and Reserve Department, Dated 27 October 1889, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library* for 1888, Appendix-H, P.S. D'Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1889, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Letter from A. Mackenzie, proprietor of Calcutta Public Library, to the president of the council Calcutta Public Library, Dated 15 December 1885, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library* for 1888, Appendix-H, P.S. D'Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1889, p.24.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 19.

1. The library and all its appurtenances to be made over to the Municipality of Calcutta, to be maintained by it in perpetuity as a Free Library for the towns and subscribers, to which all respectable citizens shall be admitted for purposes of reading and study on the premises, all invested fund so transferred to be subject to any trust or charge now existing.
2. This free library to be supplemented by a “lending department “or open only to subscribers and to the holders of “share” in the old (present) public library.
3. The management of the Library, in all departments to be vested in a council composed as follows:-
 - Six nominees of the Municipality.
 - Four elected representatives of the proprietors of the old (present) Library.
 - Two nominees of the Bengal Government (their task was to look after the interests of the Government in the library especially in terms of library collection and to see to the due appropriation of grants).
4. Transferable shares of proprietors of the old (present) library to continue to be transferable, but, without registration fee or fine of transfer, the holders to have in Lending Department all the privileges of first subscribers.
5. The Free Library to be opened from 6am to 10pm daily; the cost of the books, papers, and periodicals establishment and lightning to be borne by the Municipality.
6. The lending Department to be opened between the hours of 10am and 5pm on all week days; the cost of books, etc. and all establishments to meet from subscription and the proceeds of any invested funds made over to from Municipality by the old (present) Library which were not subject to any specific trust.
7. The Municipality to be empowered to levy a Library rate, not exceeding one pie in the rupee of the town assessment, for the maintenance of the Free Library and repair of the building, etc.
8. The Bengal Government to be invited to contribute towards the establishment of the Free Library by providing suitable accommodation for the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, either in connection with the economic Museum or elsewhere as may but meet the wishes of that society. Failing this the

Municipality to be empowered to expropriate by purchase the society's share in the Metcalf Hall.

The scheme was submitted to the Government for its consideration and involvement. According to Mackenzie, 'the establishment of a Free Library in Calcutta is a matter of Public movement in which the local Government may see fit to interest itself.'⁷⁰ This proposal was found favourable to which Rivers Thompsons, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, reported, 'invite the attention of the council to the accompanying copy of Mr. Mackenzie's letter of 16 December 1885, and to request that Sir River Thompson may be favoured with a full on the proposals therein made for the better management of the Library.'⁷¹ Stuart Bailey was also of the opinion that the scheme proposed by Mr. Mackenzie in 1885 of converting the Calcutta Public library into a Free Public Library under official control 'should form the basis of any final arrangement.'⁷²

Calcutta Public Library and Calcutta Municipality Corporation

Having found substantial support for the Mackenzie's scheme, the council placed the conditions of the government with certain modifications on which they were willing to work. At the foremost, besides other conditions, 'any alteration of, an addition to, the present rules of the library which may be needed to give effect to the scheme be subject to the approval of the proprietors and subscribers.'⁷³

To prevent from any outcry against the administration in future, the council had placed conditions for their consideration, if the government would accept the report of the committee of 15 March 1889, with the alterations made by the council of the library. They expected that the question pertaining as to whether the government, or the municipality, or both together will afford the required assistance and take part in settling

⁷⁰ Letter from Mackenzie, proprietor of the CPL to the Secretary of the *Government of Bengal in the Education Department*, 16 December 1885, Calcutta, p.28.

⁷¹ Letter from A.P.Macdonnel, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the council of the Calcutta public library, *General Department*, No.125, 23 December 1885, p.25.

⁷² *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1888*. Calcutta, P.S.D.Rozario, Waterloo Street, 1889. p.6.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 10.

issues relating to management of the library.⁷⁴ With the acceptance of these conditions, the Library was formally transferred to the Calcutta Municipality on 20 April, 1890.⁷⁵

Under the new arrangement, the management of the library came under the commissioner of the Municipal Corporation. The corporation had certain conditions on the basis of which they agreed to undertake the future management of the Library. The Government in a step towards recognition of the newly constituted library gave a grant of Rs. 5000 for the first year as an initial outlay. With respect to this sanction, it was reported that ‘as regard to the initial expenditure of Rs.10, 000, Lieutenant Governor was willing to sanction a grant of Rs. 5000 during the year 1890-91, and to undertake thereafter to add a further sum equal to the total of any private contribution not exceeding Rs. 5000, which may have been calculated within that year towards the objects referred to by the chairman of Corporation.’⁷⁶ Besides this, it was also reported that the council of the library could be able to raise the sum of Rs. 3,488 from the public,⁷⁷ and grant from the Municipality was Rs. 8, 000 for the annual purchase of books under this new settlement.⁷⁸

The Government of Bengal was fully aware that Calcutta Public Library was visited by different types of readers and it frequently requires varieties of reading materials. Therefore, it was considered convenient to place the books in the care of the Calcutta Public Library for public reference so that people would have access to those books and be useful for the public. It was mentioned in a letter from Maude to the CPL that,

the book received by the Government under Act XXV of 1867 and now deposited in the library attached to the secretariat, but they are not practically available to the public. It is contemplated by Section II of the Act that these book should be deposited in a public library and it has been

⁷⁴ Letter from Narendra Krishna, President Calcutta Public Library to under secretary, Governor of Bengal, Dated 11 July 1889, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1890*, p. 10

⁷⁵ *Report of the Calcutta Public Library for the year 1892-3*, letter from Richie, president, of the Calcutta Public Library.p.XXIX.

⁷⁶ Letter from P. Nolan, Secretary to the Government of Bengal to president Calcutta Public Library, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1890*, General Department, Miscellaneous, No. 351, Dated 19 February 1890, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Letter from H. Lee, President Calcutta Public Library to the Government of Bengal, Dated 2 May 1891, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1891*, Appendix-D, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1892, p. viii.

⁷⁸ Subodh Kumar Mookerjee, *Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*, Calcutta ,the World Press Private Limited, 1969, p. 25.

decided that they should be kept in the Calcutta Public Library as the best way to make them available to the public at large.⁷⁹

With this announcement to hand over the books under the care of CPL, Government requested that the necessary arrangement may be made for placing the books in the custody of the library. It must be understood however that the managing committee of the library should not allow these books, when placed in their custody, to be removed or lent out on any consideration.⁸⁰

Under the re-organization of the library, the management of the library was in the hands of the new council consisting of members from two bodies. Six members represented the Calcutta Corporation and six represented the proprietors and subscribers of the Calcutta Public Library. President and vice-president was also chosen from the two bodies respectively.⁸¹ H. Lee from the Calcutta Corporation and Raja Narendra Krishna from the Calcutta Public Library were elected as the first president and Vice-president respectively.⁸² The Calcutta corporation nominated H. Lee, W. Swinhoe, H.M. Rustomjee, Dr. Maherendra Lall Sircar, Baboo Joy Govind Law, and Maulvi Sirajul Islam Khan Bahadur to the council. Maharaja Narendra Krishna, H. Beveridge, H. Moor, Baboo Premnath Pandit, and Baboo Amarendra Nath Chatterjee represented to the council from the Calcutta Public Library.⁸³ Baboo Kali Charan Palit was elected on the death of Baboo Premnath Pandit on 1892.⁸⁴

Regarding the constitution of the newly formed committee, it was hinted that even though the Government of Bengal has large stake in the library, it was not represented well in the newly formed committee, therefore it was 'recommended that Babu Hara Prasad Sastri as a fit person to be added to the committee to represent the interest of the Government.'⁸⁵ This decision was communicated to the council for their consideration and opinion regarding whether the recommendation of Babu Hara Prasad Sastri as the

⁷⁹ Letter from Maude, Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the president Calcutta public library, *General Department*, dated 26 June 1890, p. XLiii.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Annual Report of the Calcutta public library for 1891 to 1892*, P.S. D'Rozario & Co., 12 Waterloo street, Calcutta, 1892, p. 2.

⁸² Subodh Kumar Mookerjee, *Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*, the World Press Private Limited, Calcutta, 1969, p. 25.

⁸³ P.T. Nair, *Origin of the National Library of India: Days of the Calcutta Public Library, Belvedere*, Kolkata, 2004, p. 165.

⁸⁴ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1892-93*, P.S. D'Rozario & Co., Waterloo Street, Calcutta, 1892, p.2.

⁸⁵ Letter from D.A. Croft, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal to the Secretary to Government of Bengal, *General Department*, No. 2537, Calcutta, 30 April 1891, p. x.

Government representative in the council was acceptable or not. In this regard, Lieutenant-Governor wanted to know if there was any objection on the part of the council of the Calcutta Public Library to the appointment of Babu Hara Prasad Sastri, Librarian of the Bengal Library, as the Government representative in the council.’⁸⁶ In response to this, the council assured the Government that when the meeting convenes the question will be considered and Maharajah Narendra Krishna Bahadur, the vice president of the council will ensure that the unconditional acceptance of the nomination of Babu Hara Prasad Sastri as the Government representative in the council of the library.⁸⁷

When the Government was finally informed that the council had accepted the nomination of Babu Hara Prasad Sastri at a special meeting of the proprietors and subscribers of the Library, subject to the provision, that while, ‘Pandit Sastri’s’⁸⁸ counsel and co-operation would be thankfully received in all matters concerning the management of the library, in cases of any material differences of opinion among the members, his vote should only be counted when the subject of discussion be such as relate in any way to the Bengal Library to be replaced, in the custody of the council the Calcutta Public Library, for the benefit of the public.⁸⁹ The provision on which Calcutta Public Library agreed upon in respect to the admission of Hara Prasad Sastri as the Government representatives to the council was not agreeable to the Government. Therefore, the Government explicitly stated that,

the Lieutenant Governor is unable to accept the conditions of which the proprietors and subscribers of the Calcutta Public Library have expressed their willingness to accept Babu Hara Prasad Sastri, Librarian, Bengal Library, as the Government representatives on the council and that unless the Babu is admitted unconditionally to the council, he cannot be appointed at all.⁹⁰

⁸⁶Letter from W. Moude, Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the president, Calcutta public library, *General Department*, Miscellaneous No.894, Calcutta, 24 July 1891, p. xiii.

⁸⁷Letter from Bipin Chandra Pal, Secretary, Calcutta public library to under secretary to the Government of Bengal, *General Department*, Miscellaneous Branch, Dated 26 January 1892, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1892 p. xvii.

⁸⁸Hara Prasad Sastri is also referred to as Pandit Sastri in the *proceedings*.

⁸⁹Letter from H. Lee, president Calcutta public Library to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal. *General Department*, Miscellaneous No. 894, Dated 13 August 1891, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library*, 1891, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1892 appendix-D, p. xiii.

⁹⁰Letter from W. Moude, Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the president, Calcutta public library, *General Department*, Miscellaneous Branch, No.240T/G, Dated 24 September 1891, *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library*, 1891, P.S. D’Rozario & Co., Calcutta, p. xiv.

Nevertheless, since the Government had a big role in the resurrection of the library, they were able to make the council agree to their point of view. Hence, after prolonged negotiations with the library council, Babu Hari Prasad Sastri was finally instated in on the council as the Government representative.

Under the new arrangement the library had to maintain a free reading room for the use of the public supplemented by public new room which was largely used by visitors from all classes. The number of users started to increase by double than that of the previous year, thus clearly proving the growing usefulness of their department.⁹¹ A big room that belongs to the Agri-Horticulture society was acquired on payment of Rs. 800 per year for the purpose of Reading Room, which was opened to the public in July 1890. This kindled the interest of the people and soon it became significantly popular that number of readers visiting the library increased considerably. As a result, in March 1891 the average number of readers attending the reading room per day was 807. Interestingly, separate records of the European and Indian readers were maintained. In March 1891, 1,465 Europeans and 958 Indians visited the library however, the position was reversed in the following year, and more Indians attended the library than the Europeans.⁹² In the same year, Increase in number of subscribers resulted in average increase in number of subscribers which was, 117 paying Rs. 392 against 109 paying Rs. 355 in the previous year, showing an increase both in number and earnings.⁹³ Financial condition also improved along with the increase of readership and improvement in the level of management, and it started to yield profit. By opening reading rooms to the public, the library was able to increase the number of subscribers and also make itself popular.

The first task undertaken by the committee after re-organizing the library was to appoint a librarian who could bring new outlook and invigorate the library. In regard to this, the committee began looking for a qualified candidate with innovative ideas who could bring changes to the institution. The post of the librarian was advertised on the pay scale of 100-10-200 where 200 candidates applied. After careful consideration of the merits

⁹¹ *Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1891 to 1892*, Calcutta, P.S. D'rozario & Co., 1892, p. 2.

⁹² B.S. Kesavan, *India's National Library*, National Library Calcutta, 1961, p. 11.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

of the different candidate by the council, Bipin Chandra Pal was selected as the Librarian on 20th August 1890.⁹⁴

Though Pal did not have any references to impress upon the selection committee, he was selected on the basis of a lecture that he attached to the application. This impressed some members of the council especially H. Beveridge. The first task Bipin Chandra Pal took up as a librarian was the compilation of library catalogue on the suggestion of H. Beveridge. A general list of books alphabetically arranged according to author's name with copious detail of cross references under the subject heading was made. Thereafter, Dictionary Catalogue was prepared for the Calcutta Public Library. This catalogue was later published in 1898.

Unfortunately, Bipin Chandra Pal, did not stay long in the office due to differences of opinion with the management committee. As a librarian, Pal felt that he was serving twelve masters. There were also a few, who constantly made his life difficult by exerting their authority over him individually. Although the individual members could not instruct him, a few of them treated him as their personal servant. He was also accused of 'misuse' of library funds. He found that the environment was not conducive for him to continue any longer. He, therefore, resigned after one year and six months of service.⁹⁵ To fill the vacancy a fresh 'application for the post was called for by public advertisement in the local papers and among the several applications received, Radha Raman Mitra was selected by majority vote, subject to six months probation. He was later confirmed for the post as he proved himself worthy for the post.'⁹⁶ After the initial positive atmosphere, situations did not improve much as anticipated under the new arrangement. The Calcutta Public Library faced the same old problem again as the management started to encounter various problems. In this circumstance, the library returned to its position prior to reorganization.

The condition of the library continued to decline gradually, which was largely due to the government's apathy, and the lack of concern from Municipal authorities. It failed entirely to shoulder its responsibility, and it also failed to levy the library cess which was suggested by Mackenzie. A sum of Rs. 8, 000, which was granted per year by the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Bimal Kumar Dutta, *Libraries and Librarianship of ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi, Atma Ram & Sons, 1970, p.102.

⁹⁶ *CPL report 1892-3*, p2

municipality towards the maintenance of the library, was found to be inadequate considering the growing number of readers.⁹⁷ Irregularity of adequate income became leverage in constraining the library to perform its responsibility. Calcutta Public Library continued to languish under lax management, and irregularity of adequate income became leverage in constraining its role to elevate the public. The library started decaying and practically useless to the community, though there were rare and valuable manuscripts in its collections. Despite unrelenting effort to save it, the condition did not improve and remained the same for nearly half a century till Curzon came to its rescue.⁹⁸

Curzon found the library in miserable condition when he visited in 1899. He described the situation as, ‘most of the books had parted with their bindings and the room in which we are now met was occupied by a few readers of news paper and light fiction, whose tenancy of the library was fiercely disputed by pigeons which were flying about freely inside the room and evidently treated as their permanent habitation.’⁹⁹ Having seen its richness in collections and also finding no reliable reference library in Calcutta, Curzon decided to save the veritable institution by amalgamating it into the Imperial Library. Curzon, took the matter so dearly, when he said, ‘it was a pity to see it given to pigeons, plants and plough.’¹⁰⁰ Therefore, with strong determination he set upon the task, knowing fully that,

the removal of the Metcalf Hall is no doubt fraught with many difficulties, but there is strong consensus of opinion that the present condition of the public library is grave scandal, and that it is impossible to remove the abuses without placing the institution under state control. The amalgamation of the libraries seems the best solution of the difficult problem. By a judicious expenditure of money and by proper administration the two libraries might be converted into a great state library, worthy of the capital of an empire.¹⁰¹

Finally, Curzon succeeded in his mission of amalgamating the CPL to the Imperial library in 1902. The legacy of the venerable library continued to live in the newly established library by Lord Curzon. The veritable treasures of the Calcutta public library

⁹⁷ B.S. Kesavan, *India's National Library*, National Library Calcutta, 1961, p. 11.

⁹⁸ N.K.Dhar, *The Imperial Library, The Calcutta Review*, p.69.

⁹⁹ *The Times of India*, 3 January 1903, Speech by the Viceroy: The Story of the Institution, p.9.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Home Department*, Public-A, No. 231-302, November 1901, p. 6

formed the nucleus of the Imperial Library. The valuable collections were put to its use again as useful as it was in its past.

Conclusion

The establishment of Calcutta Public Library can be considered as one of the best contributions of the British. Though libraries have been in existence in India since ancient time, the idea of a public library was introduced to India by the British with the foundation of the Calcutta Public Library.¹⁰² The establishment of Calcutta public library led to widely recognise the role of public libraries as one of the most important element in the foundation of knowledge economy and that it plays a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge.¹⁰³

The year 1835 is considered as an important watershed in the history of public libraries in India. The establishment of Calcutta Public Library was boon to many of the Indian natives, who had no other means of becoming acquainted with European literatures than those afforded by the Calcutta Public Library,¹⁰⁴ because books were so expensive and rare. Therefore, considering the nature of the library and the services it provided, one can safely say that the Calcutta Public Library had a unique position as the first public library in this part of the country. Such a well organized library was rare even in Europe during those days because the first Public Library Act of England and Wales was passed only in 1850,¹⁰⁵ whereas Calcutta had already possessed one in 1835, the committee of Curators remarked, 'while the question of establishing of public lending libraries is being agitated in England, it must be a source of pride to the inhabitants of this Metropolis to know that they already possessed one which, in point of liberality and subservience to public benefit may challenge comparison with any European institution.'¹⁰⁶ The Calcutta Public Library also served itself as a model which was emulated by many libraries founded in later period. This library also gave impetus to small libraries by donating duplicate copies of books, periodicals, and journals from time to time. The legacy of the Calcutta Public Library is still alive in today's National

¹⁰² Subodkumar Mookerji and Binoyendra Sengupta, *Library Organization and Library Administration*, Calcutta, world press private LTD.p.69.

¹⁰³ *National Knowledge Commission*, New Delhi, 2006.p.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1847-1848*, Sanders Cones and Co., 1848, p. xxvii.

¹⁰⁵ W.J.Murison, *The Public Library: Its origin, purpose and significant*, London, George Harrap & Co.LTD.,1971,p.15.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1847-1848*, Sanders Cones and Co., 1848, p.23.

Library as the collection of Calcutta Public Library is being preserved in their rare books section. Nucleuses of the National Library were that of CPL collection which was transferred to the Imperial Library.

The library also served as a centre for the encouragement and development of scholarship among the native students, since it was impossible for them to buy books. CPL by providing books and other reading materials foster the habit of reading and help them to find a way to improve their lives. It bridged the gap between the rich and the poor by providing equal access to everyone, and became a blessing for both the Europeans as well as the natives.

The Calcutta Public Library was successful in fulfilling the objectives of its founders by keeping it 'open to all ranks and classes without distinction and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature.'¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, in the later part of its existence, CPL was marred by financial problems, thus once a flourishing institution gradually started to decline and it rendered useless until Curzon reinvigorate the dying institution by amalgamating it to the Imperial Library in 1903. The library was re-born into National Library of India in 1948. As a National library, it has become focal centre and universally accessible for all kinds of information and culture. This study particularly documents the importance of Calcutta Public Library, because of which the foundation was laid for public library movement in India.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from W.P. Grant curator of the Calcutta public library to G.A. Bushby Secretary to the Government of Bengal, *General proceedings*, No.35, dated 23 September 1835, General proceedings, No.35, p. 417.

CHAPTER FOUR

Transition of Imperial Library to the National Library of India

Amalgamation of CPL to the Imperial Library

When Lord Curzon came to India as the Governor General on 6 January 1899,¹ his first undertaking was the visit to Government offices and public buildings in the capital city to see and analyse what they were like and how their internal systems functioned.² In the process, Curzon came to know about the Calcutta Public Library and the Agricultural Society located at the Metcalf Hall. When he reached the location, he saw the dilapidated condition of the library where ‘most of the books had parted with their bindings and the room in which we are now met was occupied by a few readers of news paper and light fiction, whose tenancy of the library was fiercely disputed by pigeons which were flying about freely inside the room and evidently treated as their permanent habitation.’³ However, he instantly realized the worth of the library which had rich and priceless collections that would be a veritable treasure for the readers and students in India. ‘About the same time, he also visited the Home Department and found stacked there in a crowded unsuitable building, the library of books belonging to the Government of India, known as the Imperial Library, practically accessible to none but officials’ and useless for the purpose of local study or reference and unknown to the public at large.’⁴ Since, there was no good public reference library in Calcutta which could be opened to the use of the public;⁵ he decided to amalgamate the two libraries.

Curzon amalgamated the Calcutta Public Library to the then Imperial Library of India in 1902 and transformed it into a Library worthy to be at the capital of Indian Empire. In Curzon’s words, ‘putting together these various experiences it seems obvious duty to me to work out for some sort of amalgamation and thereby to give Calcutta what a chief city or a great province with a population of millions of people, itself also the capital city of the British Empire in India ought most certainly to possess, namely a library

¹ P.T.Nair, *Origin of the National Library of India: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, National Library of India, Kolkata, 2004, p.167.

² *The Times of India*, 31 January 1903, p.9.

³ *The Times of India*, 3 January 1903, Speech by the Viceroy: The Story of the Institution, p.9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ N.K.Dhar, ‘The Imperial Library, Calcutta’, *the Calcutta Review*, vol.299, January 1920, p.68-9.

worthy of the name.’⁶ With characteristic energy and thoroughness, he at once set about the task of repairing the past neglect and was determined to leave Calcutta only after establishing a reference library modelled on the lines of the British Museum or Bodleian Library. In this connection Lord Curzon divulged his ambition to Sir John Woodburn, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal;

One night when you were dining here, I mentioned to you my desire. If possible to create in Calcutta an Imperial Library worthy of the name and to place at its disposal, as the nucleus of the collection, the Library of books and records now kept in the Home Department, having inspected the Metcalf Hall, and noted the dilapidated condition of the Metcalf library, as well as the collection of the Agri-Horticultural society; and having further learned that both these bodies were in serious financial strain, it appears to me that by buying out proprietary rights, we might find ourselves in a possession of a building, not ill adapted to the purpose which I had in view.⁷

Curzon after taking stock of the situation of both the bodies, decided to buy, along with the proprietary rights, the building in which library was accommodated. He decided that buying out Metcalf Hall would be the best option because construction of new building would augment financial expending and also buying of shares would incur more load upon the exchequer. The Metcalf Hall was owned by the proprietors of the Calcutta Public Library and the Agri-Horticultural Society, into whose possessions came in between the years 1840 and 1850.⁸ This Hall was named in honour of Sir Charles Metcalf, the Acting Governor General from 1835 to 1836- the interval between the departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of Lord Auckland in India. Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalf liberated the Indian press on 15th September 1835 for which the Home Department declared, ‘it was a great day, and the people of Calcutta, who were eager to celebrate it, subscribed and erected a noble building on the bank of the Hughly, to contain public library which was called the Metcalf Hall.’⁹ The Bengal Hurkaru, the local newspaper wrote about the significance of Metcalf Hall; ‘these walls will not merely record the names that can never be forgotten; but receive and preserve a Public Library and the Museum of the Agricultural and Horticultural society of India.’¹⁰ Since the building was old and crumbling, Curzon worked on its restoration. To refurbish the old building, Curzon presented his plan to Dr. Busteed; ‘the entire building

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Letter from Curzon to J. Woodburn, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, No. 73, 14 March 1899, *Curzon Paper*, p. 52.

⁸ *Home department*, public-A, No. 267, 1900, p. 1.

⁹ *Proceedings of the Home Department*, public-A, August 1907, proceeding No. 242, p. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-12 (prog. 242 & 244).



Plate 2: Bodleian Library, Oxford



Plate 3: British Museum, London

will be renovated, and upper storey will be converted into a sort of British Museum reading room; while in due time the Library should become the first collection of literature relating to India in the world.’¹¹ His tenacity in accomplishing the objective was quite evident in the painstaking effort in the process of acquiring the Metcalf Hall. To give effect to this scheme, John Woodburn was put charge for negotiating with the Calcutta Public Library and the Agri-Horticultural Society to buy off their proprietary rights in Metcalf Hall, and also for purchasing books belonging to the former. In this regard, Lord Curzon requested John Woodburn-, ‘invoke your kind assistance towards buying out the two bodies concern, handling over the Metcalf Hall to us for Imperial purposes.’¹² In the same manner, Curzon also shared his objective with the Secretary of State for India, George Francis Hamilton:

the establishment of a Public Imperial library at Calcutta has been engaging our attention for some time. Our object is to found at Calcutta an institution which will be worthy of the name of Public Imperial library. The Imperial Library in our Civil Secretariat Building there was formed some years ago from the different libraries. The marked increase in recent years in the number of persons who avail themselves of the limited facilities for research afforded by this institutions, the steady growth in the number of books for which rooms has to be found, and the seat accommodation available, have made the question of another building a matter of pressing moment. We propose to establish a library with reading rooms, public and private, as at the British Museum and Bodleian Library. We intend that it should be a library of reference, a working place for students and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which so far as possible, every book written about India at any time can be seen and read.¹³

However, according to Curzon, the idea of amalgamating the two libraries did not mean to extinguish the institution. Rather, it was to present another habitat better suited for its scopes and means, and perhaps buys the best of its books.¹⁴ His intention was to save the valuable collections that were left to its ruin along with the dilapidated building by keeping them as reference in the Imperial library. It was a noble gesture from the part of Curzon to conceive such idea of establishing in Calcutta ‘a library worthy of the name.’¹⁵

¹¹ Reel no.9.p.169.NO.200, *Letters to person from England and abroad*.

¹² *Curzon paper*, No.73,14 March 1899,p.52.letter from lord Curzon to J. Woodburn, lieutenant governor of Bengal.

¹³Government of India Finance and commerce Department, Salaries, Establishment, etc., Education, *Home-Public*, No. 267, 1900, p.1.

¹⁴ *Curzon papers*, correspondence with person in India,14 May 1899,No.118,p.85-87.

¹⁵ *The Times of India*,3 January 1903,Speech by the Viceroy: The Story of the Institution,p.9.

To get the possession of the Hall, Curzon left no stone unturned, he secured all possible help from persons who were in the position of authority, connected with India, to fulfil the undertaking. When the negotiation was finally settled through the legislative for securing the Metcalf Hall, he informed Dr. H. Busteed 'I have bought out the Agricultural-Horticultural Society and the Metcalf Hall, also purchasing their entire library from the latter. With this; I propose to amalgamate the Imperial Library.'¹⁶ To give effect in amalgamating the two libraries, a meeting was held on 21 November 1900, of the Council of the Metcalf Hall, and resolved to recommend to proprietors transfer to government of rights in public library, on the following terms:¹⁷

- i. Payment of 500 rupees per share
- ii. Present proprietors to (200b) retain, during life time, privilege of taking out for, such books as, having hitherto belonged to public library will loan portion of public library.
- iii. Present proprietors to have privilege of taking such books of Imperial, as may be issued for circulation irrespective of permission of officers in charge of records.
- iv. Present proprietors to be limited to six sets of books at a time.
- v. Imperial library to be opened to public for reading books on premises.
- vi. Building to retain name of Metcalf Hall, as large amount of money were subscribed by the public to erect it to perpetuate the name of Lord Metcalf.
- vii. All books of Calcutta Public Library to be made over to council of public library together with shelves they occupied. They proposed that legal effect should be given to those terms as soon as the Government of India agrees to it. Lieutenant Governor recommended for the acceptance on the first and second point. However, the third point was detrimental to the present Imperial library rules; therefore, it was sent to the viceroy for his opinion.¹⁸

¹⁶Letter to Dr.H.Busteed from Curzon, *Curzon papers*, 18 March 1901, No.200, p.169.

¹⁷ *Curzon Papers*, 30 November 1900, No.197, p.200a.

¹⁸ Ibid.

To this recommendation sent by the Lieutenant Governor, the Viceroy responded to every point:¹⁹

The first and second conditions were already accepted.²⁰

Third, no books of Imperial Library will be issued for circulation except official's works as now to officials. Condition therefore not required.

Fourth, limitation can only be apply to books now in Metcalf Library, viceroy can give no opinion since he does not know meaning of word 'set', and since he does not know what are existing rights of proprietors.

Fifth-the outside scope of council or proprietors cannot be imposed as a condition. Government however, have always proposed to throw open library to public for reading, under suitable conditions, such as exist in every similar Library. It certainly will not be open to anyone, without certificate or permit to walk in and demand to see any official document or valuable work.

Sixth-institution will be known as Imperial Library, but there is no objection to building retaining name of Metcalf Hall.

With regard to Seventh condition Viceroy sought for further details, 'before I agree I must know who council of public library are, and what they propose to do with books. I cannot agree to buying rights of proprietors for handsome sum and at the same time presenting them with another library which they will be at liberty to sell or part with as they please.'²¹

With these conditions agreed upon by the concern parties, the process for amalgamation proceeded.

Buying off shares from the proprietors of the Metcalf Hall

The worth of the library at that time was forty thousand volumes of books and journals, for which a sum of about Rs. 2, 50,900 was spent by the members since its foundation.²²

¹⁹Curzon Papers, No.46, 1December 1900. p.118.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² B.S. Kesavan, *India's National Library*, National Library Calcutta, 1961, p. 13.

In order to come to terms with shareholders of the Calcutta Public Library, the details of shares for paying the proprietors was prepared and brought forward, according to which;- 'it was intimated that the proprietors of the Metcalf Library, 42 in number would sell their rights and interest in the building and books for Rs. 500 each, or a total sum of Rs. 21, 000. The Government of India offered the sum of Rs. 21, 000.'²³ It was reported by the Home Department Branch that,

the Government of Bengal intimated that some new claims had been brought forward that the number of shares amount to 57 and the local Government believes that the proprietors will agree to accept Rs. 500 each. This will bring the total up to Rs. 28,000, which the Lieutenant-Governor asked to be authorized to offer.²⁴

This report was brought forward in regard to the discrepancy in terms of the number of share holders. In spite of this report, the department further submitted that the Government of India told the secretary of state that 'arrangement had been made to purchase the rights of both bodies in the Metcalf Hall at a cost of Rs. 46,000, that is, proprietors of the library Rs. 21,000, Agri-Horticultural society Rs. 25,000.'²⁵ After initial misapprehension about the offer to pay to the proprietors of the library Rs. 21, 000, if proprietors were to give 500 each and there were 42 of the amount came to Rs. 21, 000. Now since it had been ascertained that there are 57 proprietors who has a share, it would therefore be, wise to adhere to the original ideas to give each proprietors Rs. 500, and raising the total amount to Rs. 28,500. Finally, the Lieutenant-Governor agreed to adhered to the original plan and as a result recommend the concern department to, 'pay to the proposed purchased of the rights of the proprietors, Calcutta Public Library, in the Metcalf Hall at an increased cost of Rs. 28, 500 instead of 21,000 as formally estimated.'²⁶

However, a separate provision was laid down to take possession of the Agri-Horticulture Society's premises, on fulfilling this condition, the Society agreed to vacate their accommodation in the Metcalf Hall. The condition laid down was 'that a sum of Rs. 25, 000 in cash would be paid as compensation; and an annual grant of Rs. 6, 000 would be paid to the society henceforth.'²⁷ When entire process of buying out the

²³ *Home Department, Branch*, 8 May 1900, Public-A, No. 1295, 1901, p. 37.

²⁴ *Home Department, Branch*, 8 August, 1900, Public-A, No.267, 1900, 1901, p. 37.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Home Department, Branch*, 8 August, 1900, Public-A, No.267, , 1901, p. 37

²⁷ *Ibid.*

rights was over, the money spent on amalgamation cost the Government, the viceroy reported that ‘ the transfer of the Metcalf Hall for the purposes of the Imperial Library has been effected at a cost of Rs.7,500 in excess of the original estimate but this additional expenditure has my approval.’²⁸ With the completion of transaction, possession has also been given to the government of the Metcalf Hall.²⁹ To confirm and validate these transactions, a short Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly Council of the Governor-General and was passed as the Imperial Library (Indentures Validation) Act, 1902.

The Indentures which represents the results of our negotiations with the society and the committee of the Free Public Library, have now been executed, and the bill which I now ask leave to introduce has been prepared upon the advice of our standing counsel. It is not usual to refer Bill of this character to a Select Committee, but if any hon’ble member of council should be of opinion that there is any point in the bill which requires to be discussed in detail, i shall be glad to consider it and to meet his wishes, if possible. On some future occasion I hope to move that the Bill be taken into consideration and passed. We present it merely as a formal legal stage in what we believed to be great and useful undertaking, and we hope that the reorganized library will remain for all time to come as an enduring monument of your Lordship’s administration.³⁰

Commenting on the successful completion of the deal, Honourable Mr. Turner said, ‘the thanks of the public are due to your Excellency, and also to his Hon’ble the Lieutenant Governor, for having brought about such a happy result.’³¹ Curzon explained reasons for undertaking the scheme in the following:

My object in carrying out the scheme, which has taken shape in this bill, has been to present Calcutta with public library worthy of the name. When I came to India we could not be said to possess here any such institution. There was the collection to which my Hon’ble colleague has referred, consisting of the Records and writings and documents of government which was contained in one of the buildings of one of our departments. This collection valuable as it was to officers of Government, was not, and could not in the nature of the circumstances be accessible to the public, nor indeed was its existence generally known except to those officers who from time to time had occasion to refer to it. On the other hand, the existing public library in the upper storey of the Metcalf hall, while it contained an enormous number of books, had practically degenerated, so far as the use

²⁸ *Home Department*, Branch, public-A, No.16, 2 May, 1902, p.3.

²⁹ *Home Department*, Branch, public-A, No.457, May 1902, p.1.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 32.

³¹ *Home Department* Public Part-B, No.384, April 1902, Judicial and Public Papers 1902, extract from the proceedings of the council of the governor general of India assembled for the purpose of making laws and regulations, p.4.

made of it was concern, into a library of light literature and of fiction. It seemed to me desirable to consolidate these collections as far as possible, and to constitute a library which would both have the solid foundation that would recommend it to the student and at the same time possess all the necessary works of reference upon Indian and Indian subjects. I therefore, decided to hand over to this new institution, should I be fortunate enough to obtain the building, the govt collections to which I have referred, while by arrangements that I was unable to make with the proprietors of the existing Metcalf Library, and which I may say so in his presence, were conducted with great skill by His honour the Lieutenant Governor – I was enabled to secure the existing collections that were at that time housed in the first floor of the Metcalf building. My next step was to procure from home a competent librarian and student from the British Museum, who has now for year been in charge of the new undertaking.³²

With the sanction of the Secretary of State, the post of the librarian was created initially the term of appointment would be for five years.³³

Appointment of a Librarian

Traditionally librarians were considered as the custodians of the written word- as a keeper of the library. The success and usefulness of a library largely depends on the librarian. Having realized this, Curzon was not willing to settle for a second class or mediocre person as the librarian, and was determined to bring the best librarian from England. He candidly confessed to the secretary of state; ‘I am becoming a nuisance with my appeal for high class and talented English man, for whose selection I turned confidingly to you.’³⁴ Curzon was aware of the fact that the growth and development of the new library rests on the competency of the librarian. He, therefore, ensured that for the newly created Imperial Library, he would only settle for the best and qualified librarian - a man ‘who is able to preserve, arrange and calendar muniments and administer a record department, must be endowed with some of these special gifts that make a good librarian.’³⁵ To find a competent Librarian, to take the charge of the newly created Library, Curzon turned to George Francis Hamilton, Secretary, of state for India, for his assistance, said, ‘we are desirous with your Lordship’s assistance, a gentleman from England to fill the post. We require as Librarian a man of but education, not with experience of cataloguing, arranging, binding and preserving books,

³² *Home Department Public Part-B*, No.384, April 1902,p.2.

³³ N.K.Dhar, ‘ the Imperial Library, Calcutta’, *Calcutta Review*, January 1920,vol no.299.p.70

³⁴ Correspondence with secretary of state, Lord Salisbury and Sir A. Godley, Press of the Private Secretary to the viceroy, India Office London, Letter No.38. June 20, 1900, *Letter from Lord Curzon to Sir Godley, Under secy. Of state for India*, Viceroy Lodge, Simla, p.170

³⁵ *Ibid.*

but literary interests and taste. It would be desirous if possible, that he should possess some acquaintances with or at least a positive interest in oriental literature and history.³⁶ The Secretary of State for India assured Curzon saying 'we should be equally anxious to meet your wishes and to send you the fittest and most proper person we can find. But it is absolutely to offer a liberal salary.'³⁷

Lord Curzon was informed by Arthur Godley, Under Secretary of State for India that a man named Macfarlane from the British Museum, London, had the potential capabilities and will for the newly created Imperial Library. The only drawback was that Macfarlane did not have an Oxford or a Cambridge degree which was a prerequisite qualification for a librarian, 'you told me that this condition was not indispensable.'³⁸ Reacting to this news, Curzon with a hint of disappointment remarked - 'I do not mind the man you named not having been a graduate of any university (though I am sufficiently academic to think it a drawback) but I do think it essential that he should be not merely a Librarian, i.e., a man skilled in the custody, preservation and classification of books but, also a bit of scholar and a student.'³⁹

The salary of the librarian was Rs.1, 000-50-1,250 a month for the first five years rising by increments to Rs.1, 500. Besides the salary, a librarian would also receive Rs.150 a month as house rent. The selected candidate will be bound by an agreement for five years. However, if his service was found satisfactory, he will be retained by Government in pensionable service after that date. Similar to the condition adopted as in the case of members of the Indian Educational service.⁴⁰ It had been suggested that in order to retain the librarian in the service the salary would have to be arranged on liberal and progressive scale.

Owing to the credibility of John Macfarlane, Secretary of state announced that 'Macfarlane, of the British Museum, has been selected by him for the Librarianship of

³⁶ Government of India Finance and commerce Department, Salaries, Establishment, etc., Education, *Home-Public*, No.267, 1900, p. 1

³⁷ *Letter from sir Arthur Godley to Curzon*, No.54., 10 August,1900, p.188.

³⁸ *Correspondence with secretary of state*, Lord Salisbury and Sir A.Godley, Press of the Private Secretary to the viceroy, India Office London, Letter No.83.17 December 1900, p.289. letter from Sir Godley, under secy. Of state for India to the Curzon.

³⁹ *Ibid*, Letter No.60. September 12 1900, Letter from Lord Curzon to Sir Godley, under secy. Of state for India, viceroy Lodge, Simla, p.297.

⁴⁰ Telegram from the Secretary of State, *Proceeding* No.250, Home Department, Public-A, Dated 12 December 1900, p. 41.

the Metcalf Hall Library.⁴¹ 'I have got out a first rate librarian from the British Museum, and have procured for him an endowment of Rs.10, 000 a year for purchase of books alone.'⁴² Right after the appointment of Mr. Macfarlane as the librarian, he was asked to immediately take steps to secure the estimates reference and also at once to remove the books which were unwanted⁴³ in the library.

Considering the limited space of the Metcalf Hall, Mcfarlane was asked to undertake severance of useless and regrettable literatures from what was to be retained in the Imperial Library. The Lieutenant-Governor advised that works not required for Imperial Library should be made over with present book shelves to council who desire to start a circulating library of their own elsewhere, however, with a condition that books should not be sold but used for purposes described.⁴⁴ In this respect the president of the old public library was asked whether he 'intends to starts a new library with the books which are rejected from those taken over by the Imperial Library' It became imperative to tackle this issue in the initial days,, because once the Council decides to open a new library with the books returned to them, they will be entitled, under the agreement, to take the shelves pertaining to the discarded books, and, this again will impact their financial estimates.⁴⁵

With so much vigour and rigorous measures, the renovation and equipment of the building, the work of weeding and cataloguing, transferring of books and the arrangement of the shelves were completed by the end of 1902.⁴⁶ With this, 'the Imperial Library was formally opened by Governor-General Curzon, on the afternoon of Friday, 30 January 1903, the leading residents of Calcutta to whom invitation cards had been issued, were present on the occasion.'⁴⁷ 'Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay, who was one of the distinguished guests graced the occasion by his presence.'⁴⁸ The opening of the Imperial Library were confirmed and validated by the Imperial library Act, 1902 (I

⁴¹ Telegram from the Secretary of State, *Proceeding* No.250, Home Department, Public-A, Dated 12 December 1900, p. 41.

⁴² Letter to Dr.H.E.Busteed,C.I.E.from lord cuzon,P-169,NO.200,MARCH 18,1901,*letter and telegram from india and abroad*.

⁴³ Home Department- A, *Proceedings*, No. 457-463 , May 1902, p. 6.

⁴⁴ 1901, *Curzon Papers*, *Proceedings* No.250.

⁴⁵ Telegram from the Secretary of State, *Proceeding* No.250, *Home Department*, Public-A, Dated 12 December 1900, p. 41.

⁴⁶ N.K.Dhar, 'The Imperial Library,Calcutta,'*The Calcutta Review*, 1920.Vol.No.68.p.70.

⁴⁷ *Annual Reports of the Imperial Library for 1903*, Letter from J. Macfarlane, Librarian of the Imperial library to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, No.27, Dated 3 February 1904.

⁴⁸ B.S. Kesavan, *India's National Library*, National Library Calcutta, 1961, p. 13.

of 1902). The foundation of the new library will be the Imperial Library, which was formed not very long ago, by combining together certain collections of book which belong to the various department of the government of India. The new Imperial Library will be provided with Reading Rooms, public, private, as at the British Museum and Bodleian Library.⁴⁹

On the successful amalgamation of the two libraries and finally opening its door to the people, it would be appropriate to recall Frazer's comment that:

The active resistance of prejudice and passive resistance of apathy has at last been overcome; and the books have been brought together under one roof, arranged and made available to all who wish to consult them....the Imperial library in course of time be worthy to rank with some of the libraries in Europe.⁵⁰

On this occasion Lord Curzon proudly announced 'I have opened the recreated Imperial Library in the Metcalf Hall which is now a beautiful place, well appointed, well furnished, and with a library collection of 100.000 books.'⁵¹ He further proclaimed that 'it has already proved itself to be a great boon to all classes of the community; it contains a very fine and ever increasing collection of books; and it, is one of the public institutions of which I think that the city may be most proud.'⁵² He finally succeeded in awakening the public interest in Calcutta's old public library.⁵³

Sharing this accomplishment with Hamilton, Curzon claimed, 'the Imperial library, which I have created, is succeeding beyond anything that I had anticipated. It is accommodated in a magnificent building, and anything is managed with great propriety and decorum. In the first three weeks after the opening of the library, over 500 persons applied for reading tickets, and you may go in there any afternoon and find quite a number of persons sitting in the room profiting by the novel advantages placed in their disposal. It will, I think, be permanent addition both to the public institutions and to the amenities of life in Calcutta.'⁵⁴

⁴⁹Bimal Kumar Dutta, *Libraries and Librarianship of Ancient and Medieval India*, Atma Ram & Sons, Delhi, 1970, p. 103.

⁵⁰Demi-official from A.H.L. Fraser, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, *Home Department* to E.N. Baker, officiating Secretary to the government of Bengal, Municipal Department, No. 96-D, Dated 28 February, 1899, Public-A, November 1901, p. 5.

⁵¹ *Letter to Dr. Busteed from Lord Curzon*, February 5.1903.

⁵² Letter from Curzon to Rev. Bishop of Calcutta, *Curzon papers*, No.66,1904 March 16,p.69.

⁵³ 3 January 1903, *The Times of India* ,p.4.

⁵⁴Letter from Curzon to George Halminton,Secy. of state to India.,*Curzon Papers*,No.16,5 March 1903,p.69.

Under the direction of John Macfarlane the work of re-arrangement of books of the two libraries and re-cataloguing of their holding was completed in 1902. Some important undertakings were also initiated to increase its popularity and usefulness and thereby to attract people towards the library such as:

1. Training of cataloguer in the Imperial library for works in other libraries.
2. Establishment of reciprocal borrowing system amongst different libraries; and
3. Compilation of subject indexes of the contents of other libraries.⁵⁵

Soon after the re-opening the Imperial Library started issuing Permanent Reader's Tickets to the public. In the Annual Reports of the Imperial Library, 1903, it was mentioned that 'From 31 January to December 1903, the number of tickets issued was 2,121. Besides the above, 166 tickets for the day only was issued and 109 tickets for period ranging between two days and one year were also issued, making up a total of 2,396 ticket.'⁵⁶ It was observed that the number of readers who visited the library was impressive considering its recent establishment. One of the most important and urgent task required to be undertaken in order to increase its popularity and to make it user friendly was the preparation of a Reading Room Catalogue. Considering its importance to the library, effort had been made to construct it at the earliest as circumstances will allow them to undertake preparation. As a result, the preparation of constructing the Reading Room Catalogue and index of the Imperial library was immediately initiated by Macfarlane, and by 1903 the constructions were completed. Two hundred copies of this catalogue were printed of which 156 were distributed among local libraries and institutions. The first volume of the General Author Catalogue from A to L was published in March 1904. Another attraction of the library was the occasional translation of passages from French and German books relating to India for the benefit of students by the Librarian. Following this, a demand sprung up for instruction in those languages. A select few Hindus, consisting chiefly of pundits and holders of Government Scholarship, began to meet for instruction in the librarian's room.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ P.T. Nair, *Origin of the National Library of India: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*, Belvidere, Kolkata, 2004, p. 199.

⁵⁶ *Annual Reports of the Imperial Library for 1903*, letter from J. Macfarlane, Librarian of the Imperial Library to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, No. 27, dated 3rd February, 1904, p. 1

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2

The Imperial Library was enriched with books lent out by different organizations for perusal in the library. With regard to this, the Asiatic Society also gave permission on 24 November, 1903 to lend books and manuscripts from their library for perusal in the Imperial Library. 'The Government of Bengal consented to make over any books which had been received in the Bengal library under the Act xxv of 1867 and might be required for the use of the library. Accordingly, some 300 works, including periodicals, were selected by the librarians and received from Bengal Library..... this will be of great service to the Imperial Library, as providing it with instructing but out-of-the way books which otherwise could only be procured with difficulty.'⁵⁸

Effort also had been made to 'have in the Imperial library a complete series of the publications issued by the local and Imperial Governments bound like the Parliamentary Blue Books, and with this object slips have been prepared of all the Indian blue books in the library. Steps will now be taken to supply the deficiencies as far as practicable. An index of all parliamentary papers relating to India will also be formed.'⁵⁹

With the completion of the arrangement of the Library, all of the Imperial Library Rules had been drawn up in the following manner. To give effect to the working of the library, the following rules were framed by the committee in consultation with Lord Curzon:

Draft of the Imperial Library Rules⁶⁰

1. Gazetted officers of the government or local governments and other persons provided by the librarian with reading tickets on the introduction of such officers or any fellow of the Calcutta University will be allowed the privileges of reading in the room of the library. People who are less than 16 years shall not be admitted in the library for this purpose.
2. Reader's ticket shall be valid for a period of six months from the date of grant.
3. The librarian may disperse with introduction in such cases as may appear to him deserving of the concession.
4. No encyclopaedia, dictionary, atlases or books of general reference shall be removed from the library without the special permission of the librarian.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Home Department*, Public-A, No.231-302, November 1901, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *Home Public* -A, No.96-D, 28 February 1899.p.64.

5. No valuable books shall be removed from the library without the special permission of the librarian. These books will be marked in the catalogue with an asterisk.
6. Books other than those mentioned in the Rules 4 & 5 may be issued to persons mentioned in Rules 7-10 on the signature of a receipt, but no person shall be allowed to take out more than six books (up to a limit of 12 volumes) at a time, and any person taking out a book shall be held responsible for it until his receipt is return or destroyed.
7. The proprietors of the former Calcutta Public Library shall be entitled to borrow books from many those formerly in the library.
8. Books may be issued to all superior officers of the Government of India residents in Calcutta or in Simla or local governments residents in Calcutta or (whilst the Government of India are at Simla) in India.
9. Books may be issued to other persons, officials or no-officials who obtain written permission from the head of any department of the Government, or from the librarian.
10. Technical works may be issued to superior Government officers, not residents in Calcutta or Simla, by the librarian on his own authority when there are duplicate copies and with the permission of the department concern when there is only a single copy.
11. Permission to take out books is not transferable and books must be lent to persons who have not themselves the right to use the library.
12. (a) Books issues are liable to recall at any time, but if not so recalled they may be kept for a space of 15 days by the proprietors of the former Calcutta Public Library and of one month by others after the permission of the librarian to retain then must be obtain.
(b) No books shall be issued to any person who failed to return a book within a reasonable time on its being recalled by the librarian.
13. The library will be open during office hour on all week days except holidays and on Sundays between...⁶¹

⁶¹ Library hour was not mentioned

This draft was put up subject to which the council will as proposed make their byelaws and regulations. The draft according to Curzon was bad and obscure, therefore, suggested for alterations on which points he found ambiguous and unjustifiable. Curzon proceeded in following.

I will proceed to suggest alterations ,beginning with rule 1,which,instead of putting gazetted officers into the forefront, ought to put the issue of reading-passes in that position.

Rule-I.-permission to read in the rooms of library will be given to gazetted officers of the govt of India or local Government, and to all other persons who shall have been provided by the librarian with reading tickets issued in accordance with rules laid down by the council.

Rule-II.-no books or class of books, or documents or papers shall be taken out by any person other than those mentioned in rule III except with the permission of the librarian.

Rule-III.-Rule 5 of draft.

Rule.-IV-Rule 8 of draft.

It seems to me that these four rules cover the whole ground.⁶²

The modified rules were adopted as the Rules of the Imperial library as suggested and approved by Curzon. The revised rules were as follows:

Imperial Library Rules⁶³

Rule 1-permission to read in the rooms of the library will be given to Gazetted Officers of the Government of India or of local Government and to all other persons who shall been provided by the librarian with reading ticket ,issued in accordance with rules laid down by the council.

Rule-II- No book or class of books, or document or paper shall be taken out by any person other than those mentioned in rule-III except with permission with of the librarian.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Home proceedings* No.1523. 17 May 1902,pp.14-15.

Rule-III- the proprietors of the former Calcutta Public Library shall be entitled to take out books from among those transferred from that library to that imperial library, subject to the restriction that no individual shall be allowed to take more than six works (up to the limit of 12 volumes) at a time, and that no encyclopaedias, dictionaries, valuable illustrated books difficult of replacement shall be taken out.

Rule-IV-books that have been taken out are liable to recall at any time, but if not so recalled they may be kept for a space of one month, after which the permission of the librarian to retain them must be obtained.

The growing usefulness of the library especially, to the natives induced them to make an appeal to the Governor General for the relaxation of the existing cast-iron rules of the library to enable the reading public to reap unhindered benefits of the treasure of knowledge stored up therein.⁶⁴ Besides these, demand from some section of people who on normal days could not spare time to go and spend time in the Reading Room, except on Sundays and other public holidays, were brought up. The same sentiment was expressed by the local daily, *The Bengalee*, which endorsed for opening of library on Sundays and holidays for the convenience of the public.⁶⁵ Considering their inconveniences, it was decided to have a lending section so that those who wish to read at home may issue for home reading. The librarian also felt that to meet the challenges of demand, the 'remedy lies in keeping open in the evening, during part of Sundays and holidays as far as religious observation permits.'⁶⁶

Following this suggestion, the Imperial Library rules were once again amended in 1908.⁶⁷

1. The library will be open to any person who holds a reading ticket issued to him by the Librarian in accordance with such regularities as may from time to time be made by the council.
2. The reading ticket will not be issued to any person under 18 years of age. They will remain in force until cancelled by the council for the internal management

⁶⁴ *Native news paper report, Sl.no.725,vi miscellaneous ,p.213.*

⁶⁵ *Reports on Native Papers* for July-December 1902, Sl.No.1558, p557.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Imperial Library Rules*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government of Printing India, 1February 1908, p.1.

of the library will be liable to have his ticket suspended by the librarian pending a reference to the council.

3. Subject to the provision of Rule IV, no book or other documents shall be taken out by any person except with the permission of the librarian to be given in accordance with any grant or special order made by the council in this behalf.
4. Any of the proprietors of the former Calcutta public library shall be entitled, when resident in Calcutta, to take out books from among those transferred from the library to the Imperial library, subject to the restriction that he shall not take out more than six works (upto a limit of six volumes) at a time.
5. Books and other documents that have taken out are liable to recall at any time, but if not so recalled, they may be kept for a space of one month, which may be extended by the librarian at his discretion.
6. The library will be open to the public from 10 am to 7 pm on working days, and from 2 pm to 5pm on such Sundays and holidays as the council may determine.

Separate rules for issuing of books were also framed about the same time as given under:⁶⁸

Imperial Library Rules for Issuing of Books

1. Books belonging to the classes specified below may be lent out to persons engaged in special study or research, who shall have deposited with the librarian as guarantee a sum of money to cover the value of the books lent and any accidental expenses, or shall have executed a bond or permanent adequate security for the requisite amount.
2. The classes of books which may be lent out under the rules are :-
 - (a) Books of which there is more than copy available.
 - (b) Books from their nature of their subject, or the language in which they are written are likely to be seldom consulted.
3. No books forming part of reference collections in the reading room or any book valuable for its rarity or its illustration shall be lent without the special permission of the librarian, who in cases of doubt shall refer the questions or the orders of the council.

⁶⁸ Ibid.p.2.

4. The cost of postage or carriage both ways is to be defrayed by the borrower.
5. The rules as to duration of loan and number of books to be lent out at one time is as already provided in the Rules of the Imperial Library.

Memorandum on the Imperial Library⁶⁹

Scope.-it is understood, in the first place, that the Imperial Library is to be a store house of matter relating to India. There must, however, be some limitations as to the language, and perhaps English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish with Latin and Greek, might be a practical selection. Of works in vernacular languages there were already considerable numbers in the two older libraries, which can also be an addition for the new library. Further, the Imperial library is to contain a collection of "books of reference." The choice of books were to be determined in compliance with the requirements of the various government departments. The library aimed at securing a complete collection of Indian Government publications, both by acquiring copies as they appear and by filling existing gaps.⁷⁰

Detail information on the evolution of the Imperial Library including its aims and objectives was provided in an answer to the clarification sought by Rev. Dr. Bishop of Calcutta, on the occasion of inviting him to be the Council Chairman. He sought certain clarifications from the Governor General Curzon before he agreed to take up the responsibility of the Council Chairman- first of all and most importantly, 'what is the aim of the library? Is it to aim at being as complete as possible, collect all books of value on all subjects, and fearlessly fill its shelves and trusts to finding room for them hereafter in a larger house? Or is it definitely to restrict its scope? The second question was, how far is it a govt institution, that is, is the council finally subordinate or subject to the decision of government, not only in financial matters, but in matter of judgement, such as the admission or rejection of books or the acceptance of the large gifts? I feel that I don't know how far the responsibility as president extends, how far I ought to aim at making the council real power?⁷¹

To give clear understanding to all these queries, Lord Curzon, explained explicitly;

⁶⁹ Government of India, *Home Department Public-A*, Proceeding, Nos.457-463, May 1902, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Letter from Rev. Bishop of Calcutta to Lord Curzon, *Curzon Papers*, Vol.2, Reel No.9.No.89.1905.p.210.

The primary object of the library, as conceived and repeatedly stated by him, was to provide a first class, and as far as possible an exhaustive collection of all books about India or required for the study of India. The secondary object of the library is to provide a collection of general literature relating to all subject such as will be useful either to Europeans or Indians frequenting the library for purpose of study not necessarily connected with Indian history or Indian subject. As regard the measure of government control, the fact that the library was created by the government, consist, for the most part, of government books, and is only kept alive by government money, brings it incontestably within the class of government institutions.⁷²

The aims and the objectives of the establishment of the Imperial Library had been clearly elaborated above. It was no doubt started for the literary advancement of the people in India and also to collect materials relating to India for the use of the future scholars.

.....the whole collection will be thoroughly revised and re-housed, and I hoped that, within about a year from now, this building will be a place for the student, a place for the historian, and a place for the casual reader as well. It seems to me highly necessary that there should be somewhere in India, and obviously in Calcutta, as the capital of the empire, some library to which any man should be at liberty to go who wanted to know anything about India. My desire is to collect there every book that has been in an intelligible tongue about this continent, so that material not merely for casual reference, but for the publications and compilations of the historian of the future may be there available. This I think we can effect. I hope that, before I have left this country, we may have in the Metcalf building on a small scale what the reading Room of the British Museum supplies to the student and reader at home, and although many of us in the busy lives we live out here do not find much time for other than official reading, yet I hope that we may attract to the interior of this new library a race of scholars and may gradually build up in the future works of investigation and research that may add to the credit of British in this country. These are the object with which this institution has been founded, and this bill that has been introduced is intended to give legislative form to the arrangement to which I have referred.⁷³

Council of the Imperial Library

Lord Curzon wanted that management of the library to be delegated to a council of four, with the librarian as secretary and the executive administration. He proposed that Honourable Mr. Raleigh, a High Court Judge, to be the Chairman. However, the chief justice did not wish to serve himself and instead, nominated Mr. Guru Das Banerjee.

⁷² *Curzon Papers*, 12 November 1905, Reel No.13, NO.155, p.111.

⁷³ *Home Department Public Part-B*, No.384, April 1902, p.3.

The Bengal Government has nominated the commissioner of the presidency division.⁷⁴ Both, the Honourable Justice Gooroo Dass Benerjee, and Honourable Finucane, Commissioner, consented to serve as Member of the Council for internal management of the New Imperial Library at Calcutta.

Ultimately, the Imperial Library Council consisted of: Chairman-The Honourable Mr. Raleigh

Members- The Honourable Justice, Mr. Gooroo Dass Benerjee, the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, and Mr. Finucane, Commissioner Presidency Division, and the Librarian as Secretary to the Council.⁷⁵

The librarian was the executive administrator who will be assisted by the permanent staffs in the administration. The permanent staffs consisted of one Reading Room Superintendent, one Head Clerk, twelve assistants, two sorters, and a number of attendants. The work of the library was divided into three main categories, viz., acquisition of books, preparation of books for use, and use of the books by the readers.⁷⁶ With regard to the formation of the Council, the natives expressed their dissatisfaction at the appointment of only one Indian, namely, Justice Guru Das Benerji, to the Council in which the management of the library had been vested.⁷⁷ The natives demanded for the expansion of the Council and suggested Messrs Kali Charan Benerjee, G.S. Basu, Pandits Nirmami Nyayalankar, Hara Prosad Shastri, and Babu Chandra Nath Basu to be appointed as members in the committee.⁷⁸ But this demand was unacceptable for a person like Curzon who believes in perfection and was impeccably efficient. For him, it was not the numbers but skills and proficiency of the person that matters. That was exactly what he looked for in a person, in order to take the place of Raleigh on his retirement as the Council Chairman. He found Rev. Bishop as the best eligible person to be the Chairman of the Council, and to him, Curzon wrote:

I have to create a new council it is all important that I should secure for the office of chairman a high authority and a scholar who will lend the weight of his high influence, experience and judgement to the works of the council. My eye naturally turns towards you. There is no one in Calcutta possessing

⁷⁴ *Proceedings Nos.231-302*, November 1901, p.50.

⁷⁵ *Proceedings of the Home Department*, May 1902, No.462, p.14.

⁷⁶ K.N.Dhar, 'The Imperial Library, Calcutta', *Calcutta Review*, Vol.No.299, January 1920, p.71.

⁷⁷ *The Bengalee*, Serial No.70, 4 February, 1903, p.139.

⁷⁸ Native Newspaper, *The Bengalee*, Sl.No.163, 1 February, 1903, p.47.

a twentieth part of your eminent qualifications, and I feel that it would be a public loss not to secure your service if I can.⁷⁹

Rev. Bishop accepted the offer for the post and expressed to Curzon:

I am much gratified by your kind letter, and while I am afraid I shall disappoint your expectations can not hesitate about accepting the office which you offer to me with so much kindness. I am guilty of having taken scarcely in interest, or any rate of having done nothing to show in the interest of the Imperial Library. Though I know it was your work, I did not at all realised how much effort you had spent upon it and how much you cared for it; I shall now loyally try to do whatever parts falls to me , as well as I can to promote a work which you have at heart.⁸⁰

In 1912, the appointment of Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya, a native gentleman as Chairman of the Council was a matter of appreciation to the natives considering the fact that the Council of the library had always been pre-dominated by European members. Until his election, the venerated post had been held by the Europeans Another significant change that came along was that the powers of the Head of a Department (for the purpose of the Civil Service Regulation and Civil Account code so far as relate to Imperial expenditure) were also conferred upon the Council of the library.

The council, since its inception two meetings of the council were held in 1902. It did not meet in 1903. Between 1904 and 1909 it met once a year. At a meeting held on the 13th February 1912, it resolved that it should meet in future on the third Monday of each month. But a change in the constitution of the council afterwards met the monthly meeting impossible.⁸¹

The affair of the library, from the beginning till 1912 continued to remain the same. However, in 1913, the management of the library underwent a sea change in every department- from the constitution of the library to shifting of its location to the Foreign and Military Secretariat Building at Esplanade.

To look into the affairs of the Imperial Library, the Government of India appointed a Committee of Enquiry on 13 December 1929 also known as the Richey Committee. The members consisted were J. A. Richey, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India as Chairman, R.B. Ramsbotham, Member of the Imperial Library Council, J.H.

⁷⁹ *Curzon Paper*, Letter from Curzon to Rev.Bishop, of Calcutta, 16 March No.69.1904,p.66.

⁸⁰ *Curzon's correspondence with persons in India*, Letter No.99. 1904, p.150.

⁸¹ *Report on the working of the Imperial Library for the period of January 1911 to March 1912*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government printing, 1912, p.9.

Lindsay, Education Secretary, Government of Bengal, and J.G.Bhandari, Accountant-General, Secretary, Government of Bengal.⁸² The Richey Committee discussed matters concerning the future finance, location, functions and administration of the Library. The main recommendations may be summarized as:

Functions: (a), 'The Imperial Library should be the Library of reference, a working place for student and a repository of material for the future historian of India, in which so far as possible, every book written about India at any time can be seen and read.'(b), The Imperial Library should be Copy Right Library. (c), The Imperial Library should be a Central Lending Library, from which books should be available to person engaged in any special study, in all parts of India.(d),The Imperial character of the library should be maintained, especially in the matter of selection of books which should not be influenced by interest of any locality.

Location: The Library should continue to be located in Calcutta.

Management: the Council should be replaced by a new Council, the actual administration to vest in a small committee of management.

Administration: The cost of running the Library to be met entirely from Central Revenue except from the amount required for the maintenance of the Reading Room, which should be met from provincial revenues.

The recommendation of the Richey Committee was thoroughly examined by the Governor-General in Council and came to the conclusion that the Council should be remodelled. The Council was reconstituted according to the terms of the Government of India, Department of Health and Land's Resolution No.1320, Dated 17 July, 1929. The council of the Imperial Library was henceforth to consist of:⁸³

1. Two representatives of the Bengal Government, nominated by them,
2. Two nominees of the Calcutta university,
3. Three persons nominated by the Government of India to represent interest outside of Bengal.

⁸²*Report of the working of the Imperial Library from 1st April 1926 to 31March 1930*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1930.pp.2.-3.

⁸³*Report of the working of the Imperial Library from 1st April 1926 to 31March 1930*,Calcutta,Government of India Press,1930.p.2.

4. The Educational Commissioner with the Government of India-Ex-officio Chairman of the council.⁸⁴

The names of the members forming the first reformed council, whose term of appointment is to last three years, are given below:-

- I. R. Littlechailes, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, ex-officio chairman
- II. P.L. Buckland, Justice, Calcutta High Court and Lt.Col. N. Barwell, Bar-at- Law {these two were nominated by the Government of Bengal }
- III. Rev. Dr. W.S. Urquhart, Vice-chancellor, Calcutta University, and Rai Bahadur, Dr.U.N. Brahamchari {nominated by the Calcutta University}.
- IV. H.G. Rawalinson, Principal Poona College, Poona
- V. A.C. Woolner, Vice-chancellor, Punjab University, Lahore and
- VI. S. Sinha, Bar-at-Law, Patna.⁸⁵

The recommended term for the newly constituted office was for three years, which commenced from 1 August 1929.⁸⁶ However, not long after it came into effect, the Government of India had to reconsider the formation of the council in view of the partition of the country, and accordingly decided to reconstitute the council of the Imperial Library with:

1. Educational Advisor with the Government of India-Ex-officio Chairman
2. Two members nominated by the Government of Bengal
3. One members nominated by the Calcutta University
4. Four members nominated by the Government of India in consultation with the provincial government of West Bengal to represent the interests outside Bengal

The term of the office of the member of the council remained the same as before.⁸⁷ Another alteration brought about was the Librarian, the Ex-officio chairman of the library council ceased to be so, and his place was replaced by an I.E.S. Officer, who

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ *Home/Public* –File No.F48-28/47E.I/Government of India Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 28 June 1948, pp.1-2.

acted as secretary to the council, in addition to his own duties, and received allowance for the work. Mr. J. R. Barrow, I.E.S. Principal, Presidency College, Calcutta, was the first secretary to be so appointed. Unfortunately, this arrangement did not turn out as desired. Therefore, from 1 June 1931, the librarian again became the Ex-officio secretary to the council.⁸⁸

Copyright Library: A privilege to Receive Books Publish in India

Copyright libraries are those libraries upon which the law of a country confer privileges of receiving a copy gratis of every book published in the country.⁸⁹ J.A. Chapman, a former Imperial Librarian, remarked on the lack of copyright library in India. He lamented that- ‘we English have done wonderful things in India; our race may be well proud of its record; but we left things undone that we should have done. One of the things that we left undone ...we have not established a copyright library.’⁹⁰ Even though there were no copyright libraries in India, interestingly, there were two libraries that had the privilege of copyright libraries for everything published in India. Neither of them was in India and was located in England. One was the British Museum Library and the other was the India Office Library. Under the Press and Regulation of Book Act, 1867, passed during the viceroyalty of Lord Lawrence, both these libraries were entitled to a gratis copy of everything published in India. Under India Act XXV of 1867, three copies of every book printed or lithographed in British India were required to be deposited with the local Government. A copy of each was transmitted to the British Museum and the India Office Library, London, and the third copy being retained in India. Article 9(b) and 11 of the Act, empowered the local government to require the printer of any books to deliver two more copies; one for the British Museum and one for the India Office Library. The practice for the British Museum and the India Office Library was to mark and return the copies of the quarterly catalogue that were sent to them after which, they were returned home. Thus, through this Act, books published in the country could be tracked and stored for future references.

Though, Imperial Library might not be one of the copy right libraries in India and missed out the right to receive books from other provinces, but it was not deficient of

⁸⁸ B.S.Kesavan.,*The National Library of India*, Calcutta, National Library,1961. p.16.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ J.A.Chapman, ‘The Imperial Library: Past and Future,’ Calcutta, *The Calcutta Review*, March 1922,p.447.

books published in the Bengal province. The reason was that, the government of India made arrangement with the Government of Bengal in 1903 to transfer to the Imperial Library, any book which had been received in the Bengal Library which might be required for the Imperial Library. A selection from the books received in the Bengal Library under the Registration Act was accordingly sent to the Imperial Library when the Imperial Librarian has his report written on them.⁹¹

Chapman was of the opinion that, had the Imperial library existed at the time of passing of the Act, it would have been treated as a third copyright library with the British Museum and the Indian office library, having the same privileges conferred upon it.⁹² Therefore, during his tenure as a librarian of the Imperial library, he worked hard towards achieving his objective of converting the Imperial Library as copyright library. With that determination, Chapman put up the question whether Imperial library should receive a copy of each Indian publication under the Act of 1867 along with the two British libraries and the provinces.⁹³ This question was considered by the library council in 1917 but instructed him to further pursue with the Government of India. Following the council's instruction, Chapman wrote to the Government saying;

The influence of one man such as Sir Rabindranath Tagore, rather the influence of his writing, in changing the general estimate in which the Indian classical and vernacular literature are held, is hardly to be estimated; and more imbibing the prevailing spirit of Europe and its estimate of the worth of national literatures are held. The questions in those days will assuredly not be as to whether it is right that the Imperial Library should be a 'Copyright' library, but whether it is right that of the three 'copyright' libraries (I assume that Imperial Library will then have been made one), two should be in England. The question then well may be whether there should not be four 'Copyright' libraries in India, at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, in each of which every valuable Indian publication should be found as in Great Britain there are five- London, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburg and Dublin.⁹⁴

Chapman was disappointed by the fact that the Imperial Library as the only government library, and could have received all the books published in the country, but it seemed rather pleased to receive only what was published in the presidency. It was unfortunate

⁹¹ K.N.Dhar, The Imperial Library, Calcutta, *The Calcutta Review*, Vol.No.299, January 1922, p.73.

⁹² J.A.Chapman, The Imperial Library: Past and Future, Calcutta, *The Calcutta Review*, March 1922, p.448.

⁹³ Asin Kumar Das, 'The Indian National Library,' in Maurice B.Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries -2:1977-1985*, Aslib Reader Series Volume-6, 1987, p.183.

⁹⁴ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library for the period from 1st April 1916 to 31 March 1919*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, 1920, pp.4-5.

that the matter was not pursued any further on the ground that the library did not have the space to accommodate books that would be receiving under the Copyright Act nor the staffs that would be required to handle those books. Therefore, until a larger accommodation could be arranged the question of copyright was further differed.

However, the Government of India while recognising the importance of a Copy Right library, constituted a committee under the chairmanship of J.A. Richey, Educational Commissioner in 1926. The committee recommended, among other things, that the Imperial Library should be a copy right library.⁹⁵ The Library Council at its meeting on 21st march 1931, requested the librarian to prepare a scheme for a copyright library, which was then examined by a sub-committee whose members consisted of Rev. Dr. Urquhart, Rai Bahadur, Dr. U.N. Brahamachari, Khan Bahadur Adul Kadir Safaraz Shaik, and the Secretary, and forwarded to the Government of India with the council's recommendations in 1932-33.⁹⁶

The sub-committee members were of the opinion that under the ongoing situation, it was not conducive to bring forth any new scheme, although the subject under consideration was not only an imperative for the reading public but also the scheme will considerably enable the library in getting number of books for free and thereby making more money available for the purchase of other foreign books.⁹⁷

Unfortunately, the scheme could not be materialised in the pre-independence period. This delay caused a considerable loss of opportunity to acquire valuable publications from different parts of the country. Nevertheless, the matter concerning the copyright library was seriously pursued again after India's Independence in 1947. In the parliamentary debates Pandit Krishna Dutt Paliwal raised the question pertaining to copyright library in (which year?):

Will the honourable member for education be pleased to state?

- a) whether Government propose to establish a national copy right library in Delhi and
- b) Whether plans for the same have been formulated?

⁹⁵ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library from 1st April 1926 to 31 March 1930*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1930, p.2.

⁹⁶ B.S.Kesavan, *National Library of India*, Calcutta, National Library, 1961, p.22.

⁹⁷ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library from 1 April 1926 to 31 March 1930*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1930, p.2.

Maulana Abul Klam Azad, the then Education Minister replied to the above questions

a proposal for the establishment of a central library including a copy right section at New Delhi has been included in the post war Educational development plan for the Government of India 1947-48 and a sum of Rs.65, 000 has been provided in the next financial for preliminary expenditure in this connection an expert committee to be set up immediately with a view to working out the details of the scheme.⁹⁸

The outcome of the parliamentary debates did not immediately materialise even when library was transformed into the National Library of India in 1948. It took another decade for the government to make the National Library a copyright library.

Maulana Abul Klam Azad while visiting the National Library reiterated that ‘efforts are now being made to make the institution a copy right library. A law will be made entitling a library to receive copies of every matter published in India. At present it enjoys the privileges of picking and choosing material published with West Bengal only.’⁹⁹ This facility was not restricted to the citizens of Calcutta only, but was opened to all the people of this country. Requisitions for books from distant places were also taken care of by dispatching the request through post and other mediums.

The cherished dream of Macfarlane, Chapman, and others who wanted Imperial Library to become a copyright library was realized only after India’s independence and after it was transformed into National Library by the delivery of books act of 1954. The Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act was passed on 21st May 1954 and was amended on 29 December to include newspapers and periodicals.¹⁰⁰ In 1954, Indian Parliament passed an Act to deliver books to the National Library and other public libraries. This Act was further amended in 1956 according to which:

the provision of the Delivery of Books (public libraries) Act 1954 enables the National Library at Calcutta to get one copy of each of the publication (excluding newspapers) published in India since May ,21,1954.¹⁰¹

The National Library was greatly enriched by this Act and it emerged as largest nation’s reservoir of knowledge.

⁹⁸ *Legislative Assembly Debates*, official Report Vol.4.No.1, 25March -9April ,1947,p.3052(establishment of copy right library)

⁹⁹ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27January,1949,p.4.

¹⁰⁰ P.N.Kaula, *The National Library of India: A Critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya Publication,1970.p.37.

¹⁰¹ Mukherjee,Subodh Kumar,*Development of Libraries and Library Science in India*, The Press Limited,Calcutta,1969,p.79.

Education for Librarianship

Calcutta Public Library had been a pioneer in many ways with respect to library system and organisation. This pioneering endeavour was continued even when the library was amalgamated to the Imperial Library. The legacy which the Imperial Library inherited from the Calcutta Public Library was kept alive through various library activities. One such significant move was opening its door to the requests for imparting training in library to library personnel from other universities. Several requests were also received from other section of the educated elites who demanded for providing facilities for training in library method at the Imperial Library¹⁰².

In fact, there were no plans and provisions in the Imperial Library's constitution/policy for conducting library training but as knowledge started to spread wider, it resulted in establishing many educational institutions. This gave rise to demand of libraries and well trained competent librarians. The Imperial library being the only library directly administered by the Imperial government was highly regarded by everyone, and therefore, it was expected to impart the training. Initially, the library classes were started for those personnel who were sent on deputation to the Imperial Library. According to R.N.Sharma, library and information science was introduced in 1903 in India because the first evidence of any type of library training in modern India appeared in 1903 when a library personnel from Central Hindu College, was sent to Imperial Library for in-house training.¹⁰³ The Imperial Library under John Macfarlane organised between 1901 and 1906 an in-service training in library routine.¹⁰⁴ Gradually, several requests were received from different parts of the country who wanted training in the Imperial Library. This compelled the council to conduct library classes on regular basis. The library training was held in the Imperial Library in 1930 following a request for receiving training in library work by two candidates a state scholar from Hyderabad State Library and the other, an assistant librarian of the Banaras Hindu University, who were permitted to undergo training both in theory and practice at Imperial Library for three months. By the end of 1930, Dr. D.C. Ganguli, M.A, PhD (London) applied for the

¹⁰² *Report of the working of the Imperial Library for the period from 1st April 1931-31st March 1932*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1932, p.10.

¹⁰³ Mohammad M.Aman and R.N.Sharma, Development of Library and Education Science in South Asia with emphasis on India: Strengths, Problems and Suggestions. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, Vol.46.No.1.(Winter 2005), pp.77-91

¹⁰⁴ Mohamed Taher and Donald Gordon, *Librarianship and Library Science in India: An Outline of Historical Perspectives*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1994, p.88.

same course and was allowed to get necessary training as a special case, despite the fact that there was no provision for the purpose and no regular classes held to impart the training.¹⁰⁵ Undoubtedly, that was the beginning of the librarianship training which emerged to shape the future course of Imperial Library as a training centre.

With increasing demand from across the country for getting training in librarianship, the Imperial Library Council held a meeting in September 1932, and expressed their desired to open a Library Training Class in Imperial Library. A sub-committee was formed to work out the scheme, and the matter was sent to the Government of India for its consideration.¹⁰⁶ After obtaining the approval from the government of India, Library Training classes started from July 1935,¹⁰⁷ under the leadership of Khan Bahadur Asudullah. A one year course in librarianship was instituted in 1935 which continued till 1943. Classes were held alternatively between Calcutta and Lahore.¹⁰⁸

Initially, there was no specific time of commencement of the course, and the syllabus emphasised mainly in preparing catalogues, compiling bibliography, classification, recording books issued and return. Admission to the librarianship training was a great success, where huge number of applicants from all over the country, and from different caste and religion applied. However, due to limited seat, the intake was restricted to 20 applicants for one term. The selection was based solely on merit. Increase for demand for librarianship led the library authorities to revise the scheme in 1938. The Imperial Library council, in their meeting held on 26th October 1938, considered and approved the revised scheme for imparting training in librarianship. Some of the important issues approved were, 'examination should be conducted with suitable and qualified persons not connected with teaching in the class. The fee was raised from Rs.50 to Rs. 75 for the whole session.'¹⁰⁹ The duration of the course was for six months. Considering a large applicant who could not get admission to the third library training class, the library council decided to conduct another class in 1940, as against to the stipulated

¹⁰⁵ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library, Calcutta for the period 1 April 1930 to 31 March 1931*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1932, p.9.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library for the period from 1 April 1932-31 March 1933*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1933, p.8.

¹⁰⁷ *Report of the working of the Imperial Library for the period from 1st April 1935-31st March 1936*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1937, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ Prabir Roychudhury, 'the National Library and the Library Movement in Bengal, in *Reminiscences of the National Library*, Government of India, Director, National Library, Kolkata, 2006, p.44.

¹⁰⁹ *Report on the working of the imperial library for the year 1938-1939*, Government of India press, Calcutta 1938, p.9.

time of 1941.¹¹⁰ The schools of librarianship increased rapidly in the country Post-Independence.¹¹¹

However, Imperial Library was not the first library to impart library classes in the country. The pioneer was Allanson William Borden, an American librarian engaged by the ruler of Baroda to reorganise the library service in Baroda state. He was the first person who started the first library class on 6 March 1911 in Baroda.¹¹² Baroda was soon followed by Punjab University in 1919 under the American librarian Asa Dickinson, commissioned by the Government of India to organise and catalogue the library of Punjab University and to introduce a course of training in library method. In 1929, the Madras Library Association, in conjunction with the University of Madras, began a three months course in librarianship which was later developed to a one year graduate diploma course in 1937, and became the first Indian university to offer a comprehensive course in library science.

The reforms in education led to a rapid increase in the expansion of number of Schools and colleges and every institution to have libraries of its own. In order to tackle the growing demand for library, the Government took some initiatives to bring improvement in the overall working of the library by setting up several committees and commissions. Various education commissions also emphasised on the importance of library in every institutions. The first education commission which suggested that every schools and colleges should have library attached was made by W.W. Hunter, as early as in 1882. After independence, the Kothari Commission made a remark that ‘No new university, college, or department should be set up without taking account its library needs in terms of staff, books, journals, space ,etc. Nothing could be more damaging to a growing department than to neglect its library or to give it’s a low priority. On the contrary, the library should be an important centre of attraction on the college or university campus.’¹¹³ This recommendation is very apt for the present educational system because of the increased focus on research in science and technology has led to further dependence on libraries in post independence India.

¹¹⁰ *Report of the Imperial Library for the Year 1939-1940*, Government of India Press, Calcutta, 1940, p.11.

¹¹¹ Gerald Bramley, *A History of Library Education*, London, Clive Bingley, 1969, p.119.

¹¹² K.Ramakrishna Rao, Library Development in India, *The Library Quarterly*, Vol.31.No.2 (Apr., 1961), p.141.

¹¹³ Education and National Development, *Report of the Education Commission 1964-66*, New Delhi, NCERT, 1971, p.520.

Birth of a National Library

The most significant landmark in the history of public libraries in India was the birth of the National Library in 1948. The chequered history of CPL was written down in the golden book of Indian history. The humble CPL had finally found its way to become one of the most premier libraries in the country. Curzon's cherished dream of establishing a 'state library worthy of the capital of an empire'¹¹⁴ had finally been realised with the transformation of Imperial Library into a National Library in 1948.¹¹⁵ However, the reinvigorated institution could not be opened immediately much to the discomfort of the public, due to damages caused during the country's independence and the partition thereafter. It was formally opened in February 1, 1953 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The opening of the library coincided with the golden jubilee of the National Library. While formally opening the National Library in its new home at Belvedere, Maulana said, 'this noble building which formerly catered for the rulers –the land will henceforth be the resort of the even the humblest seeker of knowledge and truth. And he hoped the Library would continue to expand and would in course of time rival the splendid libraries of Europe and America.'¹¹⁶To bring National Library of India at par with other National libraries of different countries, it was suggested that 'today's great mission before this Library is not only to link itself with cultured section of the people but to forged what is called mass contact on the widest possible scale to make its place in the National Library of the country.'¹¹⁷

As a newly liberated country, the priority of the national library was to collect and preserve past cultural heritage of the country. It should act as the nation's reservoir of knowledge and information, and to make the information accessible to all who are in need. During the Post Independence era, Mahatma Gandhi had made a great observation on the importance of the National Library. He elucidated that,

'India's freedom has revolutionized the world's outlook upon peace and war and a free India has a message of peace and good will to the growing world', says the father of the Nation. Let our national library service be a reflection of this eternal message of the soul of India.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴*Home, Public-A*, 28 February 1899, No.96-D, p1.

¹¹⁵*The Statesman*, 1 July 1948, p3.

¹¹⁶*The Stateman*, 2 February 1952, p.1.

¹¹⁷*Report on the English Native Newspapers and Periodicals, The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1 February 1953, No.32, p.1.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

Focusing on the importance of the existence of a national library, Juan Osbourne expressed that ‘national library symbolized a country’s dedication to serving its cultural and literary heritage, while providing its citizens with a sanctuary of last resort in the pursuit of knowledge and information. A National library is not only regarded as a source of national pride but also as a symbol of nationhood, representing the collective memory of the nation.’¹¹⁹

Conclusion

While opening the Imperial Library on 30 January 1903, Curzon wishfully said, ‘It will be a proud and happy reflection if I am able to say that I found Calcutta without a library worthy of the name and left it a first class and well organized institution.’¹²⁰ The vision/dream that Curzon had in 1903 was fulfilled after India’s independence in 1948 and transformed the Imperial Library to National Library of India.

When Curzon came to India as the Governor General in 1899, he was very disappointed that there were no libraries where he could study about India. As an avid reader, he was a regular visitor at British Museum, London. Therefore, upon arriving in India, he was disheartened to find not a single reliable reference library in Calcutta. He, therefore, decided to amalgamate the two dysfunctional libraries and create a library worthy of for the capital. Hence, rooted on the commitment with which Curzon acted to attain his objective, the CPL merged with the old Imperial Library in 1902, and formally opened it to the public on 30 January 1903.

Today, the National Library of India stands tall amongst the national libraries of the world symbolizing the cultural and educational advancement of the country. This is indeed an unparalleled contribution of Curzon to India. Because of him, today, the National Library of India has the maximum collections on Indian languages. Libraries in India have also acquired renewed importance as the present society aims at attaining accessible to knowledge a reality for everyone. As an honour to Curzon’s laudable work, The Hindoo Patriot, one of the local dailies wrote, ‘as some measure of reward of Lord Curzon’s excellent organisation, it says that the least the resident of Calcutta can

¹¹⁹ Osbourne, Joan, ‘*The Educational Role of National Libraries: A case study of Trinidad and Tobago*, 2004, Buerno Aires, Argentina, p.1-2

¹²⁰ *The Statesman*, 2 February 1953, p.1.

do is to abundantly avail themselves of the facilities offered.’¹²¹ While some section of the inhabitant of Calcutta were happy for the fact that finally Calcutta possessed a library worthy of the capital of India but some sections of the people mourned at the loss of building which was built in the perpetual memory of Lord Metcalf.

¹²¹ The Hindu Patriot, 2 February 1903, Sl.NO.164, p.47.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL LIBRARY AND POST INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT

This chapter delves into the post-independence developments of the National Library of India and the growth of the library through its vicissitude and the turmoil following the country's independence. The National Library of India is the legacy of the British which evolved from Calcutta Public Library and amalgamated to the Imperial Library in 1903 and finally changed to National Library after independence 'in accordance with the provision of Imperial Library (change of name) Act 1948, the Imperial Library at Calcutta shall now be known as the National Library.'¹ The National Library has been recognized as 'an institution of national importance and finds a special mention in Article 62 of the Seventh Schedule of the Union List in the Constitution of India.'² A proposal for a change of name from 'Imperial' to 'National' was initiated by the then Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the parliament to suit the temper of the nation. According to him, 'under the changed circumstances it was proper for the Indian Institutions to have Indian names... for the present it was enough to change the name into National Library.'³ The National Library of India thus came into existence, symbolizing the nation's commitment to collecting, preserving, and disseminating of knowledge by giving access to its entire citizen in the pursuit of knowledge and information.

With the expansion of the library, a necessity for finding suitable location to house the nation's most prestigious library was felt. The Indian Education Ministry identified Belvedere, the building which was once the resident of Viceroy and Governor General of India situated at the suburb of Alipur to be the most suitable abode for the National Library. While formally opening the library in its new site at Belvedere, Maulana Azad

¹IOR: L/PJ/7/14101, Office of the High commissioner for the United Kingdom, New Delhi, 22 September 1948, p.1.

² Sahib Singh, Library and Literacy movement for National Development, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2003, p.48.

³ Discussion in parliament, Bill to Rename Imperial Library, 2nd September 1948, Compiled by the Editor in 'The Hindu Speaks on Libraries,' Kasturi and Sons Ltd., Madras, 1992, p.78.

declared, 'this noble building which formerly catered for the rulers –the land will henceforth be the resort of the even the humblest seeker of knowledge and truth.'⁴

Administrative set up of the National Library

Most of the 'National Libraries are parts of national governments that are directly subordinate to ministry of education or parliamentary bodies.'⁵ Initially, the National Library was under the auspice of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, administered through Governing Council consisting of eleven members nominated by the Government of India on the advice of state governments and other educational institutions. The Secretary to the Ministry is the ex-officio Chairman of the Council and the Librarian is its Member-Secretary.⁶ However, after death of Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Ministry of Education bifurcated into Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs in 1958 and the three libraries which were under the same Ministry were placed under different Ministries.

National Library came under Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, whereas Delhi Public Library and Central Secretariat Library continued to remain with the Ministry of Education, Government of India. It was alleged that the bifurcation of Ministry of Education hindered the growth of libraries and also the coordination between libraries was hampered as they were placed under different Ministries. Moreover, there was no clear demarcation of functions between these Ministries especially on matters relating to libraries. There has been instances when a scheme of establishing a national council for libraries and establishment of central library service by pooling all the librarians serving with the government into one cadre had to be suspended because it failed to decide which of the two ministries had to organise them.⁷ In 1963 both the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs were once again amalgamated to form the Ministry of Education.⁸ It is therefore, optimistic that the matter relating with library

⁴ *The Statesman*, 2 February 1953, Delhi, p.1.

⁵ David C.Mearns. Current Trends in National Libraries, in Maurice B.Line & Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, Vol.1,ASLIB READER SERIES,Aslib,London,1979.p.9.

⁶ B.S.Kesavan, *India's National Library*, Calcutta, National Library Calcutta, 1961.p.37.

⁷ Pandith Harsukh M, Library Development: To the Editor, *The Times of India* ,p.6.1963.

⁸ J.Mohanty,Education ,*Educational Administration, Supervision and School Management*, 2nd Revised and Enlarged Edition, Deep & Deep publications, New Delhi,2005,p.56.

and its development would be tackled by one single officer of the rank of Educational Advisor.⁹

The National Library of India Act 1976 was passed by the Parliament and enacted on 11 June 1976. Under the new Act, the National Library became National Library of India and it was given the status of an autonomous institution to be managed by a Board and an Executive Council.¹⁰ The Director is the head of the institution and overall in-charge of the Library with two professional Librarians under him. On the technical side, the Librarian and the Director are assisted by the Deputy Librarians, and on administrative matters, they are assisted by two Administrative Officers.¹¹

Council of the National Library

After the merger of Imperial Library into National Library, the Governing Council was reconstituted in 1954 and the number of members was increased from 9 to 12 to make the council broad-based by including representatives of the Central Universities and eminent persons interested in library administration.¹² The Council consisted of:

Educational Advisor to the Government of India (Ex-officio) Chairman, Prof. Humayun Kabir; Two Members nominated by the Government of West Bengal, One Member nominated by the University of Calcutta,

Prof. J.P. Niyogi, President, Council of Post Graduate Teaching in Arts;

One Member nominated by the Central University by rotation, Prof. V.V. Nalekar, Prof. and Head of the Department of Mathematics, Banaras Hindu University;

Six members nominated by the Government of India, Dr.P.M.Joshi, Director, Archives, Government of Bombay, Vacant, Dr. Mohm Rahattulah Khan, Curator, Asafiyah, State Library, Hyderabad, Sr.G.P. Agarwal, Chief Librarian, Social Education Directorate, Dr.V.L. Manjunath, Vice Chancellor, University of Mysore, Dr. M.N. Saha, F.R.S, MP; Librarian National Library, Calcutta, Secretary-Shri B.S. Kesavan.¹³

⁹Pandith Harsukh M, Library Development: To the Editor, *The Times of India*, 1963.p.6.

¹⁰ R.K.Bhatt, *History and Development of Libraries in India*, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995.p.97.

¹¹ Uma Mazumder, *India's National Library: Systematization and Modernization*, Calcutta, National Library, 1987, p.33.

¹² National Library, *Annual Report for the year for the year 1951-1954*, Calcutta, printed by the Government of India Press, India, 1956, p.23.

¹³ National Library, Calcutta, *Annual Report for the year 1951-1954*, Calcutta, printed by the Government of India Press, India, 1956, p.23.

The Government of India once again reconstituted the Council of the National Library for the period of three years w.e.f., 2 July 1956;

Chairman: Educational Advisor to the Government of India (Ex-officio),

Secretary: Librarian, National Library, Calcutta (Ex-officio),

Two Members nominated by the Government of West Bengal

One Member nominated by the University of Calcutta

One Member nominated by the Central University by rotation

Six members nominated by the Government of India

The first meeting of the newly reconstituted Governing Council was held on 15 October 1956.¹⁴

Working Days of the National Library

With the development of National Library, working days of the library were also extended. In the pre-independence era, the library was opened only for 250 days in a year.¹⁵ But after shifting in to Belvedere, the working hours in both the Reading and Lending Sections was also extended and was kept open for 362 days in a year. From 16 August 1954, the Library, remained open on Sundays and Holidays, excepting three National Holidays, i.e., Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, and Republic Day. The revised time working Hour of the Reading Room and Lending Section henceforth, be as;

Reading Room - 9 A.M -8 P.M Weekdays

10 A.M- 5P.M Sundays

Lending Sections-10 A.M-5 P.M Weekdays

10 A.M-1:30 P.M Sundays

And other Gazetted Holidays.¹⁶

¹⁴ National Library, Calcutta, *Annual Report for the year 1956-1958*, Calcutta, printed by the Government of India Press, India, 1959, p.7.

¹⁵ B.S.Kesavan, *India's National Library*, Calcutta, National Library Calcutta, 1961, p.36.

¹⁶ National Library, Calcutta, *Annual Report for the year 1951-1954*, Calcutta, printed by the Government of India Press, India, 1956, p.21.

The National Library strictly maintains this working hours till today.

Belvedere: Home of the National Library

The Library had been languishing for a long time to accommodate the overgrown accumulations of its collections. The National Library of India during the first 50 years of its existence has changed its location several times before permanently settling down in the present site. From its initial home in Grand Street when it was known as Calcutta Public Library, it was moved to the historic Metcalf Hall in Hare Street, and then to the Supply Secretariat Building in Esplanade. During World War II, it was shifted to Jabakusum House in Chittrajan Avenue. After a short period, it was relocated to the Esplanade Building, and finally after it was revamped into the National Library of India it was shifted to Belvedere in 1948.¹⁷ While shifting into Metcalf hall, Curzon had envisaged that the present building would soon become too small for future accommodation, and suggested that ‘if the experiment were a great success that larger premises were required, we could always in a later date revive the idea of a habitat in Chowringhee.’¹⁸ Not long after he left India, the problem of space had become one of major issue of the Imperial Library. Macfarlane, the librarian had said,

If no means of relief can be devised it will be necessary for the council to ask the Government of India to consider at once the question of a large increase of accommodation. This may be secured either by rebuilding on the site of Metcalf Hall, or (2) providing an annexe in the neighbourhood.¹⁹

Relocation of the library was required not only because it had overgrown its space at Metcalf Hall but also because of the uncongenial surroundings which was not conducive for a library. The location was not ideal for students, as it was situated in a noisy part of Calcutta with tram lines on both sides of the road and sheds beyond in which a great deal of cargo is handled.²⁰ Like Macfarlane, the first Imperial Librarian, Chapman had also pointed out that ‘the smoke coming from the Howrah factories and the steam boats on the Ganges caused the deterioration of the paper of the books.’²¹ If

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Curzon paper*, Roll -1, Correspondence with secy. Of state, 14 March 1899, No.73.p.52

¹⁹ *Annual Report of the Imperial Library*, No.134, Calcutta, 18 February 1905, p.1.

²⁰ K.N.Dhar, *Calcutta Review* 1920.p.80.

²¹ N.B Sen, *Progress of Libraries in Free India*, New Delhi, New Book Society of India, 1967, p.170.

immediate attention was not given to move the library to a congenial environment, all priceless treasures that the library claimed to possess such as the oldest newspapers in India, which date back to 1792 and were kept in humid dungeons, and lakhs of other books which were on the floor for want of staking facilities would be utterly ruined.²²

The opportunity to remove the library far from such disturbing environment came by when the capital of India was shifted to Delhi from Calcutta in 1911. The Government buildings vacated on account of the transfer of the number of offices presented itself as providence for the purpose of accommodating the library. Taking the opportunity, the council approached the Government of India to assign a portion for the said purpose. The request made to the Government yielded only in 1923 and the library was allotted a portion of the foreign and military building at Esplanade.²³ To supervise the shifting of the library Mr. K.M. Asadullah, who was the Librarian of the Library of Home Department of the Government of India was deputed. He later became the librarian of the Imperial Library. However, the re-accommodation did not resolve the dilemma of the library space, which was ever growing and also, much like the previous location there was little scope for its expansion. But as fate would have it, the outbreak of the Second World War compelled the library to take refuge in Jabakusum House at 34, Chittaranjan Avenue, in February, 1942.²⁴

Unlike in the past, search for the suitable location for the National library did not take long. While searching suitable location for the National library, the Belvedere at Alipore was mooted as its abode. The search ended with India's independence when the then Governor General, C. Rajagopalachari suggested that the erstwhile home of Lieutenant Governors and Viceroys, the Belvedere, should be the future home of the National library. The proposal found favourable with the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who stated, 'I do not want Belvedere for the mere purpose of stacking books. We want to convert it into a fine central library where large number of research student can work and where all the amenities which a modern library gives.

The place must not be judged like the present Imperial library. It is not merely a question of accommodation, but of something much more.'²⁵ The decision regarding the

²² *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 27 January 1949, p.4.

²³ B.S.Kesavan, *India's National Library*, Calcutta, National Library Calcutta, 1961.p.18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*p.19.

²⁵ *Ibid.*29.

shifting to Belvedere was reported in the local newspaper *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in 1947, 'the magnificent palace of the Imperial viceroy's at Belvedere, will from, May next; enter upon its new life dedicated to the Indian people. The National Library, the biggest in the country has already started shifting there and four months hence, these priceless collection of books, treasures, hopes to be freed from its present 29,000 square ft. of cramming space and to be settled in the rich comfort that has long been its due.'²⁶

Finally, the National Library, at Belvedere, was opened to the public on 1 February 1953, by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Education Minister, Government of India.²⁷ The opening of National Library coincided with the completion of its 50th years of existence, which was celebrated in presence of eminent Librarians, scholars, and leading residents of Calcutta. Distinguished H.C. Mookerjee, the then Governor of West Bengal, presided the function and Dr. B.C. Roy, Chief Minister of the state, graced the occasion by his presence. The Jubilee was celebrated to commemorate the beginning of state management of the library.²⁸ With effect from the 1st July, 1953 the control of the Belvedere estate was transferred to the Ministry of Education by the Ministry of work, Housing and Supply.²⁹

Protest against the Proposal of shifting the Imperial Library from Calcutta to Delhi

There were intense anxiety and opposition to the proposal that the Imperial Library be moved to Delhi. This proposal was made following the shifting of national capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. Seth Govind Dass, one of the legislative members, felt that it should be moved to Delhi; 'when the Headquarters of the Central Government are in Delhi the Library of the capital which at present in Calcutta should also be transferred to Delhi.'³⁰ Majority of people of Calcutta reacted strongly to this statement that a library in Delhi will no doubt add to its pompous dignity, but it should be borne in mind that the library has other uses than being just a mere show.³¹

²⁶ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 January 1949, p.4.

²⁷ *The Statesman*, 2 February 1953, Delhi, p.1.

²⁸ National Library, India, *Annual Reports for 1951-54*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1958, p.11.

²⁹ National Library, India, *Annual Reports for 1954-56*, Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1958, p.23.

³⁰ Legislative Assembly Debate official Report, Vol.4, No.1, 25 March -9 April 1947, p.2411.

³¹ Reports on Native English Newspapers and Periodicals for a period of January–December 1925, Sl.no.44, p.235.

Therefore, the inhabitants of Calcutta vehemently reacted against the proposal of shifting. Chapman, the former Imperial Librarian, also encouraged people to prevent this move. He said, 'what made our library an Imperial from 1903 to 1911 was not its being in Calcutta, but it's serving all India. It serves all India by sending its book all over India.'³² Same sentiment was also expressed by Ebrahim Khan, Principal, Gedat College, when he commented 'recent move for transferring of the Imperial Library from Calcutta to Delhi is disconcerting to all lovers of learning in Bengal...I appeal to all educational institutions of Bengal and to all lovers of culture to enter emphatic protest against the proposed transfer of the Imperial Library from Calcutta.'³³ However, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Education Minister, remained unfazed by such a protest and said that there were equally strong public feelings for it in other parts of India.³⁴ The transferring of the National Library has been a contentious issue since the shifting of the national capital in 1911 because most of the National Libraries in other countries are located in the capital city of the country.

But the Government of India had to finally give in to the public demand for the withdrawal of the said proposal. A due consideration was also given for the fact that the maximum collection of the library was enriched by donations received from many private libraries on the condition that it should remain in Calcutta. One such instance was found in a letter written to the library while donating the collection of Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay, that in case if the library shifts outside Calcutta, the Asutosh collection should be offered to Calcutta University and if they refused, to the Government of Bengal. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad convinced them;

I can assure you that at present the Government of India has no intention to remove the National Library from Calcutta and I am personally of the opinion that there is no likelihood of such a contingency arising. The government of India have a separate proposal for establishing a Central Library in Delhi and intend that the National Library should continue in Calcutta where it is being utilise to such a good purpose by so large a number of students and scholars.³⁵

³² J.A.Chapman, *The Imperial Library: Past and Future*, 22 March 1922. *Calcutta Review*, p.454.

³³ Ebrahim Khan, *The Star of India*, 21 April 1947. p.1.

³⁴ Legislative Assembly Debate official Report, Vol.4, No.1, 25 March -9 April 1947, p.2410.

³⁵ B.S.Kesavan, *India's National Library*, Calcutta, National Library Calcutta, 1961. p.32.

Functions and Role of National Library

The concept of National Library is remarkably recent and new to many of the developing countries. The idea of 'national' seems to stem from the search for national identity after achieving political independence. The newly liberated countries after gaining independence started working for the preservation of veritable national treasures such as recorded materials like manuscripts or printed books including maps, serials and microforms. The national library thus evolved like the national museum and the national archives, developed into a mausoleum of the cultural heritage, which served as a means of propagating the past cultural heritage came to hold the position of prestige.³⁶ According to Mearns, their prestige is measurable primarily in terms of the eminence of their staffs, the amount of their annual appropriations, the dimensions of their endowment, and the quality of the gifts they attract.³⁷ But there was no clear understanding on why national library came about. Pierre Bourgeois, director of the Bibliotheque National Suisse wrote, 'we still do not know what a national library really is, nor can we name with certainty the qualities a library must possess or the functions it must fulfil in order to be rightly called 'national.'³⁸ However, according to Kaula, the concept of national library grew out of the fear of material becoming scarce and unavailable in the future by procuring all printed material published in the country and preserve it for future reference, and also, national library should have sources not available anywhere else in the country.³⁹ A similar statement was also expounded by David C. Mearns that 'national libraries were recognised as the natural conservatories of the records of their peoples' genius however expressed, whether in print, or in manuscript...as preservators of the national literature, national libraries were designated as legal depositories and office of record for the product of national press.'⁴⁰

The function of the national library as preserver of the national cultural heritage and reservoir of the national productions were the most commendable functions of the

³⁶ Paul, Xuereb, National Libraries in Developing countries in Maurice Band Joyce line's (eds.) *National Libraries*, ASLIB Reader Series, ASBLIB, London 1979, p.100.

³⁷ David C. Mearns, National Libraries in Developing countries in Ibid, p.10.

³⁸ As quoted by Godfrey Burton, 'National Libraries: An Analysis,' in Ibid, p.87.

³⁹ P. N. Kaula, *the National Library of India: A Critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya Publications Pvt.Ltd.1970, p.19.

⁴⁰ David C. Mearns, Current Trends in National Libraries, in Maurice Lines and Joyce Lines (eds.), *National Libraries*, vol.1, ASLIB, London, p.10.

national library. The significant of a national library has been so aptly described by David Mearns when he said that the national library at its best is a 'libraries' library.⁴¹

The functions of national libraries vary from country to country. Some national libraries function as public libraries, which is a prominent feature of developing countries. This is because most of the national libraries evolved from the old public libraries, like the National Library of India which has its root in the Calcutta Public Library. Other came to being as a result of the dedication to public use of great public collections and many have developed into a contemporary stature through a gradual extension of their privileges and facilities to an ever –enlarging patronage.⁴² National libraries are by virtue of its position is linked with allother libraries in the country. In India, national library is placed at the apex in the national library system.⁴³

To understand the functions of a national library, it is imperative to know what the features of a national library. Some distinctive features of a national library are: it is an institute of national importance, its obligation is to collect, preserve, and conserve the total national output, it should disseminate knowledge at a national level. It should guide other libraries in the country in matters of planning, technique, organization and it should make rare out of print works and manuscripts available to various libraries in reproduced forms.⁴⁴ Corresponding to its features and to work in conformity with its purpose, some of the basic functions of a national library defined in the UNESCO General Conference at its 16th session in 1970 are given as, libraries which irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a 'deposit' library, either by law or under other arrangements may be called national libraries. They will also normally perform some of the functions like; production of national bibliography, collection and conservation of a large and representative collection of foreign literature including books about the country; acting as a national bibliographical information centre; compiling union catalogues and publishing the retrospective national bibliography etc.

⁴¹Ibid., p.12.

⁴² Ibid., p.9.

⁴³ *The Times of India*, 'Calcutta Library at Apex,' 17 May 1988, p.17.

⁴⁴P.N.Kaula, *The National Library of India: A critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya publication Pvt. Ltd., 1970, p.23.

Libraries which may be called 'national' but whose functions do not correspond to the above definition should not be placed in 'national libraries' category.⁴⁵

Though the concept of a national library may be of recent origin in India, the library had been carrying out the fundamental functions of a national library from its inception. Lord Curzon while amalgamating the Calcutta Public Library and Imperial Library had almost defined the function of a national library when he said, 'it should be a library of reference, a working place for students and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which so far as possible, every book written about India at any time can be seen and read.'⁴⁶

While national libraries of western countries had long been in existence, most of the new nations in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Area have established national libraries only after they achieved their independence.⁴⁷ In the case of India, National Library was accorded the 'National' status after India's independence in 1948 by an Act of Central Legislature⁴⁸ and renamed as National Library of India. As a result the growth and development of India's National Library was very slow and far lagging behind other national libraries. The developmental work was further delayed due to conflicting priorities and economic instability following country's partition. The turmoil aftermath partition greatly affected the working of the library as some of the library personnel had opted for Pakistan. Therefore, reorganisation and rearrangement of the library could be carried out only after the library was shifted to Belvedere much to the discomfort of the public.

National Repository of Knowledge

All national libraries are designated as legal depositories of a country. In 1953, 'the Government of India issued a circular to all state Government (excepting Jammu and Kashmir) directing to demand from all printers that one extra copy of each book printed or lithographed in India be delivered to this library. This year is thus memorable for the

⁴⁵Uma Mazumder, *India's National Library: Systematization and Modernization*, 1987, National Library, Calcutta, pp.2-3.

⁴⁶Education, *Home Department-Public*, Government of India, No.267, 1900, p.1.

⁴⁷Uma Mazumder, *India's National Library: Systematization and Modernization*, 1987, National Library, Calcutta, p.2.

⁴⁸ P.N.Kaula, *The National Library of India: A Critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya Publication Pvt. Ltd., 1970, p.21.

library; hereafter it will be repository of a copy of every book printed in India.’⁴⁹ By this direction, every book publishers in the country deposits one copy of its publication in the National Library. The Delivery of Books (public libraries) Act was passed on 21 May 1954 which replaced the Press and Registration Books Act 1867. Under the provision Delivery of Books (public libraries) Act 1954, the publishers were directly responsible for delivering books and periodicals within a month of their publications. This Acts also extended to include Government publications.⁵⁰ The 1954 Act was later amended in 1956 to include Newspapers and Periodicals, which saw a sharp increase of books and periodicals being received. Besides this, National Libraries as a conservator of records of the country also in possesses of early printed materials which enriched National Library to a great extent.⁵¹ Since, the National Library has the privilege of legal deposit and maintains the national union catalogue, no other library or institution in the country has comparable sources of information, and also the specialist knowledge of a large expert staff backed by the finest library resources in the country. National library is essentially considered as the best suited for servicing of the bibliographical centre.⁵² Therefore, considering the advantages the National Library has over other libraries, the National Library is considered best qualified for the production of national bibliography.

The publication of national bibliography was one of the important functions of a national library. As a legal depot, it is the duty of the National Library to compile the national production immediately after receiving either by itself or to house the organization responsible for compiling the bibliography.⁵³ To undertake the bibliographical work, the Bibliography and Reference division of National Library of India came into existence in 1950 at the National Library, Calcutta.⁵⁴ Though this division was responsible for compiling Indian National Bibliography, it works under the guidance of the National Library of India. The Librarian had to oversee the planning, editing, and publishing the Bibliography. Since its inception, the bibliography division has been engaged in compiling comprehensive as well as short bibliographies on

⁴⁹ *National Library of India: Annual Report 1951-1954*, Government of India press, Calcutta, 1956. p. 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.1.

⁵¹ Maurice B Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, London, ASLIB., 1979, p.31

⁵² *University Grants Committee Report on Libraries*, London, Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1967, p.84

⁵³ K.W.Humphreys, National Library Functions, in Maurice B Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, London, ASLIB., 1979, p.69.

⁵⁴ P.B.Mangla, Getting to Know :the National Library of India, *The Times of India*, 3 December 1967, p.7.

different subjects.⁵⁵ To investigate the problems that would be confronting the compilers of national bibliography and to advise the Government of India on the scope, lay out, and other technical details, the Ministry of Education of the Government of India appointed an expert committee in 1955. The members of this committee consisted of B.S. Kesavan, Librarian, National Library, Calcutta (Chairman), D.N. Marshall, Librarian, Bombay University Library, S. Saith Librarian, Ministry of External affairs, New Delhi, M. N. Ketkar, Librarian Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi, Y. M. Mulay, Deputy Librarian, National Library, Calcutta, B. Sengupta, C.R. Benerjee, and Dr. A. K. Ohdedar of the National Library, Calcutta. Following the recommendation of this committee, two experimental fascicules of Indian national bibliography were published in 1957.⁵⁶ Laudable achievements made in bibliographical work became a national pride. Following the creation of Bibliography Unit, the first Indian National Bibliography was issued in 1958 from Calcutta, comprising of books received in the National Library and its cumulative Indian Language components issued separately, are tools of great value to libraries in India.⁵⁷ This may be considered as the first systematic effort, on government level toward the bibliographical organisation and control.⁵⁸

The bibliographical activities of the National Library have various aspects as depository of country's publication under the law. Its first responsibility is to compile current publications. The National Library also compiled retrospective bibliography, subject bibliography, union catalogue, bibliographical service to readers, contribution to international bibliographical project etc.⁵⁹

With the creation of Indian Bibliography Unit, National Library of India also established exchange relations with other countries. The publications received in exchange of Indian National Bibliography from various institutions were looked after by the National Library following a pending establishment of a separate book exchange unit. Another important task performed by this unit is extending bibliographic services

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Consolidated Reports for the years 1955-56 to 1964-65*. Central Reference Library, Calcutta, p.2-3.

⁵⁷ Chakravarty, N.C. *Library Movement in India: An Introductory Essay*, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1962, p.33.

⁵⁸ Jagdish Saran Sharma, *Fundamentals of Bibliography*, 1977, S.Chand & Company LTD, New Delhi, p.77.

⁵⁹ B.S.Kesavan, *Bibliographical activities of National library*, UNESCO Regional seminar on the Development of National Libraries in the Asia and the Pacific Area, Manila, 3-15 February 1964, p.2.

to varied clientele.⁶⁰ However, compilation of a current national bibliography is only possible when the library enjoys the privilege of legal deposit. Due to the limitation of legal deposits, it has become an impediment for the Indian National Bibliography in compiling the current national bibliography. The compilation of national bibliography is further complicated by the fact that it has to compile the lists of books in fourteen different Indian languages. This problem regarding the language bibliographies was resolved as the Central Reference Library decided to produce the language bibliographies along with the roman version.⁶¹ In the absence of trade list, the current national bibliography is a tool only for librarian and readers information seeking about books. Nonetheless, this bibliography has inestimable value for the future generations of scholars.⁶² Through the bibliography it came to light that in 1948 the National Library of India had in its collection less than 500 volumes of books in most of the important languages in the country, though printing was introduced in India about two centuries earlier. One of the reasons is that the entire books published in India during those years were sent to London for preservation in British Museum Library and India Office Library by the British rulers.

Preparation and Printing of Catalogue

The preparation and printing of catalogue had been one of the earliest endeavours of the Calcutta Public Library. The present cataloguing system of the National Library has its origin in the Calcutta Public Library. The first attempt 'to print catalogue of a library in India with systematic arrangement was the Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library published in 1855.'⁶³ The necessity for preparation of catalogue was felt even before the library was opened to the public, when books were transferred from the Fort William College Library to be the foundation of the library to start upon, had to be listed down and make entry as per the accompanying lists of books delivered. At the same time, it also required of the library was also required to list down the books in their possession so that duplication of books could be avoided while selecting books for the library, which would greatly reduced the burden on the library's fund and space. It was also thought of that Catalogues might also be useful for easy reference.

⁶⁰ Dasgupta, Kalpana and Kalyani Maitra, *the National Library and Public Libraries in India*, National Library, Calcutta, 1986, p.9.

⁶¹ Asin Das Gupta, The Indian National Library, in Maurice B Line and Joyce Line (eds.) *National Libraries*, Vol.2.series-6(eds.) by London, ASLIB, 1987.p.185.

⁶² Ibid. p.2.

⁶³ Pandey S.K.Sharma, *Public Libraries in India*, Ess Ess Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p.257.

Therefore, Preparing and compilation of catalogue was made mandatory by the Curators of the Calcutta Public Library in order to present its holding to the readers and subscribers. Preparation of catalogue was not considered convenient for the readers alone for easy perusal, but it was necessary to do so since it was laid down as a rule of the library. Rule number 12 of the library required that 'all works received by the library should be entered in the library catalogue, and the titles should be conspicuously notified in the public library room for the circulation of books among proprietors and subscribers.'⁶⁴ However, preparation and printing of new catalogue involved heavy expenditure and the library with its limited funds at their disposal was not prepared for frequent updates. This compelled the curators of the library to actually try to prepare a catalogue of all the works in the library.⁶⁵ The merit of having a printed catalogue outweighed the framing of rules for collecting books in the meeting of the proprietors and subscribers held on 8 March 1836 in the library room. Curators were of the opinion that printing catalogue should be given first priority;

they have thought it more useful to the institution to prepare a catalogue *raisonne* of all the works at present comprised in the library, by reference to the different departments of which the deficiencies of the collection can accurately be known, the Curators having undertaken to prepare useful work in those department of knowledge with which they have respectively some acquaintance from those list compared with the present catalogue when printed, a general list may easily be made by reference to which advantage may be taken of all opportunities for acquiring books.⁶⁶

Hence, it was announced by the curators that catalogue *raisonne* of all the works in the library had been prepared for printing and it was completed and ready before the opening of library. To make sure that all necessary arrangements were made before the opening of the library, W.P. Grant and Dr. Marshman instructed 'that the catalogue prepared by Curators be printed forthwith,'⁶⁷ and this printed catalogues according to Rules of the CPL (Rule No.20 of Circulation), should 'be sold to the proprietors, subscribers and others at the price of one rupee per copy.'⁶⁸

⁶⁴ *Report of the Calcutta public Library* for 1847 & 1848, Appendix-B printed by Sanders, Cones & Co., 1848, p. VI.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, Vol.2, March 1836, p.99.

⁶⁷ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, March 1836, p. 100.

⁶⁸ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, March 1836, p. 101.

A consolidated catalogue of the books acquired in 1835 to 1845 was issued in 1846 with a short history of the library and it was reviewed in the same year by the Calcutta Review, Vol. VI, July-December, 1846, in the Miscellaneous Notices. According to the review, 'the incorporation of a portion of the library of Fort William College renders the Public library of Calcutta very much superior to most similar institutions.'⁶⁹ At the same time this publication also garnered criticism from the reviewer for the defects in the catalogue who demanded, 'for its Curators to issue a new and improved edition of the Catalogue.'⁷⁰ To bring improvement in the catalogue, the library turned to persons who had knowledge of cataloguing. J.E.D. Bethune turned emerged as the person who was acquainted for the preparation of catalogue. Bethune suggested adopting the press marking system in the catalogue, which meant a reference to the place of book in the library, and consisted of two numbers and a letter. The library was further advised to adopt the rule as practiced in the great libraries of Paris and London that a catalogue should lay on the table and anyone wishing for a particular work should enter his name annexed on a slip of paper, which should also be laid on the table for this purpose.⁷¹ These suggestions were incorporated in the new catalogue 'that a complete classified catalogue is nearly ready for the purpose of being referred to in the library and it will be of use to those who have had stitched with their catalogue the monthly list of books. When the new arrangement of books was completed the catalogue in question will be pressed marked and printed.'⁷²

The catalogue that was brought forward by the Calcutta Public Library generated a number of complaints. Primary complaint was that books available in the library were not entered in the catalogue which rendered imperfect in the event for steady supervision by one of the governing body. A number of suggestions were given by the concerned individuals and institutions, who all agreed to the fact that the catalogue needed improvement. The problems were highlighted in the library's report of 1888; 'it is a matter of deep regret that the library does not possess a complete printed catalogue of all the books it contains.'⁷³ The curators expressing their regrets for the defects,

⁶⁹ P.T. Nair, *Origin of the National Library of India: Days of the Calcutta public library*, National Library of India, Belvedere, Kolkata, 2004, p. 90.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ *Report of the Calcutta public Library for 1847 & 1848*, Appendix-B, printed by Sanders, Cones & Co., Calcutta, 1848, Appendix-E, p. xxii-xxiii

⁷² *Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1850*, Sanders, Cones & Co., Calcutta, p. 20

⁷³ *Report of the Calcutta public Library for 1888*, P.S.D. Rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1889, p. 7.

stated that ‘separate establishment under a competent librarian is needed for the proper cataloguing of the books, which, in consequence of the books not being in all cases properly classified.’⁷⁴

The defect in the library caused due to improper catalogue was soon done away with, and ‘an improved system of cataloguing was on the suggestion of Beveridge adopted with the sanctioned of the book committee. A general list of books alphabetically arranged according to author’s name with copious detail cross references under the subject heading, making what is known as Dictionary catalogue is under preparation.’⁷⁵ The Curators of the library took into consideration the imperfections in their catalogue system and endeavoured to better it with the preparation of a dictionary catalogue. The preparation of the catalogue was a tedious and lengthy process which involved a heavy expenditure. Hence, it was decided by the Curators of the Calcutta Public Library that this expenditure would be charged as extraordinary expenses along with other costs of the establishment. Rogers Committee, which was formed by the library to investigate the causes for the decline of the library, criticised the lack of up-to-date catalogue in the library and continued to point out that none of the proprietors and subscribers possessed a complete catalogue. In the absence of such a catalogue it was hopeless to expect any accession of subscribers from among residents in the mofussil, notwithstanding the facilities afforded then by the railway for drawing supply of books from the library.⁷⁶

A complete catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library comprising 640 pages with an appendix which runs to 56 pages was printed in 1855 by Sanders, Cones & Co., Cossitallah, Calcutta. The appendix contained the catalogue of the vernacular literature committee’s library compiled by J. Long. The catalogues printed in 1855, 1894 and 1898 are preserved in the National Library of India, Kolkata. The extant catalogues are a useful source of information for the present library. It gives us the idea of what kinds of books CPL purchased, what cataloguing methods and techniques were followed, what improvements were incorporated later on etc. They contained works that were classified on the basis of discipline: Theology, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, History,

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1891 to 1892*, printed by P.S. D’rozario & Co., Calcutta, 1892, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Finances of the Calcutta Public Library, Report of the Sub-Committee* Appointed on the 10 February, 1873, Office of Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1873, p. 24.

Biography and Memoirs. Antiquities, Sub-division of Antiquities, Heraldry and Genealogy, Topography, Mythology, East Indies including China, Voyages and Travels, Mathematics, Pure and Mixed, Sub-division of Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics and under physics there was natural and experimental physics, Philosophy, Mechanics, Hydrodynamics, Acoustic, Optics, Electricity and Galvanism, Light and Heat, Metrology, Practical Science, Natural History, Medicine, Fine Arts-sub-division, Painting, Architecture, sculpture, Music, Poetry and Drama, Prose work of Grammar, Philosophy, Sub-division, Grammar, Belles, Letters and Criticism. Miscellaneous-Literature, Cyclopaedia Works, Bibliography and Printing, Periodical, Greek and Latin, French Work, Italian Work, Spanish and Portuguese Work, Northern Literature, Hebrew and Oriental Work, Subdivision, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Hindustani, Hindi, Marhatta and Guzrattee, Telegoo, Ceylons, Burmese, Punjabi and other languages.⁷⁷

The first catalogue was revised due to certain inadequacies and was published by the Calcutta Public Library in January 1894 (published and printed by Sanyal & Co., Bharat Mihir Press in Calcutta). There was a major change in the catalogue as it followed the dictionary system and thereby all entries followed the alphabetical order and were arranged by author's name as well as title entries. Another interesting change and improvement was that the year of publication of the book was given against the book although the place of publication was not printed. The most elaborate catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library was the one published in 1898 with a supplement that was revised up to December 1898, printed by Sanyal & Co., Bharat Mihir Press, Calcutta. It followed both author as well as subject entries alphabetically.

A comprehensive and upgraded version of catalogue was printed in the Imperial library under the direct supervision of Lord Curzon. The Imperial Library borrowed rules for compiling the catalogues of printed books, maps, etc for the Imperial Library from three libraries models; 'anyone who compares them will at once see how much these rules owe to those issued by the Trustee of the British Museum, to the 'staff-calendar' of the Bodleian library, to those drawn up by the late Henry Bradshaw for the Cambridge

⁷⁷ *Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library 1855*, Sanders, Cones & Co., Cossitallah, Calcutta.

university.⁷⁸ The Imperial Library also published elaborate printed catalogue for vernacular language, subject index of the books in the author-catalogue which consisted books in European languages available in the library. A separate catalogue was also printed for maps and plans besides general and subject index catalogues. Some of these printed catalogues were for free distribution for the smaller libraries and some were sold to different people and agencies at minimal price.

When this library was accorded 'National' status, in 1948, the responsibility for compiling national catalogue became one of its fundamental responsibilities. As a bibliographical centre, preparing and compiling union catalogue for the books, maps, periodical work received are adequately described here. From these sources, catalogues are printed for its holdings and made available in libraries throughout the country as an invaluable aid to scholars.⁷⁹ So far National Library has published about 50 catalogues. A milestone achievement by the library was the project of Bibliography of Indology in 56 volumes after the acceptance by the Reviewing Committee recommendation. Some of the volumes have been published and the work is now in progress.

Library Acquisition

The essence of a library lies in the comprehensiveness of its collection. The entire purpose of a library becomes futile if the collections of the library do not cater to the needs of the society it serves. For a national library, the responsibility is even broader because the intellectual needs of the country as well as demand from other countries have to be obtained and supplied. Therefore, the main responsibility of the national library is to acquire and conserve the whole of nation's production of printed material,⁸⁰ in all regional languages as well as foreign languages. National library is considered to be a repository centre of the country; it is expected to acquire as many publications as possible which are published in different countries. The main objective of the policy of a national library is to enrich its collection. Originally the idea of comprehensive collection was conceived by Anthony Panizzi, an Italian born Librarian working for the British Museum Library who desired that, 'the British Museum Library should have the

⁷⁸ *The Imperial library*, Rules for compiling the catalogues of printed books, Maps, etc., Calcutta, superintendent government printing, India, 1913. n.p.

⁷⁹ K.W. Humphreys, National Library Functions, in Maurice B Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries*, ASLIB, London, 1979. p.70.

⁸⁰ As quoted by K.W. Humphreys, the Role of the National Library: A preliminary statement in *Ibid*, p.57

best collection of English literature of all other countries outside of each of these countries'⁸¹ later on, this idea was incorporated as one of the fundamental objectives of a national library. However, to define the basic functions of national library is difficult and has been widely debated in national library conferences held by UNESCO⁸² and it still remains to arrive at a conclusive definition. The problem is because of the diverse origin of national libraries due to which a general functions and role cannot be defined. An attempt was made to adopt commonly applicable functions for the national library in areas such as, Acquisition, Bibliography, Cataloguing, and Protection and Conservation. Acquisition is one that is considered as one of the most important fundamental functions of a national library. Though Acquisition policies may differ from country to country, but the collection of printed books and usually of manuscript is common to most.⁸³

In India, the National Library's collection has been greatly enriched by the enactment of the Delivery of Books Act (public library acts 1954) 1954 by the Government which declares that, 'the provision of the Delivery of Books (public libraries) Act 1954 enables the National Library at Calcutta to get one copy of each of the publication (excluding newspapers) published in India since 21May1954.'⁸⁴

In the beginning, when Calcutta public library was established in 1835, it started with only 6,500 books donated by members and some books transferred from the Fort William College Library. Today, through the Delivery of Books Act, there has been ceaseless influx of books everyday in the National Library, which comprises of all the major Indian languages as well as English and other languages.⁸⁵ This was the vision Lord Curzon had while amalgamating the Calcutta Public library into Imperial library. Said he had mentioned that:

My desire is to collect there every book that has been in an intelligible tongue about this continent, so that material not merely for casual reference, but for the publications and compilations of the historian of the future, may be there available.⁸⁶

⁸¹ As quoted by Uma Mazumder in *India's National Library: systematization and Modernization*, National Library Calcutta, 1987, p.2.

⁸² Godfrey Burston, National Libraries: An Analysis, in Maurice B.Line and Joyce Line (eds.), *National Libraries* Aslib Reader Series, Vol.1.Aslib.London,1979,p.87.

⁸³ K.W.Humphreys ,National Library Functions,in Ibid, p.65.

⁸⁴ Mukherjee,Subodh Kumar,*Development of libraries and library science in India*, The press limited,Calcutta,1969,p.79.

⁸⁵ P.B.Mangla,Getting to Know :the National Library of India,*The Times of India*, 3 December 1967,p.7.

⁸⁶ Imperial Library Indenture Validation Bill,*Home Department Public-B*,No.384.April 1902,p.2.

Before the Delivery of Book Acts, it was through a sheer vice regal fiat that made it possible for the management of the library to secure every official publication from all over the country. The result is that, at present, the library has the richest collection of original publications on the British era of Indian History. Under the provision of the Press and Registration Acts, a collection of the great literatures of Bengal were collected and added to the library year by year.⁸⁷

The active participation of the Government after country's independence in the development of the National Library gave momentous rise to its significance. On commemorating the fiftieth year of its existence in 1953 the government of India marked the event with the most noteworthy allotment of special grant of Rs.50,000 for filling up the gaps in its collection.⁸⁸ The grant from the government enabled the library to add a wide ranging coverage on all aspect of knowledge. This resulted in a tremendous rise in its stock- from mere 3,00,000 volumes in 1948 to nearly two million now, which has now been turned into a multi-dimensional institution.⁸⁹ Over the years, the collection of the library has been enhanced through gift exchange, purchase, and through the Delivery of Book Act 1954. Progress during the last eighteen years has been rapid. The total stock of books in 1947-48 was 350,000; in 1964-65 it increased to more than 1,200,000. It was also reported the annual expenditures also increased more than 20 times in comparison to pre-independence days. Finally, the nation has come to realize the importance of preserving national veritable treasures- the old and priceless books piled up in the overcrowded old building of the National Library which received attention of the government only after independence. It was further triggered by the measures taken up by the central government when accommodating the influx of enormous amount of books received under various sources; Government had sanctioned Rs. 48 crores for 41 sq.ft. for the construction of the central building of the National Library.⁹⁰

Through various government programmes, the National Library of India holds the position as one of the finest national library in Asia and Africa. Undertaking difficult

⁸⁷ *The statesman* 2 February 1953, p.1.

⁸⁸ *Report of the National Library for the year ended 31st March 1953*.p.12.

⁸⁹ *Press Trust of India*, 20 cr Aid for National Library,(n.d.)

⁹⁰ *The Times of India* 10 February 1995,p.8.

workloads, the centre government has further chalked out an INR 20 crores projects including construction of a 16 storey building to house the National Library.⁹¹

To bring improvement in the library services and overall growth of the library, the Government from time to time invited eminent librarians from Delhi and Bombay to discuss with their Calcutta counterpart, of ways and means to improve the functioning of the library. Some of the issues confronting the library leading to its degradation were non-availability of books, administrative slackness, and lack of adequate space for the incoming books.

Response to the Nation's Needs: Developments

Recognising the importance of libraries in promoting education, research, and in the overall development of a nation's socio economy, the government of India, after independence implemented various policies and programmes for the growth and development of libraries particularly National Library India. As the apex library in India, much attention was given so as to foster the library worthy of its name. A remarkable event in the development of the National Library was the appointment of National Library Committee in 1947 by Sir John Sargent, the then education Advisor to Government of India, with Ranganathan as one of its members. This committee was formed to find out ways and means of establishing a national library in Delhi. The Location for the National Library had been a contentious issue since the time the Capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. The controversy stemmed from the fact that in most of the country national libraries are located where the government headquarters are. But in India, while most of the important institutions of culture are located in the National capital, Delhi, it was thought improper to shift the National Library to Delhi. Therefore, to solve this problem the first meeting was held in 7 April 1948 and second meeting in 14 May, 1948. However, in June 1949, the government issued a notification that the proposal for national central library had been indefinitely postponed,⁹² which was unfortunate event for the people who wanted National Library to be at the heart of the capital of the country.

⁹¹ *Press Trust of India*, 20 cr Aid for National Library,(n.d.)

⁹² P.N.Kaula, *The National Library of India: A critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya publication PVT.LTD,1970,p.24.

A significant effort towards the development of public libraries in the country has been the inclusion of scheme for the 'Improvement of Library Service' in the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956). During the First Five Year Plan, the emphasis was given on the improvement of library services for the educational development. The government of India initiated a scheme called 'Integrated Library service' with the support of the state government. The scheme targeted every area selected by the government for intensive educational development. It was also proposed under this plan to set up a National Central Library and one central library in each state. Some of the important achievements during this plan were the establishment of Delhi Public Library in 1951 and INSDOC in 1955 with the joint efforts of the government of India and UNESCO. In 1952, the Government of India initiated the community development program in which social education was assigned an important role. Gradually, the pattern of the social education programme took a clear shape and libraries, including circulating libraries, occupied an integral place in this programme. The community development programme thus gave a fillip to rural libraries.⁹³

Another important landmark was the enactment of Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act in 1954 and later the Act was amended in 1956 to include newspapers and periodicals. The Act obligated every publisher in India to deposit a copy of its publication with the National Library in Calcutta, the Asiatic (Central) library Bombay, Connemara Public Library, Madras, and the Delhi Public Library. Since then, on the basis of books received under this Act, a national bibliography is prepared by the central Reference Library in Calcutta which was set up in 1955.⁹⁴ Through this Act, the National Library collection has been greatly enriched. The First Five Year Plan had recommended the setting of a National Central Library on the line of the National Central Library in U.K. for improvement and proper organisation of library services in the country. Unfortunately, this provision could not be implemented in the planning period.⁹⁵

For reviewing the work of the National Library and suggest measures for its efficient functioning and future development, a reviewing committee by the Union Ministry of Education was appointed in May 1968. The committee was headed by eminent

⁹³ *Report of Advisory Committees for Libraries*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1959.p.5.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Inder Mohan Goswami (ed.), *Development of Library and information Science*, Modern library Science Series-1, New Delhi, Commonwealth Publishers, 1995, p.141.

educationist and administrative expert, Dr. V. S. Jha as chairman, N. Mukherjee, Prof. V.K. Gokak, Mr. S.K. Gupta, B.S. Kesavan, and P. Gangulee as members, and the Librarian as member secretary. The Reviewing Committee recommended, with regard to its function of acquisition, to appoint a committee of specialists to advise on the policy that the national library ought to follow in acquiring manuscripts. Some of the recommendations includes such as, to constitute a senior scholars to make systematic survey of the existing reference collection, to appoint expert to catalogue the manuscripts in Tibetan, Sanskrit, and modern Indian languages, publication of the Indian National Bibliography by National library as its basic functions, installation of machines for providing photocopy facilities at the library, and finally, a setting up of separate independent units for monographs, Indian official publications and foreign official publications including the UN. The Reviewing Committee also suggested for appointing a Director, who would also be the ex-officio Chairman of the Governing Council. The Governing Council is to consist of eminent persons from the universities, distinguished educationist, administrators of proved worth, and scientists of repute as its members.⁹⁶

The National Library of India Act 1976 was passed by the parliament and it was enacted on 11 June 1976. Under this new act, the National Library was to have the status of an autonomous institution managed by a Board and an Executive council. The Library was to be headed by a Director and the Librarian was to work under the Director.⁹⁷ However, there were widespread condemnation of the National Library of India Act 1976, which envisaged an autonomous board for the National Library in Calcutta on the ground that the autonomy as recommended by the Jha Committee was the delegated one and not the statutory kind, and that the Act 'would lower the image of National Library.' it was further argued that the three tier arrangement with an autonomous board, an executive council, and the director as the Act envisaged, would be detrimental in functioning of the library. The Union Education Minister, Dr. Chunder stated, 'it is now felt that such diffusion of authority will not be conducive to efficient functioning of the library.' Keeping this statement in view, and opposition from various quarter,

⁹⁶ *The Times of India*, 'Governing Panel for Library Urged,' 15 August 1970,p.10.

⁹⁷ R.K.Bhatt, *History and Development of Libraries in India*, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1995.p.97.

decided not bring the Act in force.⁹⁸ Therefore, the National Library continued to function as a subordinate office under the Department of Culture.

Conclusion:

The emergence of National Library symbolises nation's commitment to collecting and preserving of cultural heritage for the benefit of future scholars Juan Osborne fitting remarked on the importance of National Library that it is 'not only regarded as a source of national pride but also as a symbol of nationhood, representing the collective memory of the nation.'⁹⁹

After independence, the Government of India accorded the title of 'National' to the Imperial Library in 1948 to give a national character following the ending of the colonial regime. But, National Library after independence was far from satisfactory. It lacked behind in every aspect inadequate resources, lack of trained library staffs, problems of collecting printed material, preservation and storage etc. To improve these conditions, the Government of India has implemented various measures over the years. As a first and essential step towards the promotion of the National Library in India, the Government of India passed on 21 May 1954 the Delivery of Books (Public libraries) Act 1954 which replaced the Press and Registration Books Act 1867. Under this provision, the publishers were directly responsible for delivering books and periodicals, including government's publication, within a month of their publications.

To improve in the working of the National Library, a Reviewing Committee was formed by Union Ministry of Education and the Committee was headed by eminent educationist and administrative expert, Dr. V. S. Jha as chairman in 1968. The reviewing committee recommended that the advisory council of the library should be replaced by governing council and also to appoint a Director, who should be an ex-officio chairman of the governing council,¹⁰⁰

As discussed, the progress of National Library is still slow as compared to other national libraries. The reason is rooted in the history of the library as pointed out by the Jha Committee in its report. The historical background of the institution had given rise

⁹⁸ *The Times of India*, 'Library Act not to be Implimented,' 15 August 1970,p.10.

⁹⁹Osborne, Joan, *The Educational Role of National Libraries: A case study of Trinidad and Tobago*,2004,Buerno Aires,Argentina,p.1-2

¹⁰⁰ *The Times of India*, 'Governing Panel for Library Urged,' 15 August 1970,p.10.

to certain inherent contradictions in the organization by combining the functions of the National Library and those of public library. There was also the demand for national and local for its services- the later engenders the problems of crowding of the reading room and lending of books and other reading material.¹⁰¹ But National Library functioning as a public library proved to be a major handicap in its function as national library. To remove overlapping of functions, the Government has to clearly lay down the objectives and functions of the national library. Another reason hampering the growth of National Library is the presence of a section lending books for home reading, a feature which does not exist in any National Library in the world. The tradition of lending for home reading had originated from Calcutta Public Library and it continues to exist even after Curzon amalgamated CPL to the Imperial Library in a vestigial manner. To remove this anomaly, the government and the experts' thought of a scheme to set a National Central Library at Delhi and NCL at the apex of the entire library system of the country and convert the present National Library into a Regional Library with two other Regional National Libraries in Madras and Bombay. This scheme was envisaged in the First, Second, and Third Five Year Plans.¹⁰² Many years have passed since the provision was made it is still yet to be implemented. On the same line Ranganathan also advocated for National Central Libraries in his memorandum submitted to the Educational Advisor, Government of India, 'Library Development Plan: A Thirty Year Programme for India.'¹⁰³ The government of India has not taken any systematic measures for the improvement of the National Library for the last many decades as a result the library has been steadily downgrading.

The National Library has been facing severe challenges due to lack of spaces as a result the priceless collections of books and documents including those rare ones are perishing. An inadequate staffs to manage the library adds to its woes. Several government policies for the improvement of the National Library have not been implemented so far. Unless government take intensive participation in the development of the National Library, the National Library will be reduced to nothing but a big public library. Therefore, to improve its overall condition, the introduction of modern technology such as Digitalisation of the library will save a considerable space apart

¹⁰¹ Kumar, Girja, *Library development in India*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1986,p.46.

¹⁰²P. N. Kaula, *the National Library of India: A Critical Study*, Bombay, Somaiya Publications Pvt.Ltd.1970.p.19.

¹⁰³ Ibid.,p.24.

from minimising the involvement of manpower, it was claimed that ‘digitalisation will ease the task involve in managing books, journals, and other forms of data.’¹⁰⁴ In this context, National Knowledge Commission (2005) also suggested that to ‘enable universal equitable access knowledge resources, libraries should be encouraged to create more digital resources by digitizing relevant material in different languages, this can be shared at all levels.’¹⁰⁵ To give the National Library a true national character in its services and functions, it is imperative to promote Information Communication Technology in the library so as to ‘provide wide library access to all and bridge the gap between local, national and global level.’¹⁰⁶ Therefore, to translate all the proposals and recommendations into reality, a regular financial support from the government is necessary as David C. Mearns has put it, ‘No National Library can be greater or perform better services than its financial support allows.’¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Mini K,Joseph, Indian libraries await a tech takeover: Digitalisation is making inroads into the country’s library segment, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Times of India,26 December 2001,p.14.

¹⁰⁵ National Knowledge Commission, Report to the Nation, Government of India, 2007, p.9.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.,p.10.

¹⁰⁷ David C. Mearns Current Trends in National Libraries, in National Libraries (Ed.), Maurice Lines and Joyce Lines, vol.1, ASLIB, London, p.13.

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

The concept of public library in India developed in nineteenth century. It was only after the advent of the European Empire in the sub-continent that public library was first set up in India. Library movement in India is said to have begun with the establishment of the Calcutta Public library in 1835, following the emancipation of the freedom of press by Lord Metcalf. In perpetual memory of Lord Metcalf, the inhabitants of Calcutta decided to erect a public building for the reception of a public library in his honour. According to L. Clarke, 'he knew of no measure which would show the feelings of the inhabitants of European India, which would better show the estimation in which they held the liberty of the press, than by the establishment of a public library.'¹ Clark further remarked that 'if there was any part of the world in which such an institution would be useful in cultivating European ideas, science, and notions it would be in this city.'²

One of the most significant policies under the European Empire was the introduction of western education and its influence through literatures and institutions. This had profound impact on the intellectual, socio and cultural aspect of the Indian society, particularly in Calcutta. Along with education, printing became an important instrument in advancement of reading and writing, and production of books. The introduction of printing mobilised the flow of writing and producing books, which in turn help in the proliferation of libraries and diffusion of knowledge to a wider audience possible. Print also enabled to achieve the purpose and function of the library, which otherwise, would be nothing but a mere store house of knowledge. However, because of the print, duplications of books became possible and helped in the proliferation of libraries in India. This latter paved the way for renaissance in library movement in India. It became easier to produce more books thereby, making the art of reading a widespread habit. As

¹ P.T. Nair, *Origin of National Library: Days of the Calcutta Public Library*; National Library of India, Belvedere, Kolkata, 2004, p.243.

² Ibid.

the number of educated increased, so did the number of readers, and the challenge to publish more books which can be made easily and affordably available to the readers.

Prior to the advent of modern library, libraries were owned or maintained by aristocrats, priestly class, in the palaces of kings, monasteries, temples or at the important learning centre. It was more like storehouses of knowledge and preserved only the written documents. Since ancient times libraries had been an integral part of education system and a dynamic force for the development of the society. Libraries were traditionally a repository of knowledge and information, but over the years they have evolved from a mere storehouse of knowledge to a service institution in modern society, similarly the role of library changed from a custodian of knowledge to the disseminator of knowledge to millions of Indians.³

Before embarking for Calcutta, J.H. Stocqueler had set up General Library in Bombay in 1830. However, after some years, with his departure, the library ceased to exist. Stocqueler came to Calcutta and found that the city was destitute of public library. Inconveniences due to lack of public library was felt by all the inhabitant of Calcutta as a result he took up a similar initiative to establish a library which was successfully launched after persistent attempts, unlike his previous effort. Other than his insistence, there were agencies that made Calcutta conducive for instituting a library. The impetus for the growth of public libraries in Calcutta was fuelled by factors such as the active participation of native intelligentsia, who themselves were English educated, thriving of educational institutions, centre for printing and publishing, and flourishing of book trade market. Some of the developments that took place following the introduction of western education in Calcutta were, the establishment of schools and colleges, setting up of public libraries, printing presses, book trades, literary clubs, that culminated a social class of the creation of a native western educated elite. European motives were to perpetuate their interest by inculcating western values through books and other printed texts. Thus, the first public library was opened in Calcutta on 21st March 1836, and began to prosper within a few years time and it became a landmark in Indian history.

The CPL was also the first modern public library in South Asia, established to supplement the western secular education in India.⁴ Every person subscribing Rs.300 in

³ R.K. Bhatt, *History and Development of Libraries in India*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 2.

⁴ Anup Kumar Das, *Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in Public Library Development in India*, IFLA, Sage, Vol.41(4)370-380, 2015.

one payment or in three payments of Rs.100 each was considered proprietors. Prince Dwarkanath Tagore became first proprietor of the CPL. Initially subscribers were divided into three classes, with different privileges of borrowing books and other library services. To attract more readers to the library, a 4th class was created in 1849 and extent the same privileges enjoyed by 3rd class. However, the formation of 4th class had adverse effect on the other classes due to which it was abolished in 1865. Library Rules were prepared by the Curators, according to Grant, one of the Curators asserts, 'they have been drawn up to meet the convenience of all classes of the community, by no means excepting those young men, natives of this country, who are most meritoriously pursuing their studies and whose means do not afford them opportunities of purchasing books.'⁵

The Calcutta Public Library was the first modern public library opened to all ranks and classes. In fact, Calcutta was not bereft of libraries in 1835, there were many libraries already in existence such as the Asiatic Society, the Bar Library Club, the Calcutta Library Society, and so on but these libraries were not open to the common and native people. They were opened only for the Europeans or its members. Therefore, establishment of CPL was considered a watershed in the history of public libraries in India as it was opened to every person irrespective of class, creed, and religion. The Calcutta Public Library had a considerable influence on the native citizens and it was subsequently reflected in the proliferations of many small libraries in the suburbs and distant moffusil towns of Calcutta in later part of the nineteenth century. It also served itself as a model which was emulated by many libraries founded in the later part. The CPL was a focal centre, providing information and knowledge necessary for the development of scholarship to the local students and educated youth who had left schools or colleges. It served as centre for recreation and a meeting place to discuss for the promotion of education generally and social condition and moral upliftment of the less favoured section of the community. Through the establishment of CPL the process of westernization of education in Bengal was successful. Therefore, the concept of public library as an instrument of mass education was effectively used by the British. Through this, an attempt was made to examine the factors that led to the establishment of the CPL. this in turn lead to the examination of the efforts of the Europeans, their

⁵ *Calcutta Monthly Journal* 1835.

attitude and interest in the establishment of CPL as the main focus. How did the European use the support of native intelligentsia or Bhadraklok to accomplish the objective of the library? Though CPL was established on a democratic principle of universal access, how far does the right to access extend? How did the participation of native intelligentsia influence the institution's ideological development and in determining how that institution should function and be managed? On the face of it, the participation of the native in working of the CPL provided a semblance of involvement and influence but in reality decisions were in the hands of the European. Simple example to show how European manipulated the functioning and working of the library was reflected in the formation of the library committee. The proportion of Indian representing in the committee to European community was disproportionate; it was overwhelmingly dominated by the European members, the discrepancy was questioned by Mr. Turton. Was it nothing that in there should be in the committee who were to draw up rules and regulations, people who were acquainted with the habits and taste of large portion of that community for whose benefits the institution was intended? It had been said that the committee were to be the literary representative of this community, but how can this community be represented by persons who have no knowledge of their want?⁶ Thus, in reality European has the final say in every matter concerning the library.

One of the most important factors that largely contributed to the development of public library particularly in Calcutta was the active participation and support of the educated elite natives. In the Annual Report of the Calcutta Public Library for the year 1847-1848, out of the total of 126 subscribers, 13 were Indians who were well known names of the community of that time. The names were, Baboo Ramanauth Tagore, Baboo Bimolachurn Dey, Baboo Debendranath Tagore, Baboo Ramgopaul Ghose, Baboo Hemnath Roy, Khettro Mohun Chatterjee, Baboo Peary Mohun Chowdry, Baboo Muttyloll Seal, The Rajah Sattuchurn Ghosal Bahadur, The Rajah Pertaubchunder Sing, Baboo Ashutosh Dey, Baboo Prosono Coomar Tagore, Baboo Radha Madhub Banerjee, and Baboo Brojonauth Dhur.⁷ Babu Peary Chand Mittra, the father of Bengali Novel was the Librarian from 1838, and in the same year Babu Doyal Chand Dhar, Babu

⁶ *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, October 1835, pp.277-278.

⁷ *Report of the Calcutta Public Library for 1847 & 1848*, printed by Sanders Cones & Co., 1848, pp. 18-19.

Nabinskissen Ghost, and Babu Shrinath Bose were appointed as the new sub-librarian. In later stages, many more elite natives, such as Rajah Narendra Kumar, Bipin Chandra Pal, Baboos Joy Gopal Sen, Cally Prossonno Dutt, were actively involved in reviving the condition of the CPL.

However, in spite of their overwhelming support to the library, library degenerated rapidly and rendered completely useless to the people and it was left to its ruin till the time Lord Curzon came and rescued it from further deteriorating by amalgamating to the Imperial Library in 1902. These collections of the CPL became the basis on which the Imperial Library was founded. Prior to this, libraries were not free, subscription fees were collected as against the use of books and issue of books for home reading were restricted to those who were in the privileged class and those who really have the pressing needs could not be much benefited from its services. Therefore, public library as instrument of mass education was not fully effective as the application of charging fee restrained a large number of people from the disadvantage background from availing its usefulness. Though, it was established with an object to disseminate knowledge and helped people from the disadvantage background to escape from the limits of poverty but in reality, the facilities were enjoyed only by the wealthy class in the society. Reason such as this was one of the factors responsible for the fall of the CPL which has its obligations to functions as a circulating library for amusement and entertainment for those who contributed towards its funds either as proprietors or as subscribers. Therefore, as a matter of fact, library was obliged to meet the demand of the contributors and at the same perform duties of a public nature without having any extra income to meet the demands.

Thus, this nature of performing dual functions subjected to government criticism and was not eligible for getting government support. Due to which when CPL was faced with pecuniary problems, government declined to extend any kind financial assistance to the deteriorating library unless management was reorganised. However, even after the reorganisation, the condition of the library was not improved. Lacked of maintenance leads to inaccessible to the library, this rendered practically useless to the people, hence, it was finally left to its ruin. Fortunately, Curzon arrived on time as a governor general of India to save the veritable collections that were perishing in the dilapidated CPL. He amalgamated to the Imperial Library founded in 1891 by the

British colonial government by combining a number of secretariat libraries and with collection from different libraries. The newly formed library was formally opened on 1903. The emergence of Imperial Library was an important landmark because for the first time the government of India took upon itself the responsibility to offer library services to the people of India. His object for establishing the Imperial Library was that it should be a library of reference, a working place for students and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which so far as possible, every book written about India at any time can be seen and read.⁸ This library was very useful for students and scholars as many of the collections were built up with source material in different subjects. The Imperial Library was also a pioneer in providing library training in modern India, the first library training was conducted in 1903 when library personnel from Central Hindu College, Banaras, was sent for in-house training at the Imperial library. This paved the way for library education in India.⁹ Curzon's contribution for the growth of library was laudable. There was no General Governor before and after Lord Curzon who had so much concerned for the preservation of matters relating to India and aimed at securing a complete collection of Indian Government publications or to fill the gap for the future use. Curzon's legacy continues to live on even today in the formed of National Library of India.

The Imperial Library was accorded national status after independence in 1948 to give a national character following the end of colonial regime. The emergence of National Library symbolises that nation has come a long way; signalling nation's dedication to collecting and preserving of its cultural heritage. The nucleuses of the National libraries were made up from the collection inherited from the Calcutta Public Library. The National Library of India finds a special mentioned in the constitution of India as an 'institute of national importance.'¹⁰ While opening the National Library to the people in 1953, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, former Educational Minister, hoped that the National Library would continue to expand and would in course of time rival the splendid

⁸ Government of India Finance and commerce Department, Salaries, Establishment, etc., Education, *Home-Public*, No. 267, 1900, p.1.

⁹ Mohammed M. Aman and R.N.Sharma, Development of Library and Information Science Education in South Asia with emphasis on India : Strenght, Problem and Suggestions. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, Vol.46 No.1(Winter, 2005), pp.77-91.

¹⁰ Asim Das Gupta, The National Library of India, in Maurice Lines and Joyce Lines (eds.), *National Libraries: 1977-1985*, vol.2, ASLIB, London, 1987, p.183.

libraries of Europe and America and assured that government of India would spare no effort to achieve this.¹¹ Today, National Library of India is the largest library in India in terms of its collections. But the National Library of India is still functioning as a public library to a limited extent, the tradition which originated from the Calcutta Public library. This inherent anomaly is a great deterrent in carrying out the function of a national library. Unless, this anomaly is rectify and some measures introduce, the National Library will remain a like a big public library.

It can be argued that the massive endeavours undertaken by the European to provide reading materials to foster the habit of reading and to enhance knowledge was not without selfish motives. It was not different from the common agenda of the missionaries' interest of propagating Christianity through education. In a similar manner, the European through the control of reading materials designed to inculcate western values and further their interest. This apprehension was confirmed when one of the curators explained while extending his support to the library that 'the advantages it present to our native fellow subjects cannot be too strongly dwelt upon for it is a peculiar feature, a principal recommendation, that it will aid their enlightenment, and teach them to place a proper estimate on the blessings of European rule. When they do once properly appreciate the advantages resulting from the government, they will be convinced that there is none other under which they could derive the same degree of happiness and prosperity.'¹² Even though this statement speaks volume of their selfish interest among other agendas, it perpetuates their rule by controlling and subjugating the natives that seemed predominant amongst them. Their ambitious plans were to disseminate western values through the reading materials.

The concept of public library in itself is the culture of the Europeans, through which they spread their values and culture which according to them would enlighten the natives. Thus, public libraries became a tool wielded meticulously to disseminate of such knowledge which suits their interest. This expression is found in the remark made by Minchin, that 'the institution of this library, not only so far as the community of Calcutta concerned are but as a society likely to benefit the natives of this country

¹¹ *The Statesman*, 2 February 1953, Delhi, p.1.

¹² *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, October 1835, Asiatic News, pp.277-278.

generally for by extending to them the literatures of England, we induced to cultivate the knowledge of our language, and afford them the means both of improving their literature and their morals.’¹³ The European encouraged specially the students and youth to develop the habit of reading those elegant European literatures and science which were kept in the library. Because reading always inculcates desire in the reader, therefore, through the reading of those books the minds of the native readers could be easily influenced in their thinking and behaviour. The hidden interest of the European was further facilitated by natives for their thirst for European knowledge.

The native proprietors in the quest for acquiring western knowledge of Science and education undermined the importance and value of indigenous knowledge and so negate the value of their own culture when they fervently appealed to the Curators of the CPL, ‘the promotion of the real interests in India and we may add the happiness of the inhabitants mainly depend upon the successful prosecution of those effort which has been made some year past to foster a taste for elegant literature and sound knowledge of the west.’¹⁴ This, for the Curators, was perfect opportune time to fulfil their objective of filling the shelves with the European literatures and science. Later this paved the way for the influx of European books in the library and prompted in setting up of smaller libraries in other parts of the city.

The Europeans, on the other hand, was conscious of the indigenous knowledge, which they knew were immensely valuable because they knew that Indian indigenous scientific knowledge was exceedingly advanced. Therefore, those rare and important manuscripts and other literary sources on subjects pertaining to India were sent away to India office Library and EuropeanMuseum Library, in London for preservation. The exploitation and draining of valuable native knowledge had far reaching repercussion to the future generation of India. Because of such mishaps, today’s scholars have to go to London to consult those books and manuscript for their work. It was a well-calculated move made by the colonisers, which for their benefit was far-sighted and destructive for the Indians in the long run.

¹³ Ibid.p.278.

¹⁴ *Report of Calcutta Public Library for the year1850*, pp. xxv-vi , Appendix

The study shows that the establishment of CPL was instrumental in bringing unequal society to equality by giving equal access to knowledge to those deprived classes. It brings about equalization to access to knowledge to people who were traditionally excluded from becoming literate because of the existence of caste which prevented the common people from reading and gaining knowledge. Reading and access to books were the birth rights of the upper classes. However, introduction of printing enabled to percolate the diffusion of knowledge widely and rapidly to areas which education had never touched. Printing also enabled to achieve the purpose and function of the library which otherwise would have been nothing but a mere store house of knowledge. Because of printing, duplications of books were possible and in turn helped in the proliferation of libraries in India, which acted as leverage for renaissance in library movement in India.

Considering the number of Indians who were western educated and their keenness to read English literature avidly, the establishment of Calcutta Public Library was boon to many of who have no other means of becoming acquainted with European literatures than those afforded by the Calcutta Public Library.¹⁵ Therefore, the nature of the library and the services provided by the Calcutta Public Library had a unique position as the first public library in this part of the country. Such a well-organized library was rare even in Europe during those days. It also served as a model which was emulated by many libraries founded in later period. This library also gave impetus to small libraries such as, Hawrah Institute, Public library at Midnapore, Circulating Library at Wooterpara, Koonagar library, Naval Brigade Library, Outram Institute, and so on by donating duplicate books, periodicals and journals from time to time to cultivate habit of reading.

As a consequence of these developments, public libraries began to grow and flourish not just in the major cities but also in small towns, across the country. Simultaneously, when the European introduced Western education, it became imperative to generate ample of texts for the students. Once this educated young people become professionals, it created a faction in the society who wish to continue reading. The only impediment that thwarted the growth of public library during those years was the scarcity of funding to maintain the libraries. In subsequent years, measures were introduced and decisions

¹⁵ *Report of the Calcutta public library for 1847-1848*, Sanders Cones and Co., 1848, P. xxvii.

taken to address and redress the issues, and to make public libraries an epicentre of dispensing knowledge for every individuals who thirst to read and seek more knowledge.

In the present era of fast expanding knowledge, libraries have taken an unprecedented flight. The increased focus on research in science and technology has led to further dependence on libraries for a wider access of the publications of past and present. Today through these reservoirs of knowledge countries are administered, scientific research is carried out and scientific discoveries are recorded. These are the records, on which civilization rests, and it is with the care and dissemination of knowledge that are preserved that these libraries are concerned.¹⁶

In this information age, libraries are also seen as a means to bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor society. National Library as repository of knowledge and information has the potential to bridge the gap. Libraries exert the 'greatest single educational influence next to schools'¹⁷ in promotion of literacy and dissemination of knowledge. The advantages that ensued from public library benefited especially students belonging to disadvantaged section of the society in improving their intellectual, moral and raise them to lead a dignified life. Thus, libraries have been playing an important role in the preservation and dissemination of knowledge throughout its long history.¹⁸ A library is a source of real knowledge and no education can be regarded as complete in the absence of libraries. A library possesses the key to the world of knowledge. Therefore, in this context, the National Library as a reservoir of national resources plays a key role in the dissemination of knowledge and information across the country. To provide universal access to information it is necessary to incorporate sophisticated modern technology in the library for a wider accessibility and faster delivery of information on time. But lacked of electronic resources and open access retarded the growth of National library. Therefore, it became an unenviable task of the National Library to modernize the library in line of modern day technical know- how of the world.

¹⁶ Raymond, Irwin, *The Heritage of the English Library*, London. George Allen & Unwin LTD., 1964,p.17.

¹⁷ W.J.Murrison, *The Public Library: Its Origins, Purpose and Significance*, London, George Harrap & CO.1971,p.155.

¹⁸ Margaret, Adolphus, *Focus on Indian Libraries*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.p.1.

The journey of CPL, how it was established and where it stands today, is a phenomena that requires not only reading, but a thorough investigation through field visits. It becomes even more relevant in contemporary times as one probe into the early history of the library and look at its objectives and contributions to the generations then, and even now. The CPL has seen its last days before it was remodelled into what we know today as the National Library of India. Presently, the operation and function of the National Library stands firm on the same ground as that of the CPL, perhaps with necessary innovations according to the needs of times.

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for it is a peculiar feature, a principal recommendation, that it will aid their enlightenment, and teach them to place a proper estimate on the blessings of British rule. When they do once properly appreciate the advantages resulting from that Government, they will be convinced that there is none other under which they could derive the same degree of happiness and prosperity. I for one would rather the British rule should cease in this country if it can only continue by means other than the affection of the people; but I am convinced that rule only requires to be known to be appreciated. Let but knowledge find its way to the minds of the natives of this country, and they will require no other proof of the superiority of the present Government to the Mahomedan one that preceded it. This is one of my motives for supporting this proposal, and fortunately, the proposers intend that it shall be a library of circulation, hereby extending its benefits, and making it more deserving of our support. Mr. Pattle concluded by moving the following resolution:—

Resolved,—That a Provisional Committee be appointed to consider of the best means of accomplishing the objects stated in the first Resolution—to frame a set of Rules and Regulations for the management and use of the Library, and the conduct generally of its affairs, and to report the same, together with their opinion, to a subsequent meeting, to be called by public advertisement in the newspapers by the Committee as soon as they shall be prepared with the report.

Rev. Mr. DEALTRY said, the resolution had his most hearty concurrence, and in seconding it he was convinced he was humbly but earnestly contributing towards the means of circulating knowledge not only through this city but through this great empire.

Sir J. P. GRANT then moved the first resolution from the chair and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. PLOWDEN briefly proposed the third resolution, which was seconded by Mr. James Kyd, and adopted by the meeting. It is as follows:—

Resolved,—That the Committee be empowered to apply for the temporary use of apartments in the Town Hall, and in case these cannot be obtained, then to hire apartments for the reception of the books in an airy and central situation, upon as reasonable terms as dry and elevated apartments can be procured for; and to purchase suitable book shelves and furniture of a plain and not costly description. Further, that the Committee be empowered to engage such persons as may be necessary to take charge of the books, rooms and furniture; and to make catalogues, keep accounts and copy correspondence, and generally to assist them in the duties they undertake, a strict regard being paid to economy, to the state of the funds and amount of the subscription.

Before the resolution was put from the chair, Mr. Kyd took the opportunity to mention, that he had just received a letter from Dr. Stroug, of which the following is an extract:—

"The Rev. Dr. Marshman is now at my house and will attend the meeting. He says he is willing should it be thought desirable, to be one of a Committee for the object of arranging the matter,—you are aware how valuable a man he would be. He does not like to propose the thing himself, but has sanctioned me to write as much to you. I had intended being myself at the meeting but my complaint does not allow me. Will you kindly put his name down for any sum that you may subscribe yourself, and if I had been there and an opportunity had offered I meant to have offered the lower part of my house for any books that might accumulate until a proper place was ready for them: you may, if you please, make the offer for me. There is a separate entrance and the rooms are, high, airy and large."

Dr. MARSHMAN stated to the meeting that the apartments offered by Dr. Stroug were in his opinion admirably adapted for the purpose. But, as will be seen, the matter was left to the committee, and a suitable acknowledgment given to Dr. Stroug for his kindness. The resolution was then put from the chair and carried.

Mr. W. P. GRANT.—The resolution which I have to propose, is merely one of detail, and does not occasion a necessity for detaining the meeting with any lengthy remarks. I shall, therefore, briefly express my hearty

concurrence with a plan which goes to establish a library on an extensive plan; not of books for reference only, but of books for circulation also. In Calcutta, where almost every man is engaged in business, to make the library one for reference only, would be circumscribing its utility; indeed it would render it almost useless, for under those circumstances the books are the more required for perusal at home. The following is the resolution, which I hope may meet with as much approbation as those that have preceded it:—

Resolved,—That it be recommended to the Provisional Committee to enquire in to the means of procuring books in Calcutta, which may serve as a foundation to commence upon; and to make application to the Government for such assistance in this respect as the Committee shall judge proper in the name of the subscribers. And that the Committee be empowered to receive subscriptions, and such donations of books, as the patrons of the institution may be disposed to make to it, the result of such enquiry and application and the amount of such subscriptions and donations to be in their report.

Mr. Grant, in conclusion, drew the attention of the meeting to the libraries in Edinburgh, where, he said, there are no less than three accessible to strangers, viz. that for the Faculty of Advocates, for the Writers of the Signet, and the College Library. These, said Mr. Grant, are perfectly at the disposal of persons by they residing in Edinburgh, or by they only sojourners there for a week or a fortnight, and many persons, in the latter case, who, perhaps, had entered the city with a single volume in their portmanteau, could declare the degree of pleasure experienced by them in consequence of this facility.

Mr. A. ROOSENS briefly seconded the resolution.

Mr. G. T. SPENCER here suggested that there ought to be a call on the friends of the library to send in the names of such books of reference as might be obtainable in Calcutta. Mr. Rogers thought details ought to be left to the committee, and the meeting coincided with the latter gentleman. The resolution was then put and carried.

Mr. MINCHIN, after a few prefatory remarks, moved the following resolution.

Resolved,—That the Provisional Committee, or such of their number as they shall appoint, in writing, for this purpose, be at liberty to draw from the Treasurer, from time to time, such sums as may be necessary for current expenses, not exceeding the amount in his hands, and to call upon the Treasurer, from time to time, for an account of receipts and disbursements.

At hail, said Mr. Minchin, the institution of this library, not only so far as the community of Calcutta concerned are but as a society likely to benefit the natives of this country generally. For by extending to them the literature of England, we induce them to cultivate the knowledge of our language, and afford them the means both of improving their literature and their morals. K.

Colonel DUNLOP second the resolution, which was put from the chair and carried without opposition.

Mr. H. TORRENS proposed the sixth resolution, being merely for the formation of a Provisional Committee and which with subsequent alterations stood as follows:—the names in italics being added to the original motion:—

Resolved,—That the following gentlemen be requested to form the Provisional Committee:—

Sir Edward Ryan.	Mr. W. P. Grant.
Sir J. P. Grant.	The Rev. Dr. St Leger.
Mr. W. H. Macnaghten.	Mr James Kyd.
Mr. C. W. Smith.	Capt. D. L. Richardson.
Colonel Dunlop.	Capt. Thomson.
The Rev. H. Fisher.	Mr. James Prinsep.
Mr. Dickens.	Mr. W. M. Woodlston.
Dr. Ranken.	Mr. Wale Byrn.
The Rev. James Charles.	Mr. Scott Thomson.
Mr. J. C. Marshman.	Mr. B. Harding.
Mr. John Bell.	Mr. Carey.
Museekrishen Mullick.	Russobandy Dutt.

The number of names on the list, Mr. Torrens observed, might appear unwarranted, but they were to be divided into sub-committees of four or five, each sub-committee taking different sections. As to the gentlemen themselves

he need not enter into any panegyric because the simple utterance of each name conveyed its own panegyric.

Mr. LARRU seconded the resolution, and did so with greater pleasure, because it contained the names of gentlemen whose experience and attachment to literature and science would secure for their constituents the most important services, and enable each particular section to have its own representative, in this, as it might be considered, congress of the republic of letters—gentlemen who are acquainted, and familiar with each section, and from whom we may hope that the institution will derive the most beneficial results. The term "provisional" had been adopted to distinguish it from the other committee whose duty it would be to propose rules, fill up details; and though last not least, to purchase books, collect subscriptions, and organize the construction of the library. The united efforts of these gentlemen he, Mr. Leith, felt confident would raise a structure which would merit the support of the whole community.

Mr. PATTLE said, the gentleman who has just sat down has spoken of a committee intended to represent the different classes of society, but he, Mr. Pattle, observed that in the formation of the committee, the mercantile class appears to be wholly unnoticed. Perhaps this had arisen from a conjecture that mercantile gentlemen had not time to attend to the details, but still, as there was to be a sub-committee, he thought the meeting ought not to omit a compliment to gentlemen of so much importance. He would, therefore, propose, that the names of Mr. Carr and Mr. Harding be added to the number. As to their distinguished chairman, he was sure the meeting were aware of the deep interest Sir John Grant took in the proposed institution; there was no one more anxious, no one more able to further their views, and he trusted that the meeting would not allow him to depart from this hall, without requesting permission to place him on the committee.

Sir JOHN GRANT was fully sensible of the very flattering proposal, but would rather decline the honor; not from any disinclination to the office, but from a dislike to take upon himself duties to which he had not sufficient time to attend. If the meeting were of opinion that the duties were not so arduous but that he had leisure to attend to them, he would bow to their decision, premising, however, that it must not be considered as a compliment. No one was more able to bestow a compliment than his friend Mr. Pattle, but the making choice of a committee was a matter of business of which compliment should form no part; and rich as they were in names on the committee, they could not afford to have one inactive member.

Mr. TURTON entirely concurred with Sir John Grant, and would put matters of compliment out of the question. But notwithstanding the number of the committee, he would propose that it should be increased by the addition of Mr. R. S. Thomson, a gentleman with whom he, Mr. Turton, had the pleasure of acting on one committee, and to whose usefulness and ability he could give ample testimony.

Mr. SINAES admitted the correctness of the remarks made by Mr. Turton, but regretted that amongst the gentlemen whose names were contained in the resolution proposed by Mr. Turton, there was only one who could be said to represent the class to which he, Mr. Sinaes, belonged. He thought the committee ought to be more general and under this impression he begged to suggest that the names of Mr. Woollaston, and Mr. Wale Byrn be added to the number.

Mr. P. S. D'ROZARIO and Mr. CROW rose at the same time and seconded this proposition. The latter said, he could scarcely hope that the resolution would meet with success, for he perceived that the feeling of the meeting was decidedly against it, (cries of no, no.) He would however do his duty, and offer a few remarks in support of the two gentlemen named by Mr. Sinaes, with both of whom he, Mr. Crow, was personally acquainted. He believed there was an impression on the mind of several gentlemen who had taken an active part in these proceedings, that the number on the list of the committee was already too great, but he thought otherwise, and begged of the meeting to consider whether the large number was not a circumstance in favor of Mr. Sinaes's proposition.

The proposition which the East Indian bore to the European community, would point out that one East Indian was not a fair number to represent that class; and therefore he would submit for the favourable consideration of the meeting the proposition of Mr. Sinaes.

Mr. R. S. THOMSON was sensible of the honor it was proposed to confer on him, and deeply indebted for the flattering compliment from Mr. Turton, but he would rather decline the honor, and for this reason—he believed the list of the committee, as it stood originally, was calculated to impart confidence to every friend of the proposed institution, and its enlargement might destroy that feeling. However if the meeting were of opinion that he could be of any service to the committee, he would cheerfully accede to their request.

Mr. A. ROGERS supported the original resolution, and reminded the meeting that it was a classification of books, and not a classification of persons to which they had to attend.

Mr. L. FRASER spoke in favor of the original resolution, and urged that if it were departed from, the native community which stands in proportion of three hundred to one to the East Indian, had also a claim to be represented in the committee; so had the Jews, the Parsees, and indeed every other section of this diversified community.

Mr. PATTLE suggested that the question should be referred to the committee, who no doubt would receive it with becoming attention; and he trusted that the proposer had that confidence in the committee which would induce him to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. CROW would again beg to be heard before the amendment was put from the chair. He was ready to grant that the proportion of Natives to East Indians, was more than three hundred to one; but it was not the mass of the people that ought to be taken into consideration. Those who were likely to appreciate the proposed institution and to benefit by it in either class should alone be taken into consideration, and then he was sure that the proportion would not be so great as it otherwise appeared to be. The question of qualification, he thought, was one of a very delicate description, particularly when a comparison had to be instituted. He would, therefore, not enter upon it in detail. However he might observe that the names proposed by Mr. Sinaes were of gentlemen who stood high in the opinion of the East Indian community and in the opinion of those who knew them for the performance of duties that were likely to devolve on them as members of the committee. He said it was not only those who would devote their time, but also those who had influence in the class to which they belonged who ought to be selected; and for that purpose, those who were connected with public institutions, and known as the promoters of public and liberal measures, were most likely to benefit such an institution as was now proposed. On the contrary, those who led a secluded life, it was not likely would be so successful in that respect. With these considerations, he begged to press the proposal of Mr. Sinaes on the attention of the meeting.

Mr. TURTON was anxious to state the grounds on which he supported the amendment. He thought there was a great deal in what had been advanced by Mr. Crow, not only with regard to the literary qualifications of the gentlemen alluded to, but for other reasons. Was it nothing, that there should be on a committee who were to draw up rules and regulations, persons who are acquainted with the habits and taste of a large portion of that community for whose benefit the institution was intended? It had been said that the committee were to be the literary representatives of this community, but how can this community be represented by persons who have no knowledge of their wants? As to the number of the committee it mattered little, since there was to be a sub-division, which would enable them to divide their labours, whether there were twenty-one or twenty-four, or any other reasonable number; and as there was but one native on the committee, he thought if he had a coadjutor it would greatly increase his efficiency. Therefore, he would prefer the committee to be unlimited and he would propose that Baboo Russomoy Dutt be added to the number.

Mr. J. R. COLVIN begged to add his testimony of the utility of Mr. Woollaston. No man, said Mr. Colvin

is capable of giving more solid information to the committee, or will be a more useful member of it.

Mr. SINHA's amendment was then put, and carried by a large majority. The amendment is embodied in the resolution above.

Mr. TURTON.—When his friends prepared the resolution, he believed that they must have had Mr. Pattie's opinion before them as to the propriety of short speeches, for they had assigned to him the driest resolution in the whole lot. It was one merely relating to finance. However, though he, Mr. Turton, did not excel as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would endeavour to explain the principle on which it was proposed the institution should be founded. Mr. Turton then explained the substance of the resolution, which, with an alteration suggested by Mr. Greenlaw, stands as follows :—

Resolved.—That the property of the Library be vested in trustees for the benefit and use of shareholders, and that the following payments do constitute persons proprietors and subscribers.

PROPRIETORS.—Every person subscribing 300 rupees in one payment, or in three payments of 100 rupees each—100 rupees being paid down, and the remaining instalments at intervals of six and twelve months, to be considered proprietors.

The shares of original proprietors subscribing within the period of one twelve-month, to be transferable on such fine or conditions as the Provisional Committee shall determine. The question of transfer of future shares to be left open to the Committee.

SUBSCRIBERS.—The subscription to the Library to be as follows :

1st Class.—Entrance 20 rupees, and 6 rupees per mensem, for every month subsequent to the first. Such subscribers of 2 years standing, or upwards, to be entitled to become shareholders, by an additional payment of 200 rupees.

2d Class.—Entrance 16 rupees, and 4 rupees per mensem, for every month subsequent to the first. Subscribers of this class of 4 years standing to be entitled to become shareholders by an additional payment of 200 rupees.

3rd Class.—No entrance. A subscription of 2 rupees per mensem payable from the commencement of the first month.

Donors of books and others, on the recommendation of the committee, may be nominated honorary members by a general meeting of proprietors.

No books to be taken out of the Library, without a deposit being made; the amount to be regulated by a committee to be appointed annually by the proprietors out of their own body in such manner as shall be hereafter decided.

No books or periodicals to be taken out of the Library, until they shall have lain ten days upon the table; after which period proprietors or subscribers of the 1st and 2d classes, will have the privilege of taking them out and reading them in circulation, preference being given to the proprietors and subscribers of the 1st class who may apply within a month after the arrival or purchase of such books.

All books to be delivered out in the order of application, subject to the above preference.

No other class to be permitted to take any books out of the Library without the permission in writing of the Annual Committee.

Mr. TURTON continued. He thought he had in his eye some trifling opposition to this resolution, for ruin had been predicted to the institution, if they were to adopt the first part of it. But he could not foresee the ruin that others apprehended; on the contrary, he thought that the plan was admirably adapted to give permanence to the library. The part of the resolution which it was said would have a ruinous effect, was that which proposed persons subscribing Rs. 300 should become proprietors. He thought no injurious consequences would ensue from this, and he would inform the meeting why he thought so. In four years, subscribers of the first class, at six rupees per month, would pay Rs. 300, and

he put it to the meeting whether it was not a very good compromise to obtain 300 Rs. immediately available for the purposes of the library, by making those who pay three years in advance free of all subscriptions afterwards. Taking into consideration who were likely to become subscribers, he did not think that the average time each individual would remain in Calcutta, would be more than four years, and possibly, of these the majority would become proprietors not so much with a desire to benefit themselves as to benefit the library. Taking the number of proprietors to be 100, this would raise a fund of Rs. 30,000 to commence with. Without funds there could not be a library; and though this might not be the best plan, he was quite satisfied that it was the best plan that had been as yet proposed.

Mr. PATTIE here suggested that donors of books that may be thought by the committee Rs. 300 in value ought to be considered subscribers.

Mr. TURTON said, that point had not escaped the attention of the framers of the resolutions, but it must be borne in mind that a great number may wish to become proprietors on those terms. It was a consideration, he thought, that ought to be left entirely to the committee, for it could not be supposed that they would be so indifferent to the interests of the institution, that if they thought the proposal adapted to advance it, they would not propose its adoption.

Mr. W. P. GRANT said, it was a great object with the committee to raise a sufficient fund to purchase books in England.

Mr. H. M. PARKER thought that books to the value of Rs. 300 was too small an amount to entitle persons to become proprietors, he would rather it should be fixed at Rs. 1,000.

Mr. PATTIE reminded the meeting that there were many scarce and valuable books in this country which were out of print, and could not be obtained in England. But after some further conversation, the suggestion was left to the committee.

Mr. L. CLARKE said his friend Mr. Turton was correct when he anticipated opposition to the resolution just proposed. He, Mr. Clarke, had been one of the party who had met on a previous day to consider the resolution preparatory to this meeting, and he had declined to propose that resolution which his friend Mr. Turton had just moved, because he thought it was not founded on calculation, and that it defined roles which it were better at present to leave for more mature consideration in committee. He thought it would be necessary for the committee, before they come to the result contained in the resolution, to have a calculation as to the expenses of establishment, binding of books, stationery, and then the amount of surplus which might be applied to the purchase of periodicals, for without these there could be no library. This, in his opinion, ought to be the duty of the committee, before any such propositions as those contained in the resolution were brought forward, and he, Mr. Clarke, was quite certain, that if the minimum of that surplus was not the base for the committee to go on, it would lead the society into great difficulties. He knew the resolution had been formed without any calculation whatever. In fact, it originated with himself, for it was him from whom the idea fell at the preparatory meeting regarding shareholders, and he was quite sure it was a crude proposition without the slightest calculation for a base. For this reason he opposed the resolution. He contended that it would be fatal to the interests of the institution, and ought not to be adopted unless after mature consideration. But the rules were decidedly bad, for his friend proposed that on the payment of Rs. 300, a proprietor should be free from all subscription for ever, whereas, the subscription of a subscriber of the second class in four years, would amount to more than that sum. Here then by the payment of Rs. 300 a proprietor not only escapes all future payment but his heirs and assigns also. (Mr. Turton expressed his dissent from the statement.) Well, said Mr. Clarke, we shall see about that presently. A proprietor may transfer his share to whom he chooses by the payment of a fine of Rs. 100; thus he has all the privileges of a proprietor for four years by the payment not of Rs. 300, but of Rs. 200, and he would appeal to many persons now near

him, if a similar scheme for a proprietary had not ruined the Chowringhee Theatre, where an enormous debt was entirely occasioned by giving the benefit of the theatre without requiring the proprietors to pay any thing, and thus while the public paid eight rupees for an admission by purchasing a share, admittance was obtained at the rate of one rupee one anna for each performance. It was this very same principle his friend was now advising the meeting to adopt,—allowing the proprietors to have the benefit of the institution at too cheap a rate. There were other parts of the resolution which he, Mr. Clarke, objected to, but this he thought would be sufficient to induce the meeting to refer details to the committee, whose object ought not to be to make a great beginning to come to a poor end. But he, Mr. Clarke, had doubts as to the prudence in making it a share Library at all. He thought it ought to be a Public Library to remain here for ever, or if it were necessary to provide in the trust deed for its distribution, it might be so arranged that in the event of a distribution being necessary, the books should be given to Bishop's College, the Asiatic Society's Library, or the Martiniere. He called on the public not to make a share Library but a public Library. Let the friends of such an institution actively solicit support, and he had no doubt but that Rs 15,000 might be immediately raised for the purpose. He would not, however, come forward with a proposition to that effect at present, but merely propose an amendment as follows:—

“That it be referred to a section of the Provisional Committee, consisting of Messrs. Bell, W. P. Grant and James P. Finsep, to prepare a draft of a Trust Deed for the constitution of the society and to prepare the rates of subscription and admission.”

Mr. PLOWDEN seconded the amendment. He declared that previous to entering the room he had entertained a very different opinion, but Mr. Clarke's eloquence had convinced him that the Library ought to be strictly a public one.

Mr. TURTON begged leave to say a few words on this part of the subject, for Mr. Clarke's eloquence had not satisfied him that he was wrong, and if he was not greatly mistaken Mr. Clarke had but recently entertained these opinions. But possibly Mr. Clarke's mental eloquence may have had the same effect on Mr. Clarke himself as his oral eloquence had had on Mr. Plowden. He, Mr. Turton, happened to have a different opinion and was not quite so sanguine of raising Rs 15,000 as Mr. Clarke, for he thought that the public,—and he was sure he might place himself amongst the number,—did not like to advance their money, in entire ignorance of the benefit to accrue from the gift. He for one would not countenance an object by giving his money to a crude undertaking, in which a committee who had been agitating the subject for two months were to come before a general meeting without a plan. In fact, he was not so willing, like his friend Mr. Plowden, as it was vulgarly said, to buy a pig in a poke. He was perfectly satisfied that the plan must precede the subscription, and that if the subject were referred to a committee of twenty-four, there would not be less than a dozen plans brought forward by as many members of the committee at the next general meeting.

Considerable discussion followed, in which Mr. Clarke, Mr. W. P. Grant, Mr. Plowden, Mr. Greenlaw, and Mr. James Sutherland took part. At the suggestion of Mr. Dobbs, the amendment was remodelled, and stood as we have given it above. Mr. Torrens spoke in favor of the amendment, and Mr. Leith opposed it.

Mr. TURTON would use his right of having the last word by asking Mr. Greenlaw what he meant by saying that the Library would not be a public one, for was it not as public when vested in proprietors as when vested in the public? But was the latter the most desirable plan to be adopted? Let the meeting look to the Bombay theatre and to the Ochterlony Monument. As to the former, the public in 1763 determined to build a place of amusement at Bombay, and Government gave a piece of ground for the purpose. There were no proprietors, no one to look after the interests of the building. Time passed on, a large debt accumulated, and at last, when it was discovered that the building could neither be sold

nor mortgaged, Government took it under their charge, and appropriated it for a public office. As to the Ochterlony monument the evil of a want of proprietary was too apparent to require comment, and in God's name, gentlemen, said Mr. Turton, if you desire to avoid a similar neglect, vest your Library in those who will not be inattentive to their own interests. The amendment was then put and negatived.

Mr. GREENLAW then proposed another amendment, taking away the right of transfer from proprietors, but this after some further discussion was withdrawn, Mr. Turton limiting that right to proprietors who should become so during the first twelve months. The original motion, thus amended, was then put from the chair and adopted by the meeting.

The following resolutions were then put and carried without discussion:—

Moved by Mr. Sutherland, seconded by Russicklal Mullick.

Resolved,—That the Annual Committee be at liberty to issue tickets to poor students and others for temporary admission to the Library under such regulations as they may think fit.

Moved by Mr. Stocqueler, in the absence of Sir C. D'Oyly, seconded by Dwarkanauth Tagore.

Resolved,—That the foregoing resolutions relating to entrance subscriptions and privileges be considered only as a general outline, subject to such modifications as may be recommended by the Committee now appointed and adopted by a General Meeting to be called by the Committee.

Moved by Mr. Holroyd, seconded by Baboo Russomoy Dutt.

Resolved,—That the Union Bank be the Treasurer to the Institution.

Moved by Mr. H. Torrens, seconded by Captain D. L. Richardson.

Resolved,—That Mr. J. H. Stocqueler be requested to officiate as Honorary Secretary to the Institution.

Moved by Mr. Sutherland, seconded by ———.

Resolved,—That the thanks of the Meeting be conveyed to Dr. Strong for his liberal offer of rooms in his house for the temporary use of the Library.

Mr. STOCQUELER then rose to move what he believed would really be the last resolution. Previous to doing so, however, he begged to say a few words for himself. He begged to return his best thanks to Mr. Torrens for proposing that he should fill the office of Secretary to the Provisional Committee, and to the meeting for the manner in which the proposal had been received. He only hoped that such assistance as he might be able to afford the Committee in the prosecution of their labors would not be found altogether unavailing. Much had been kindly said about his claims to the merits of having originated the proposition for the formation of a Public Library. He believed that he had no just claim to any such merit. Indeed it was a reproach to the city to say that such a scheme was original. The project, it appears, had been brought forward before and failed, and it was merely his, Mr. Stocqueler's, good fortune to have revived it at a time when society better understood its true interests, and when the rights of men were more readily recognized and better appreciated. He would now move that Sir J. P. Grant do leave the chair.

Sir J. P. GRANT in rising said, he could not vacate the chair without expressing how much the public were indebted to Mr. Stocqueler for his exertions. He was quite sure that without his energy and perseverance there would have been no meeting to day.

Thanks were then unanimously voted to the chair, and the meeting separated.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

The following Resolutions, passed at a Meeting of the General Committee, on the 3d September, are published for general information:—

1st. *Resolved*,—That Mr. William Carr, Mr. John Bell, and Mr. James Kyd, do turn themselves into a

Sub-Committee, to consider whether the shares of future Proprietors or Shareholders in the Public Library shall be transferable, and, if so, upon what conditions; and also to settle the rates of entrance and subscription, as mentioned in the Seventh Resolution of the General Meeting.

2d. *Resolved*.—That the following gentlemen do form a Sub-Committee to consider and report upon the description of books, necessary, in the first instance, to be procured, and the probable expense of the same, including Periodical Works, and to carry into effect the several matters contained in the Fourth Resolution of the General Meeting:—

Sir Edward Ryan.	Capt. D. L. Richardson.
Revd. James Charles.	Mr. T. Dickens.
Mr. James Prinsep.	Mr. W. P. Grant.
Mr. Woollaston.	Revd. Dr. St. Ledger.

3d. *Resolved*.—That the following gentlemen do form themselves into a Sub-Committee, to determine what place shall be engaged for the reception of the Library; for the purchase of Book Shelves and Furniture of every necessary description; and to apply, if necessary, for apartments in the town Hall, or the centre apartments of the College; and likewise attend to all other matters mentioned in the Third Resolution of the General Meeting:—

Sir J. P. Grant.	Mr. C. W. Smith.
Captain Thomson.	Russomoy Dutt.
Mr. R. Scott Thomson.	Mr. Wale Byrn.

4th. *Resolved*.—That the property of the Library be vested in Trustees for the benefit and use of shareholders,

and that every person subscribing within the period of one twelvemonth from the 31st August last, to the amount of three hundred rupees, to be paid in one payment, or in three payments of one hundred rupees each,—one hundred rupees being paid down, and the remaining instalments at intervals of six and twelve months, be considered a shareholder.

5th. *Resolved*.—That all payments on account of shares, or instalments of shares, be made to the Union Bank, to the credit of the four following gentlemen, as Provisional Trustees for the Calcutta Public Library:—

Sir Edward Ryan.	Sir J. P. Grant.
Mr. C. W. Smith.	Colonel Dunlop.

6th. *Resolved*.—That the Secretary do circulate books for the reception of the names of persons desirous of becoming shareholders, inserting the foregoing Resolutions in a fly leaf in each book.

7th. *Resolved*.—That the Sub-Committee do communicate with each other, and also with the Chairman, and with the Secretary, who will call a General Meeting of the Committee, at four o'clock, P. M. on such days as the Chairman may determine upon.

8th. *Resolved*.—That Sir Edward Ryan be permanent Chairman.

9th. *Resolved*.—That the foregoing Resolutions be published.

(Signed) E. RYAN, Chairman.

By order of the Committee,

J. H. STOCQUER, *Honorary Secretary*.
Englishman.]

Appendix II

[335]

CALCUTTA PUBLIC LIBRARY MEETING.

1835, DEC, CMJ —

Resolutions adopted at a general meeting held at the Town Hall on the 31st August, 1835.

"That it is expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a Public Library of Reference and Circulation, that shall be open to all ranks and classes without distinction, and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature."

"That a Provisional Committee be appointed to consider of the best means of accomplishing the objects stated in the first Resolution—to frame a set of Rules and Regulations for the management and use of the Library, and the conduct generally of its affairs, and to report the same, together with their opinion, to a subsequent meeting to be called by public advertisement in the newspapers by the Committee as soon as they shall be prepared with the report."

The Provisional Committee appointed by the second of the foregoing resolutions, having considered the various matters referred to them, have in pursuance of the directions given to them, called together a public meeting at the Town Hall, for Saturday the 31st October, at which meeting they will present the following

REPORT.

In answer to an application for the temporary use of apartments in the Town Hall, the Town Hall committee obligingly assigned a room to the library, but the situation of Dr. Strong's house and the extent of the apartments which he has kindly consented to appropriate to the use of the library, induce the Committee to recommend that his offer be accepted.

The Committee have obtained estimates of the probable cost of book-shelves and such other furniture as appear to them immediately necessary to be procured for the use of the library, and they recommend, as the result of their enquiries, that the sum of Sixty Rs. 1,000 be applied to these purposes. In the meanwhile the Secretary has kindly offered the use of his own book-shelves, of which the Committee have gladly availed themselves.

The subject of the *Establishment* necessary for doing the duties and taking charge of the books and other things enumerated in the 3d resolution of the public meeting, has engaged the particular attention of the Committee, and they recommend that a Librarian be appointed on such a salary as will secure the continual and exclusive services of a competent person, and they have ascertained by inquiry that such a person would cheerfully undertake these duties for a salary of Rs. 200 by the month.

The Committee recommend also that, for the purpose of insuring attendance at the Library from an early hour in the morning until a late hour at night, two Under-Librarians be appointed; and they think it would be satisfactory to those who will resort to the Library if one were an East Indian and the other a Hindoo. The Committee are satisfied that highly respectable and well qualified young men of these classes will readily give their services for Rs. 50 each by the month.

The Committee recommend that the rest of the establishment should consist of

A Steward at Rs.	10	by the month.
Two Dhuffies, ..	12	" "
A Beporter,	5	" "
A Porter,	5	" "
A Druggist,	5	" "

Rs. 43.

making a total for the establishment of servants, including Librarians, Rs. 343 monthly.

The Committee, in the month of September, applied to Government to allow under such rules as it might approve of, the Subscribers to the Public Library to enjoy the use of the books belonging to Fort William College, understanding that a large part of these consists of Oriental works which the Asiatic Society are desirous of procuring, and are likely to apply for, the Committee restricted their application to those books which do not relate to the particular objects of that Society's care; and they have received a communication from the Secretary to Government, announcing generally, that Government is disposed to comply with their application and to place, under the care of a Committee, the works

in European languages belonging to the College Library.

Regarding any reservation which Government may think it right to make of works required for the public service, and regarding the rule under which the use of the books will be allowed, the Committee are informed that a further communication will be made.

The printed catalogue of these books gives a list of 1,912 works: of these 190, at most, may be deemed to come under the description of those which the Asiatic Society may lay claim to, leaving 1,722 works of which the subscribers to the Calcutta Public Library are likely to enjoy the use. The Public Library had also at the time the list was sent to the Committee, received donations of 337 works comprising 1,356 volumes and about 150 volumes have been received since. Taking the proportion of volumes to works given by the books presented to the Library, and applying it to the 1,772 works lent it by Government, the collection of books at starting would consist of about 5,000 volumes from Government, 1,500 volumes of donations; together 6,500 volumes, which the Committee have reason to believe is a larger number than is to be found in the Cape Library.

However, a very large proportion, perhaps five-sixths, of the Cape Library consists of works published in the present century. In all works of this modern date, the Library of which the subscribers may now have the use is very deficient, as it is also in older works in the particular departments of

Poetry and the Drama.	Biography.
Prose Works of Imagination.	Politics.
Miscellaneous Works.	Jurisprudence.
History.	Science and the Arts.

There is a very good foundation of a Library in the departments of Works of Philosophers, and Philology, that is Grammars and Dictionaries, a fair foundation of Classic and Italian works, hardly any French, and no German.

The Committee in giving the result of their investigation of the books available as a nucleus of a Public Library, have no wish to depreciate the value of these books, on the contrary they wish to state it as their opinion that few collections of the same extent would be found to contain so many useful books, and so few which any makers of a Library would be disposed to reject, as that belonging to a Fort William College. But they think it right to point out the deficiencies which occur to them; not in any hope that sufficient funds can be obtained at once to supply them all, but to show that, in addition to the important assistance already afforded by public and private liberality, a large sum of money, and great attention in laying it out are necessary in order to provide a library sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community of Calcutta in every department of literature.

The Committee are of opinion that a sum of not less than Rs. 20,000 should be placed at the disposal of a Committee, for the purpose of purchasing such standard works as they may think advisable, in addition to those now available to the Subscribers, in order to supply the deficiencies, herein before mentioned, in those departments of literature which are most likely to be appreciated by the Subscribers generally.

In addition to this sum Rs. 1,000 are recommended to be laid out in book-cases and furniture.

And your Committee recommend that Rs. 9,000 more be placed at the disposal of a Committee for the purpose of procuring in the first place one set of the most approved periodical publications which shall not be allowed to circulate among the Subscribers, and of laying out, at their discretion, the balance in purchases of periodical and other popular literature for circulation.

The Committee are of opinion that the above sums, amounting together to Rs. 30,000, are necessary to be provided in the first instance, to cover the expenses

attendants on forming such a Library as the public Meeting of the 31st August appear to have contemplated; and, with this sum judiciously laid out, they think a Library might be formed so generally useful as to ensure a large number of monthly Subscribers, and enable the Committee on whom the management might devolve, to lay out a large portion of the periodical receipt in the purchase of new and popular works.

With regard to the means of procuring books in Calcutta, there appear to be occasional opportunities here of purchasing valuable and useful standard works, and the Committee think it would be useful to keep a part of the Library funds so as to be available for such opportunities when they occur. But the Committee are of opinion that in a Public Library the procuring quickly, at the fair market rate, works which are found wanting, should be more attended to than the waiting for casual opportunities of supplying desiderata at a lower rate. And they are also of opinion that the best library will be formed at the least cost, when scrupulous attention is paid to the choice of books purchased and ordinary prudence employed in buying them.

The number of subscribers of Rs 300 each who have already come forward is 55, and about Rs 500 more has been subscribed in donations, making in all a capital of Rs 17,000.

The Committee have thought it right, in this state of the funds, which prevents the plan they have suggested from being immediately acted upon to call a public Meeting and lay before them their views upon the subject, before proceeding to consider that part of the matters referred to them which regard the formations of rules for the use of the Library. If the meeting should be of opinion that the projected institution should be set on foot, the committee recommend that the management of the Library be committed to a small committee of gentlemen, who should be desired to frame such rules for the use of the books in the first instance as they think advisable, and that a stated annual meeting of subscribers be appointed at some convenient time of year, the first of which might take place at no distant period, when the rules might be approved of or altered as may seem best to the subscribers generally. The Committee beg also to suggest that the rules of the Cape Library afford an easy means of framing these rules, such attention being paid to such modifications as the different circumstances of this place require.

The Committee recommend that the payment of 300 Rs. in one payment or in three payments of 100 Rs. each, 100 being paid down and the remaining 200 Rs. in two equal instalments, at 6 and 12 months, shall constitute parties proprietors of the Library, entitle them to all the privileges of 1st class subscribers.

That 1st class subscribers pay an entrance fee of 20 Rs. and a subscription of 6 Rs. for every month subsequent to the first.

That 2d class subscribers pay an entrance fee of 16 Rs. and a subscription of 4 Rs. for every month subsequent to the first.

That 3d class subscribers pay an entrance fee of 10 Rs. and a subscription of 2 Rs. for every month subsequent to the first.

That any subscriber be at liberty, at any time to become a proprietor upon making up his contributions to the sum of 300 Rs., with interest at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum from the time of his commencing his subscription.

That subscription be collected in advance from the 1st and 2d class of subscribers monthly, and from the 3d class quarterly.

That subscribers who choose to pay a year's subscription in advance, be allowed a deduction of 10 per cent. on such advance.

That no subscriber failing for one month to pay his subscription shall be allowed to make use of the Library, until he receive permission to do so from the Committee of Management.

That subscriptions be not received for broken parts of a month, and that they be held to run as from the 1st of the month in which they are enrolled.

That proprietors shall not have more than ten shares each.

That all shares be transferable on payment by the purchaser of a fine of 100 Rs. per each share transferred, and this share whether he be already a proprietor or not.

That persons who have not paid up the full amount which entitles them to a share be not allowed to transfer such anticipated share.

That subscribers quitting Calcutta without communicating in writing to the managing Committee their intention, be required to pay their subscriptions until such intention is so communicated by them; and, failing so to pay, shall cease to be subscribers, and shall not be re-admitted without special reference to the Committee.

That proprietors who leave India without due notice to the managing Committee and who do not return within eighteen months, from the time of their departure, shall at the expiry of such eighteen months, forfeit all claim to any share or shares they may hold, and such share or shares shall revert to the library; and that proprietors who leave India with such notice to the managing Committee, and who do not return within five years from the time of their departure, shall at the expiry of such five years, in like manner, forfeit all claim to any share or shares, and such share or shares shall revert to the library.

That proprietors and subscribers be convened annually for the examination of accounts and for general business.

That accounts be made up yearly, and be audited and approved by the managing Committee, and submitted to the yearly meeting of proprietors and subscribers.

That upon all pecuniary questions each share shall have one vote, on all other matters each proprietor to have only one vote. And upon all such other matters, each subscriber shall have a vote.

That the Committee of Management have power to issue to poor students and others tickets of admission to the Library, for such periods as may be thought advisable, such tickets not to be transferable.

RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED AT THE LIBRARY MEETING ON THE 7th OF NOV.

Moved by Dr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Garden, and carried *unanimously*.

Resolved 1st.—That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the support already afforded to the scheme is sufficient to enable a public Library to be established in Calcutta upon the principles embodied in the Resolution of the meeting of the 31st August last.

Moved by Mr. W. P. Grant, seconded by Col. Dunlop, and carried *unanimously*.

Resolved 2d.—That it be an instruction to the Committee, to engage only one Under Librarian in the first instance, at such salary as they can procure a competent person for, with power to engage another when it appears to them necessary.

Moved by Mr. Holbyd, seconded by Mr. Leith, and carried *unanimously*.

Resolved 3d.—That the recommendations contained in the report of the provisional Committee now ready with the above amendment, be adopted by this meeting.

Moved by Colonel Dunlop, seconded by Dr. Jackson, and carried *unanimously*.

Resolved 4th.—That the management of the Library be entrusted to seven Curators to be chosen by the Proprietors, and first class Subscribers of one year's standing, at an annual meeting in the month of February in each year, to be called by advertisement by the Curators for the time being.

Moved by Colonel Beaton, seconded by Mr. Turton, and carried *unanimously*.

Resolved 5th.—That the Curators be requested to frame such rules for the collection, and circulation of books and

in the management of the Library, as in their discretion shall seem fit, to establish such a Library upon the principles agreed on by this meeting, and to publish the rules as soon as may be for general information previous to the general meeting in February next; that they be also empowered to appoint a Librarian, and such other establishment as may be necessary to open the Library if practicable, on the 1st December.

Moved by Mr. Pattie, seconded by Mr. Grant, and carried as a distinct Resolution.—

Resolved 6th.—That no Resolution of the Curators disposing of the Funds of the Society exceeding in amount one thousand rupees, be carried into effect until the accounts shall have been on the table for the space of one week.

Moved by Mr. Leith, seconded by Mr. Turton, and carried.—

Resolved 7th.—That the proceedings of the Curators shall be entered in a book, which shall always be on the table of the Library for the inspection of Proprietors and Subscribers.

Moved by Mr. Turton, seconded by Mr. Kyd, and carried *nem. con.*

Resolved 8th.—That the present Rules be considered the Fundamental Rules of the Institution—and that they can only be altered at the General Annual Meetings, or at a special meeting called for that purpose by Public advertisement in some one or more of the daily newspapers in Calcutta, with not less than seven days' notice, and in which shall be expressed the object of the proposed alterations.

Moved by Mr. Turton, seconded by Mr. W. P. Grant, and carried *nem. con.*

Resolved, 9th.—That it shall be open to the Curators to call a Special Meeting at any time that they may think fit, giving such notice as provided in the last resolution—and that they shall be bound to call such meeting to be held within one month from the receipt of a requisition signed by any five proprietors, or any ten proprietors and subscribers of the 1st class of one year's

standing, expressing the object for which the requisitionists desire such meeting—and if notice of such meeting shall not be given by such Curators within one fortnight of the receipt of such requisition, any three proprietors may call the same, giving not less than seven days' notice thereof.

Moved by Dr. Marshman, seconded by Col. Dunlop, and carried unanimously.

Resolved 10th.—That the following gentlemen be requested to accept the office of Curators, until the first general meeting:

Sir Edward Ryan,	W. P. Grant, Esq.,
Charles Cameron, Esq.,	J. C. Marshman, Esq.,
T. Dickens, Esq.,	and
H. M. Parker, Esq.,	J. R. Colvin, Esq.

Moved by Mr. W. P. Grant, seconded by Mr. G. T. F. Speed, and carried *nem. con.*

Resolved 11th.—That J. H. Stoeckeler, Esq., be requested to act as Honorary Secretary to the institution until the next general meeting.

Moved by Mr. Pote, seconded by Mr. Sinaes and carried unanimously.

Resolved 12th.—That the thanks of this meeting be offered through the Curators to the Honorable the Governor of Bengal, for the liberal transfer of the College Library to this institution.

Moved by Mr. Sinaes, seconded by Mr. Pote, and carried unanimously.

Resolved 13th.—That the thanks of this meeting be given to those private individuals who have, by donations of books or otherwise, contributed so liberally to advance the interests of the Library.

Moved by Lieutenant-Colonel Beatson, seconded by Mr. Leith and carried unanimously.

Resolved 14th.—That the thanks of this meeting be offered to the provisional Committee for the pains they have taken and the ability and judgment they have shown in framing their report and drawing up the original plan for establishing the Public Library.—*Hurkaru.*

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

MARCH 1836, VOL. 2

Proceedings of the General Meeting of Proprietors and
Subscribers of the Calcutta Public Library, held at
the Library Rooms, 8th March, 1836.

The Hon. Sir J. Peter Grant in the chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. Sir E. Ryan, C. Cameron, Esq., Rev. J. Marshman, W. P. Grant, Esq., J. R. Colvin, Esq., J. H. Stacquerel, Esq., H. M. Parker, Esq., T. Dickens, Esq., Baboo Russomoy Dutt and Prasanna Coomarr Tagore, J. A. Pearson, Esq., Col. Beatson, Col. Dunlop, G. T. Speed, Esq. and others.

*Report of the Curators of the Calcutta Public Library
to the Proprietors and Subscribers thereof.*

The Curators have pleasure in informing the proprietors and subscribers of the Calcutta Public Library, that the use of the Fort William College books have been made over to them by the Governor of Bengal under the following conditions, viz.

* 1st. That the Society shall provide a place and establishment fitting for the reception, care and preservation of the books lent them by Government, and if at any time for want of funds or any other cause the Society shall neglect or be unable to do so, that they will redeliver the books to any person whom the Governor of Bengal may depute to receive them.

2d. " That the assignment shall be subject to the approbation of the Hon'ble the Court of Directors, and the books be reclaimable by the Government if this approbation be disapproved by that authority.

3d. "That they shall at all times be open to the examination of any person the Governor of Bengal may depute to examine them, in order to see that the books are preserved with due care."

are preserved with due care.

Upon signing these conditions the Curators get permission to take away the books and they then thought it necessary to appoint a person in whom they might have confidence for the purpose of taking charge of the books from the gentlemen entrusted with the care of them by Government, and of carefully comparing the books delivered with the lists, which the Curators will be called on to acknowledge the correctness of. It was also necessary to arrange the books of which your library consists, and this not only in such a catalogue as might be of easy and useful reference, but also to arrange the books themselves in a manner consistent with convenience and economy both of space and funds.

These matters have necessarily taken up much time, but they appeared to the Curators of such importance as to warrant all the attention which has been paid to them; and they have satisfaction in announcing that a catalogue raisonné of all the works in the library is now raised and ready for printing, and that all the arrangements which appeared to them necessary to be made before opening the library, will be completed by the day on which they have called a general meeting of the proprietors and subscribers.

The Curators, after a careful consideration of the merits of the different candidates who presented themselves, have appointed Mr. Stacy to the office of librarian. They have also appointed Peery Chand Muttar to the office of sub-librarian. Considering all that was spent upon the establishment until the library was opened as diminishing the very small capital upon which the library depends, they have endeavoured to keep these expenses as low as a due attention to the work to be done would allow, and though they did not think it right to avail themselves of Mr. Stacy's liberal offer to co-operate in all the laborious work preparatory to opening the library, they were glad to be able to secure his services, for this purpose at 100 rupees per month, or half the salary which it has been thought right to affix to the situation which he holds.

Annexed to this report is a statement of all paid and received on account of the institution the 7th of March, 1836. In addition to the mention to be found in this document, the Corators observe that

The total expenses of book-shelves will amount to.....	1,100
Of other furniture to.....	450
Together.....	1,550
Of which has been paid.....	1,000
(Being all which they were entitled to lay out) leaving a balance of.....	550

which they have to ask your permission	to devote
the above purpose. The total amount	
subscribed for is.....	
Proprietor's shares of Sa. R. 300 each,	6,887
of which is already paid.....	200
Donations.....	34
Subscriptions.....	7,121

Some of the proprietors have paid up their whole shares, and the actual sum available, supposing all outstanding to be collected, is Rs 7,500, which the proprietors think too small a sum to meet the expenses which it is desirable to incur immediately.

They therefore submit that you should come to a resolution calling upon the proprietors to pay their instalment forthwith; if this be done, there would immediately be available for the purposes of the library Rs. 14,200.

Ms. 14, 200.

The Curators have taken into consideration the referred to them by the 5th resolution of the meeting of the 31st October last, and with regard to that part of the resolution which refers to them, the framing of rules for collecting and arranging the books, they are of opinion that it would be proper to frame such rules. They have thought it desirable that the institution to prepare a catalogue of some of the works at present comprised in the library, by reference to the different departments of which the deficiency of collection can accurately be known, and the Curators having undertaken to prepare lists of useful works in those departments of knowledge with which they have respectively some acquaintance, they believe that these lists compared with the present catalogue printed, a general list may easily be made by reference to which advantage may be taken of all opportunities of acquiring books.

With regard to the other matter referred to them above resolution, viz., the framing rules for the circulation of the books.

*Proposed Rules for the circulation of Books of the
cutta Public Library among the Proprietors and
scribers.*

Rule 1st. -- None of the books belonging to Fort
liam College Library shall be allowed to circulate
out special leave obtained from the Curators.

Rule 2d — The Curators shall have power to draw from circulation, and also to prohibit with special leave obtained from them, the circulation of book in their discretion.

Rule 3d.—All other books in the Library shall be allowed to circulate among proprietors and 1st class subscribers.

Rule 4th.—No book shall be allowed to circulate until it shall have remained in the Library one week from the date of receipt, except novels, tales and pamphlets intended for circulation. These may be put into circulation after two days from the date of receipt.

—No person shall be entitled to take books from the Library who has not deposited a sum of Rs. 100 applicable to the discharge of all claims on behalf of the Library.

—No person shall be entitled to take any book from the Library until he shall have discharged against him on behalf of the Library.

10th.—No deposit shall be returnable except on order in writing of the Curators.

11th.—The Library shall be daily open (Sundays excepted) from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. immediately preceding the Meeting of the Proprietors and subscribers in the Library, only excepted) from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

12th.—Any proprietor or 1st or 2nd class subscriber shall be entitled to have delivered to him on written order books from the Library if he has a suitable bag or box for the secure conveyance of books.

13th.—No person shall be entitled to have the Library at any time more than one set of books and one periodical without special leave of the Curators.

14th.—Any works comprised in one volume and of the works of any one author or set of authors together shall be accounted a set of works, and that in voluminous works the Curators shall have power in their discretion to limit the number of volumes which shall be taken out at any one time.

15th.—All works as received shall be entered in the Library Catalogue, and the titles thereof shall be conspicuously notified in the Public Room.

16th.—All new works shall also as received be entered in the Library Catalogue, and the titles thereof shall be conspicuously notified in the Public Room. All new works shall be issued to proprietors and subscribers who put their names under the respective entries in the order in which they put down their names, provided that proprietors and 1st class subscribers who put down their names within a month of the receipt of such new work shall be entitled to take out such new works before any 2nd class subscriber.

17th.—The person next in succession for such works shall not apply for it one day after it has been turned to the Library shall be considered as having his turn and the first applicant on the list after him then be entitled to take out such works.

18th.—Any person taking out books shall be entitled to keep them for the following periods exclusive of the day of delivery, viz.

Periodicals for	2 days.
New Works, vol. 8vo.	2 days.
vol. 4to.	1 week.
vol. folio.	2 weeks.

person shall be entitled to keep other works for the above times, or until one day after he has received notice on the part of the Curators to return them.

19th.—Any Proprietor or subscriber taking out books without giving notice to the Librarian shall be liable to a fine of 5 rupees each volume for every day the book is kept out of the Library.

20th.—Any person not returning any book within the times limited by the Library Rules, shall pay to be determined by the Curators not exceeding 5 rupees per volume for each day of such undue retention.

21st.—Any book found on return to the Library to be damaged shall be withdrawn from circulation until examined by the Curators, and the particular imperfection notified in a conspicuous part of the book before the person in whose custody such book was when such damage occurred, shall be answerable to the Curators for such sum as they may determine to be necessary to repair the same.

22nd.—When any fine has been incurred by any person who has taken out books, notice thereof shall be

given to him by the Librarian, and if not paid the fine shall be deducted from his deposit and no books be issued to him until his deposit be completed.

The report of the Curators being read, it was proposed by Col. Beatson, and seconded by Col. Dunlop—

“That the appointments of a Librarian and Sub-Librarian which have been made by the Curators, be confirmed, and that the expenditure which has been incurred for book-shelves and library furniture, be sanctioned. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by Col. Dunlop, and seconded by Baboo Russomoy Dutt—

“That the Proprietors be requested to pay up their second instalment for the purposes mentioned in the report of the Curators. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by Sir E. Ryan, and seconded by H. M. Parker, Esq.—

“That it be recommended to the Curators to lay out the sum of Sixty Rupees 6,000 in the purchase of popular and entertaining works, including periodicals, from time to time, as the Funds received shall allow. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by Colonel Beatson, and seconded by Dr. Marshman—

“That the late Curators be requested to prepare the list of valuable books which they consider wanting in order to complete this library to what it ought to be, with a view to their being procured when it may be practicable, with reference to the state of the funds. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by W. P. Grant, Esq., and seconded by Dr. Marshman—

“That the catalogue prepared by the Curators be printed forth with. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by Sir E. Ryan, seconded and by

“That Doctor Strong be made an Honorary Member of the Society with all the privileges of a proprietor. Carried unanimously.”

Moved by Doctor Marshman and seconded by Colonel Beatson—

“That the following gentlemen be elected as Curators for the ensuing year.

Dr. Strong.	W. P. Grant, Esq.
J. Kyd, Esq.	Dr. Marshman.
Baboo Russomoy Dutt.	C. E. Trevelyan, Esq.
Col. Dunlop.	

Amendment moved by Sir E. Ryan, and seconded by Mr. Dickens—

“That the number of Curators be reduced to three. Carried by a majority.”

Moved by Sir E. Ryan, and seconded by Mr. Cameron—

“That W. P. Grant, Esq., Col. Dunlop, and J. Kyd, Esq., be elected as curators for the ensuing year. Carried unanimously.”

After which the following amendments were made in the printed Rules, viz—

“Rule 5. No persons shall be entitled to take books out of the library who have not deposited the following sums, viz. Proprietors and 1st class Subscribers 20 Rs.; 2nd class Subscribers 10 Rs. Such sums to be applicable to the discharge of all claims against him on behalf of the Library.”

Rule 8. The Library shall be daily open (Sundays excepted) and the space of seven days immediately preceding the Annual Meeting of Proprietors and Subscribers in each year only excepted) from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m.

Rule 10. No proprietors or 1st class subscribers shall be entitled to have out of the Library at any one time more than two sets of works and one periodical, nor any 2d class subscriber more than one set of works and one periodical, without special leave of the Curators.

Rule 15. Any person taking out books shall be entitled to keep them for the following periods exclusive of the day of delivery.

Periodicals.	Monthly.	2 days.
	Quarterly.	4 days.
	Vol. 8vo.	2 days.
New Works	Vol. 4to.	1 week.
	Vol. folio.	2 weeks.

Rule 16th. Any proprietor or subscriber taking away books without giving notice to the Librarian shall pay a fine of 10 Rupees for each volume so taken."

After which the following rule was added :—

Rule 20. That the printed catalogues be sold to proprietors, subscribers, and others, at the price of one-rupee per copy.—*Bengal Hurkaru.*

Appendix IV

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

MARCH 1837, PAGE 198. CMJ

At a meeting of the proprietors and subscribers held on 4th March, 1837.

J. F. Larn, Esq., in the chair.

Present.—W. P. Grant, Esq., J. Bell, Esq., T. H. Gardner, Esq., G. F. T. Speed, Esq., Dr. Jackson, Dr. Pearson, and J. Beardsmore, Esq.

Visioner. G. A. Prinsep, Esq.

The Curators reported the following new proprietors, viz.

The Right Hon'ble Lord Auckland, O. C. B.,	Dr. Charles Egerton.
A. Gladstone, Esq.	W. Earle, Esq.
	C. Lyall, Esq.

And the following new subscribers :

Lieut. Peirce,	C. G. Stretzell, Esq.
G. B. Ryan, Esq.	Dr. McCosh.
D. E. Malloch, Esq.	

And the following list of contributions to the *Vested Fund* in aid of the Library, viz.

M. M. Manuck, Esq.	1000
Right Hon'ble Lord Auckland, O. C. B.	200
Baboo Dwarkanauth Tagore	200
Hon'ble Sir E. Ryan, Kt.	100
Hon'ble Sir J. P. Grant, Kt.	100
Col. W. S. Beaison	50
W. P. Grant, Esq.	50
W. Earle, Esq.	50

Proposed by W. P. Grant, Esq., and seconded by Dr. Pearson, that the contributions to the *Vested Fund*, be invested as realized in Company's paper in the joint name of the curators. The paper to remain in the custody of the Government agent, and the interest to be

drawn by him, and invested in the Government Saving's Bank in the joint names of the said curators.

Proposed by Mr. Bell, and seconded by Dr. Jackson, and carried unanimously, that with reference to the few opportunities enjoyed by men in business to watch or even to gain an outline of the proceedings of this infant institution, for the successful establishment of which upon a sound foundation all must be anxiously interested, that a copy of the rates and rules of admission as proprietors and subscribers be circulated with subscription books as well for contributions to the Vested Fund as for the admission of new proprietors and subscribers among such members of the community as the curators may deem expedient, with a note as follows :—

To A. B. Esq.

* Sir,—Upwards of months have now elapsed since the formation of this Library without having the benefit of your name on its list of proprietors or subscribers.

Feeling assured that the claims of such an institution to public support need only be brought prominently forward to engage your intention, we beg to submit a copy of our rules and rates of admission.

In doing this we earnestly entreat you to consider that although your time may not allow you either to take at present any active part in its operation or draw largely upon the literary resources, you can render a most important service by contributing towards its solid establishment and future support, and we confidently hope that you will at least afford this testimony of the interest you feel in the prosperity of a public depository of knowledge and recreation which to every individual at some time or other must prove useful.

We are, &c.

CURATORS.

Hurkara, March 6.]

Appendix V

PUBLIC LIBRARY. P. 178
CALCUTTA MONTHLY JOURNAL - FEB. 1840, 3RD SERIES
VOL. VI

The annual general meeting of the public library was held on Friday last. The report furnished matter for congratulation—there has been an increased circulation of books—and an accession of subscribers: the former having amounted to upwards of twenty-two thousand volumes in one year—the latter numbering, with the promoters, two hundred and nine. The cash receipts for the year came to Rs 10,233.5 2—which sum has been appropriated to the purposes of the Library. The vested fund amounts to Rs 4,273. Nothing has yet been done about a building for the Library, but there are grounds for hoping that a plan will soon be submitted to, and approved by Government, for erecting a large building in a suitable site. The union of the Library with other institutions under the same roof, continues a favorite project, but the sum of six thousand rupees more is

necessary to enable the Curators of the Library to contribute a proper quota to the funds for such a purpose.—*Englishman*, March 2.

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Calcutta Public Library, held on the 23rd Feb.

C. W. SMITH, Esq., IN THE CHAIR.

Present.—W. P. Grant, Esq., W. Byne, Dr. Corry, Capt. Marshall, J. W. Twentymen, T. P. Mortell, Esq., H. M. Parker, Esq., and Col. Dunlop.

Mr. W. P. Grant read the following reports of the Curators and the Librarian.

The Curators refer to the accompanying report from the Librarian, and the accounts upon the table for statement of the affairs of the Library during the last twelve months, and are glad to have to congratulate the friends of this Institution, on the proofs exhibited of the growing appreciation of its usefulness by the public at large.

The only matter connected with the Library, not embraced in the Librarian's report, which the Curators have to bring to the notice of the proprietors and subscribers, is the prospect of a building being soon erected, to which the books may be permanently transferred. Committees of the Agri-Horticultural Society, Metcalfe Testimonial, and Metcalfe Library Building fund have frequently met, along with the Curators, and have cordially joined together in a proposal to erect within the funds of all the four bodies whom they represent, a building, the ground-floor of which shall be devoted to the Agricultural Society, and the upper one to the Library. The funds applicable at present, amount to little short of Rs. 49,000, and the Curators fondly hope, that the small sum which will be required in addition to these funds to erect a building every way suitable to the purposes contemplated, may be raised among the well-wishers of this Institution. The vested fund at present amounts to above 4,000 Rs.—an addition of less than 6,000 Rs. would do all that is necessary and would leave the Library to derive the benefit of the best half of the building for payment of one-fourth of its actual cost.

The Curators were in hopes of being able to report to this meeting, that the Governor-General had actually given the sanction of Government to the building, being erected on public ground. This has not yet been given, but the Curators know that his Lordship approves highly of the junction of interests which has been effected, and of the purposes to which the building is to be devoted. They have no doubt of being soon able to state, that the plan of the building has been submitted to, and approved of by the Government, and a suitable site granted for it.

Dr. Strong's generosity in continuing to afford the use of the present excellent apartments gratuitously, to the Institution, prevents it from feeling immediately the want of a building of their own.

Library Rooms, 28th Feb. 1840.

To W. P. GRANT, Esq., H. M. PARKER, Esq., and W. CARR, Esq.
Curators, Calcutta Public Library.

Gentlemen,—I have the honor to submit to you the annexed statement of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Library during the last year, and embrace the opportunity to observe, that the addition of another year to the age of the Institution has tended in no small degree to the augmentation of its popularity, and the extension of its usefulness. It is a source of sincere congratulation to observe that alike in respect to the accession of subscribers, to the receipt of monthly contributions, and to the circulation of books, it has made considerable progress—a circumstance which gratifying as it is to those who are interested in its prosperity—can only be attributable to the increasing appreciation of its utility.

The Library now comprehends eighty Proprietors nine of whom have died, and one hundred and thirty-eight subscribers.

The circulation of books during the last year was as follows.

	Sets.	Vols
General Literature,	4233	7886
Prose works of Imagination	5391	12504
Periodicals,	1939	1939
	11563	22329

Giving an average monthly circulation of vols. 1861 nearly, while that of the year before last, though the greatest of all the preceding years, had reached only 1516 vols., which, averaged per month vols. 1393

The amount of subscriptions (taking what has been and what remains to be corrected) of the last year is, 8304 Co's Rs., averaging per month, 692 Rs., while the sum total of subscriptions of the year before last was, Co's Rs. 5635 9-8 pie, giving an average monthly subscription of nearly 453 Rs.

It will be perceived from the annexed account that there is a balance of Rs. 1814 2 11 against the Library, supposing all demands were to be immediately met, but that it will not now take much time to make it up admits of little doubt—especially as I have observed that the monthly income of the Library increases more in summer than in winter, owing to their being more departures and greater activity of business in the latter season.

Since the last Annual Meeting, one hundred and seventy rupees have been contributed to the Vested Fund, and it now amounts to Co's Rs. 4273.—*Englishman*, March 13.

Appendix VI

5

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

[Pro. No. 235

COMMEMORATION OF THE METCALFE HALL BUILDING.

Dated the 23rd August 1906.

No. 235

From—Babu KAMAKHYA MOHAN BANARJI (Journalist), Barisha Post Office,
24-Perganas,

To—His Excellency the EARL OF MINTO, Viceroy and Governor General of India.

I beg to draw your lordship's attention to a grave injustice done to an old memorial building in Calcutta. The Metcalfe Hall was built by public subscription in 1843 to commemorate the memory of Sir Charles Metcalfe the "emancipator of Indian Press." Since that time the Calcutta Public Library was located in the second floor of the Hall, but there were tablets on the two gates with inscriptions to show that the building was the Metcalfe Hall.

When our late Viceroy Lord Curzon transformed the Calcutta Public Library into the present Imperial Library His Lordship removed the inscription tablets as well as the raised-type inscription on the west portico of the building and placed the present Imperial Library inscriptions in their place. There is nothing in the building to show that it was the Metcalfe Hall which was built to commemorate the administration of a kind administrator. No one will think that the Government was justified in removing the tablets and thereby obliterating the name of an old Memorial Building.

Will your Lordship please look over the matter and place some marks outside the building above alluded to, to show that it is "The Metcalfe Hall" of old?

Office memorandum no. 1222, dated the 4th September 1906.

Transferred, for disposal, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department.

A formal acknowledgment only has been sent to enclosed.

J. SCOTT,
for *Private Secretary to the Viceroy.*

Dated the 12th October 1906.

No. 236

From—Babu KAMAKHYA MOHAN BANARJI (Journalist), Barisha Post Office,
24-Perganas,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

Re-Imperialism of the Metcalfe Hall.

From an answer dated the 4th of September 1906, to my letter, dated the 23rd of August 1906, to His Excellency the Earl of Minto, Viceroy and Governor General of India on the subject of the obliteration of the name of the Metcalfe Hall at Calcutta, I understand that the subject has been transferred to your Department for consideration and decision.

Will you please let me know what has been done of it?

Office memorandum no. 2451, dated the 25th October 1906.

No. 237

In reply to his letter, dated the 12th October 1906, Babu Kamakhya Mohan Banarji is informed that his representation regarding the removal of the inscription-tablets from the Metcalfe Hall building is still under the con-

Pub. - Aug. 1907—Nos. 235—244.

RECEIVED
HOME DEPARTMENT
12th OCTOBER 1906
J. SCOTT
Private Secretary to the Viceroy

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Pro. No. 237] Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

sideration of the Government of India and that a further communication will be addressed to him in due course.

G. B. H. FELL,
*Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department.*

To

Babu Kamakhya Mohan Banarji, Barisha Post Office) 24-Parganas.

238

Dated the 8th November 1906.

From—BABU KAMAKHYA MOHAN BANARJI, Barisha Post Office, 24-Parganas,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

Re: Metcalfe Hall.

In continuation of my letters to His Excellency the Viceroy on the subject of the obliteration of the name of the Metcalfe Hall of Calcutta dated 23rd August and 5th September 1906, which have been transferred to your department for consideration and disposal, I beg to quote the following from Sir John William Kaye's "Life and correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe", in support of the representation made by me in the letters above alluded to:

"The Metcalfe Hall in Calcutta which had been built by public subscription to commemorate his (Metcalfe's) Indian Government, and especially the great act of the liberation of the Press, being now complete, and Metcalfe's bust having been placed in it, a meeting was held for the purpose of voting an address to His Lordship on the occasion of the ceremony; and the following was adopted by the community of Calcutta:

"To

The Right Honourable
Lord Metcalfe, G.C.B., etc.

"The completion of an edifice in the city bearing Your Lordship's name and erected in honour of your virtues and of your public services in India, and the placing therein of Your Lordship's bust, are events which we would fain celebrate by renewing those expressions of attachment and respect which we addressed to you when we joined in the design of a building to become a memorial of our high estimation of your character to bear the name of "The Metcalfe Hall", and to contain the chambers appropriated to the reception of our public library, and to the sittings and proceedings of the Agricultural Society of India.

The address was sent home, and a committee, of which Lord Auckland was the head, was entrusted with the duty of presenting it to Lord Metcalfe".

Members of the Committee.

Sir E. Ryan, Halt Mackenzie,
Mount Stuart Elphinstone, General Galloway,
General Duncan Macleod, W. B. Bayley,
H. T. Prinsep, J. S. Brownrigg, and
Dwarkanath Tagore."

In face of the above, it is desirable that some inscriptions in a prominent part of the building be put to show that it is the Metcalfe Hall.

I would also like to beg you to dispose of this at an early date, so that travellers in Calcutta during the ensuing cold season may not miss the much cherished Metcalfe Hall.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME DEPARTMENT
11/11/06
Archives

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

[Pro. No. 239]

No. 60, dated the 7th January 1907.

No. 239

From—G. B. H. FELL, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department.

I am directed to refer to the correspondence ending with your letter* no. 3725-B., dated the 10th December 1906, regarding the removal of two old tablets and an inscription which indicated the origin of the building from the Metcalfe Hall Calcutta.

2. It appears that these tablets and the inscription on the building in question have been replaced by new ones showing that it is now occupied by the Imperial Library. The change is, however, liable to be regarded by the public as a matter for regret; and there is a danger that the origin of the building may, in course of time, be lost sight of. The Government of India think that if in accordance with the spirit of the orders contained in the Home Department resolution no. 234—242, dated the 29th January 1904, a memorial tablet were placed on one of the gate posts of the Hare Street entrance, it would preserve the historical associations of the building and satisfy all legitimate sentiment on the subject. But before coming to final decision, they will be glad to be furnished with an expression of the opinion of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the proposal. I am also to request that, if His Honour sees no objection to this suggestion, a draft of an appropriate inscription may be submitted for the approval of the Government of India.

No. 61.

Oriental papers returned.

Copy forwarded to the Public Works Department for information.

Dated the 25th March 1907.

No. 240

From—BABU KAMAKHYA MOHAN BANARJI, Barisha Post Office, 24-Parganas,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

In reference to a representation made to His Excellency the Viceroy, I was made to understand from a letter from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, and also from a memorandum from your office no. 2451 (Public), dated the 25th of October 1906, that the case is yet under consideration of the Government of India, and a further communication will be addressed to me in due course. I regret that five months passed away, but nothing has yet been known as to the intention of the Government with regard to the suggestion made in my letters dated 23rd August, 10th September, 12th October and 8th November, 1906.

I will be much obliged if you will please let me know whether the Government intends to take any action in the matter represented in my letters above referred to.

Office memorandum no. 974, dated the 23rd April 1907.

No. 241

In reply to his letter dated the 25th March 1907, Babu Kamakhya Mohan Banarji is referred to the Home Department office memorandum no. 2451, dated the 25th October 1906, and is informed that orders on his representation

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Pro. No. 241]

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

regarding the removal of the inscription tablets from the Metcalfe Hall building have not yet been passed. As soon as orders are passed they will be communicated to him.

G. FELL,

*Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department.*

To

Babu Kamakhya Mohan Banarji,
Barisha Post Office, 24 Parganas.

No. 242

No. 1799, dated the 2nd August 1907.

From—H. C. STREETFIELD, Esq., I.C.S., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

With reference to the correspondence resting with this Government letter no. 851-T.G.* dated the 31st May 1907, regarding certain tablets and an inscription in the Metcalfe Hall, Calcutta, I am directed to submit, for the information of the Government of India, the accompanying copies of a letter from this Government to the Librarian, Imperial Library, no. 1363, dated the 21st March 1907, and of the reply from the Librarian no. 845, dated the 19th June 1907, and its enclosures.

*(Reply to reminder not printed in Proceedings.)

2. It will be seen that the two new tablets on the gates of the building which have replaced the old tablets, bear only the words "Imperial Library," and give no indication of the origin of the Hall. The hall was built chiefly from public subscriptions as a Memorial to Sir Charles Metcalfe and it seems to the Lieutenant-Governor of vital importance that this fact should be recorded on tablets to be fixed in the gateposts so as to be read by all persons entering the building. At the same time His Honor does not think it necessary or desirable that these tablets should notify the special action of Sir C. Metcalfe to celebrate which the hall was erected. This might well be recorded on a larger tablet to be put up on or in the Hall itself as suggested hereafter. Sir Andrew Fraser would accordingly propose that a tablet should be fixed at one or at each of the gates leading to the Hall, bearing the following inscription:—

"This building was erected as a testimony of respect to Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, afterwards created Baron Metcalfe, Member of the Governor General's Council 1827—34 Governor of Agra 1834—35. Provisional Governor General 1835—36. The foundation stone was laid with Masonic Honours on Saturday the 19th December 1840."

3. I am at the same time to invite the attention of the Government of India to the inscription on the plate laid down with the foundation stone of the Hall, as recorded in the extract from the Bengal Hurkaru dated Monday, December 21st, 1840, enclosed with the letter from the Librarian, Imperial Library, no. 845, dated 19th June 1907. This inscription gives full particulars of all the circumstances attending the building of the Hall and is in itself of considerable interest. It seems to the Lieutenant-Governor a pity that it should be lost sight of, and I am accordingly to suggest for the consideration of the Government of India that the whole inscription on both sides of the plate should be reproduced on a second tablet to be affixed to the inner wall of the building itself.

RECEIVED
21-8-1907
The Secretary to the Government of India
Home Department

3

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

[Pro. No. 242]

No. 1363, dated the 21st March 1907.

From—W. S. MILNE, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal,
General Department,

To—The Secretary to the Council of the Imperial Library, Calcutta.

I am directed to forward the accompanying copy of a letter from the Government of India, Home Department, no. 60, dated the 7th January 1907, and of the inscription which this Government proposes to recommend for the memorial tablet to be placed on the gate of the Hare Street Entrance to the Metcalfe Hall, and to say that His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor would be glad to be informed whether the Council of the Imperial Library agree generally with the proposals of the Government of India and consider the proposed inscription appropriate.

2. I am also to request that the year in which the Metcalfe Hall was erected on its present site may be stated.

No. 845, dated the 19th June 1907.

From—HARINATH DE, Esq., M.A., Officiating Librarian, Imperial Library,

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department.

I am directed by the Council of this Library to refer to your letter no. 1363, dated the 21st March 1907, relative to the Memorial Tablet which it is proposed to place on the gate of the Hare Street Entrance to the Metcalfe Hall.

In reply, I am to forward copies of papers collected by Mr. Claughton the officer in charge of the records of the Government of India and to state that in paragraph 1 of Mr. Fell's letter no. 60, dated the 7th January 1907, mention is made of the removal from the Metcalfe Hall of two old tablets and an inscription, which indicated the origin of the building, while in paragraph 2 of that letter it is stated that the tablets and inscription referred to have been replaced by new ones showing that the building is now occupied by the Imperial Library. From enquiries made it has been ascertained that the two tablets removed were inscribed with the words "The Calcutta Public Library, Metcalfe Hall" and "The Agri-Horticultural Society, Metcalfe Hall" but that nothing can be traced to show that there ever was any inscription indicating the origin of the building. On the other hand, in lieu of the two tablets removed, two tablets have been placed one at each gate, bearing the words "Imperial Library." There is no other inscription of any kind in the building.

I am further to state that the Council of this Library consider the inscription proposed by the Government of Bengal to be inappropriate for the following reason. The Metcalfe Hall was erected in commemoration of Sir Charles Metcalfe's action in freeing the Press in India from certain restrictions. This was done during his provisional tenure of the office of Governor General (20th March 1835 to 4th March 1836) and not when he was a Member of Council. The inscription proposed is therefore misleading, as it excludes by implication the very period which the Hall was built to commemorate. I am accordingly to suggest the following inscription in substitution of the one proposed:—"The foundation stone of this building was laid with masonic honours on Saturday, the 19th December 1840, as a testimony of respect to Sir Charles Metcalfe (afterwards by creation Baron Metcalfe) who, on the 15th September 1835, as Governor General of India, released the Press of India from certain disabilities.

Pub.—Augt. 1907—Nos. 235—244.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Pro. No. 242]

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

Mural Inscription on the Metcalfe Hall.

History of the Metcalfe Hall.

"During the interval between the departure for England of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of Lord Auckland in India, Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, then a Member of the Governor General's Council, was appointed provisional Governor General of India, (i.e., from 20th March 1835 to 4th March 1836) and as such on the 15th September 1835, he liberated the Indian Press." "It was a great day, and the people of Calcutta, who were eager to celebrate it, subscribed and erected a noble building on the bank of the Hugly, to contain a public library which was called the "Metcalfe Hall"—in com-

Kaye's "Life of Lord Metcalfe" Vol. II, 1858. (Pages 156-57.)

memoration of the great deed of their benefactor, Lord Metcalfe. It (the building) was to bear an inscription declaring that the Press of India was liberated on the 15th September 1835, by Sir Charles Metcalfe, then Lord Metcalfe, and the bust of the liberator was to be placed in the building."

2. In the "Hand-book of British India," page 149, Stocqueler, who was the first Honorary Secretary to the Calcutta Public Library, says "in order to pay a tribute of gratitude to their benefactor (Lord Metcalfe, who was temporary Governor General of India) the numerous members of the Calcutta Community determined to raise a monu-

Hand-book of British India by J. H. Stocqueler, 1854. (Page 149.)

ment that should perpetuate the recollection of his (Lord Metcalfe's) many public and private virtues and more particularly signalise the last great act of his Indo-political life—the emancipation of the Indian Press. In the interior of the building there is placed a marble bust of Lord Metcalfe, which with an appropriate inscription, intimates the reasons for the erection of the 'Hall' and perpetuates the recollection of the many noble qualities which distinguished the Indian career of the worthy peer."

Lord Metcalfe 1846 (the year in which he died).

3. The marble bust of Lord Metcalfe was placed in the Metcalfe Hall on the 9th April 1846, on a red granite pillar, which still bears the inscription "Lord Metcalfe, 1846". The bust only (leaving the pillar there) was removed

The Bengal Bazar of the 10th April 1846.

to the Victoria Memorial Museum and placed on a mahogany stand to which a brass plate bearing the following inscription, has been attached—"Marble bust of Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Governor of Agra, 1834, presented by the Government of India." The bust

has since been removed to the Government House, and is still there, and it has been ascertained that it is the same marble bust which was in the Metcalfe Hall since the year 1846.

4. An account of a meeting held in the Town Hall by the then sheriff of Calcutta will be found in the "Calcutta Courier" (a daily newspaper) dated the 24th August 1835. At this meeting it was proposed that a public subscription be opened for the erection of a building which should be called the Metcalfe Library and that on the portico or some other conspicuous part of the building the object of its erection, to wit,—“In commemoration of the freedom of the Indian press having been recognised by law under the Government of Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe” should be recorded by a suitable inscription. It was proposed at the same meeting that either a statue or a bust should be placed within the building. In the subsequent issues of the same paper (the Calcutta Courier) various correspondents suggested other

1835, 26th and 31st August; 18th September; 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 29th October; and 26th December.

means to perpetuate the memory of Lord Metcalfe, such as, the erection of a statue, the foundation of scholarships or the

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, AUGUST 1907.

Commemoration of Metcalfe Hall building.

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placing of a picture with a mural inscription in letters of gold in some conspicuous public building, but all these suggestions or proposals gave way to the happier concept of erecting an edifice, which, while it subserved purposes of great utility, should by its title, commemorate the worth of the excellent Lord Metcalfe."

5. In the "Bengal Obituary" 1851, (page 265) it is mentioned that "a marble bust of Lord Metcalfe may be seen at the Metcalfe Hall with the following:—Lord Metcalfe, 1846."—the year in which Lord Metcalfe died. It is therefore presumed that there was no "mural inscription" whatever on the building.

Bengal Obituary, 1851. Page 265.

6. In this connection, the "Bengal Harkaru" of 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842 and 1846 and the "Englishman" of 1846 (the only papers of that period available in the Imperial Library) have also been carefully examined and in the "Bengal Harkaru" dated the 21st December 1840, we find that the foundation stone of the "Metcalfe Hall" was laid by the Masonic Brethren on the 19th December 1840, and that a plate with inscriptions on both sides was laid along with the foundation stone. A typed copy of the extract containing the inscription is put up. But nothing can be traced as regards the "mural inscription" in question. In the "Englishman" of the 9th November 1846 the death of Lord Metcalfe was announced and it was noticed that among the many noble acts of Lord Metcalfe as provisional Governor General of India, the most important one was the liberation of the press from all restrictions. In the "Bengal Harkaru" of the 15th April 1846, we find an account of the unveiling ceremony of the bust and the dinner which followed in honour of Lord Metcalfe. But there is no mention of any kind of inscription on the building in the above newspapers.

Lord Metcalfe died on the 5th September 1846.

Extract from the "Bengal Harkaru," dated Monday, December 21st 1840.

* * * * *
The following is the inscription on the plate laid down with the Foundation stone of the Metcalfe Hall:—

In the Reign of
Her most Gracious Majesty Victoria,
And under the Auspices of the Earl of Auckland, Governor General of India.
The Foundation stone of the Metcalfe Hall, was laid with Masonic honors by JOHN GRANT, ESQ.,
Provincial Grand Master of Bengal and its Territories, assisted by JAMES BURNES, K.H.,
Provincial Grand Master of Western India,
W. C. BLACQUIRE, ESQ., Past D. P. G. M. Bengal.
Sir EDWARD RYAN, KT, P. G. S. W.
Major W. BURLTON, P. G. J. W.
and a highly numerous and respectable convocation of the Craft.

On Saturday the nineteenth day of December in the year of our Lord 1840 in the Æra of Masonry 5840.

This edifice was erected as a testimony of respect to Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, who on the 15th day of September in the year of our Lord 1835, in virtue of his authority as Governor General of India and with a generous, and enlightened regard for the cause of truth and the interests of mankind, gave liberty to the Press of India.

These walls will not merely record a name that can never be forgotten; but receive and preserve a public library and the museum of the agricultural