The British power, however was not destined to live long in India. Like a sparkle that lights up the night and spends itself shooting splendid flashes into the darkness and then fizzes out into dull glow before it dies out, the far flung British rule in India burnt itself out. The long awaited independence was achieved by India in 1947.

In 1947, when India achieved independence, the province of Bengal was partitioned, the bigger eastern part being separated from the rest of India to form the new state of East Pakistan. Later on 1971, it came out from Pakistan's rule and became independent Bangladesh. The smaller western portion was named West Bengal and at that time was divided into two detached areas - one smaller unit, including the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar and much bigger southern unit, comprising the districts of West Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, Birbhum, Burdwan, Bankura, Hooghly, Howrah, Calcutta, 24-Parganas and Midnapur. In 1957, a narrow corridor, formerly a part of the neighbouring state of Bihar was transferred and attached between the northern and southern portions of West Bengal to give
the state a territorial unity; most of the Purulia district was also transferred to West Bengal.

The attempt for the partition of Bengal was not a new one. The politics of confrontation in Bengal first started in 1905 when Lord Curzon decreed his proposal to partition Bengal. The State of Bengal at that time included a larger area comprising present West Bengal, Bangladesh and parts of Bihar and Orissa and was, therefore, economically dominant. Matched with this economic preponderence was her cultural hegemony. Bengali elites at that time occupied a privileged position in India due to the enthusiasm with which they welcomed English and employment in local self-government.

The University of Calcutta was the first Indian University to be established in the subcontinent (1857) out of which and other institutions came out Bengali intellectuals imbibing the British notions of education and institutions. British administrative cadre, all through India, was filled in by educated Bengalis. This installed in them a sense of pride and honour over the rest of the Indians. The partitioning proposal of Lord Curzon was thus regarded as a blow against this superiority complex. The crisis was, however averted, but the joy of the new
triumph was soon eclipsed by the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Besides, the spread of education among the non-Bengalis and their recruitment into administrative posts, the rise of a wealthy non-Bengali Business class in Bengal, were all factors that seemed to challenge the supremacy of Bengalis. But the success of the agitation against the partition of 1905 developed a spirit of charismatic nationalism in Bengal which has since been intensified through activities of terrorist groups. In fact terrorism has always been widely acclaimed in Bengali society. From the days of the Anushilan Samity⁴ terrorism has been the basic technique of nationalist groups in Bengal. It is on this ground of action that the Bengali political elite came into conflict with the non-violent techniques of Mahatma Gandhi. Considering themselves as 'modern' in approach, Gandhiji's 'cult' of asceticism, and opposition to machinery were defined as 'irrationalism' by leaders like Chittaranjan Das and Subhas Chandra Bose. But the achievement of independence through non-violent methods in 1947 marked the triumph of the Gandhians over the Bengali radicals.

Together with independence came the partition of Bengal in 1947, the last series of events which hit Bengal very badly. It dwarfed Bengal, both economically and politically, and was considered a humiliation imposed
upon the Bengali society. After the partition of 1947, large number of refugee population immigrated from Pakistan across the eastern borders into the southern regions of West Bengal. Large numbers of refugee population from East Bengal broke from their traditional surroundings and flocked into the vast complexities of West Bengal's urban life, thereby accelerating the velocity of the mobilization process that had achieved momentum from the days of the British rule. A number of 377,899 people migrated into the urban areas of Calcutta and its vicinity. The figure has been constantly increasing and according to an estimate in 1970, it reached the staggering figure of 4,203,378. The figure is, however, an underestimate as not all the people who have migrated to or permanently settled in West Bengal following the partition have registered themselves as refugees. Again many families from East Bengal who had at the time of partition been residing on a temporary basis in the Western part of Bengal and who would in the normal course have returned to their original homes, decided to settle in West Bengal and added to the pressure of population in the state.

Such a situation was created in West Bengal after the partition of 1947. The task of rehabilitating 377,899 displaced people (which has ever been on the increase) imposed a tremendous burden upon the governmental system while the state's resources faced a severe curtailment,
in a paradoxical manner, through the decree signed by the Indian and the Pakistani Government in 1947. In exchange of vast numbers of displaced migrants, the State (W.B.) had to forsake its fertile eastern regions over to Pakistan. Gone were also the rich paddy fields and fisheries of the east.

The highest pressure was felt around the city of Calcutta which being a city of migrants already possessed a relatively high density of population. Hence conditions deteriorated, health, educational and employment facilities seemed insufficient. The state government, plagued by a severe lack of funds and resources, found itself helpless, and everywhere the picture of scarcity intensified. The responsibility of rehabilitating the displaced numbers rested with the West Bengal Government. So immediately after independence the state government's attempts at development were mainly directed at the rehabilitation of the refugees. In the turmoil of socio-economic changes that were taking in the state following the partition of Bengal in 1947 the developmental programmes for public libraries could not be given adequate attention by the government till the first Five Year Plan period.
Let us now turn our eyes to the library scene in India during the period under review. Immediately after Independence along with the reformation of education, the development of libraries also started attracting attention.

The first great milestone on the road was the Madras Public Libraries Act, 1948. In the development of public libraries in India, the state of Madras turned a new leaf on the historic day of 25 October 1948 when the state legislature passed the Madras Public Libraries Act which received the assent of the Governor-General on 29 January 1949. This was largely due to the unremitting efforts of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. The next example of executive action was the establishment in 1950 of the Delhi Public Library. This was founded by joint action of the Government of India and UNESCO as a demonstration project applying western concepts of modern public library techniques in a developing country like India.

Another significant step was the inclusion of the scheme of 'Improvement of Library Service' in the First Five Year Plan of Educational Development, 1951-56. This scheme envisaged a network of libraries spread all over the country.
"The kernel of the scheme was the establishment of district libraries, with a system of circulation of books throughout the district. The district libraries were to be supplemented and supported by a central library for the whole state, or for a whole linguistic pattern for multi-lingual states."

"The circulation of books required library techniques which had not yet been fully developed in India. It was, therefore, necessary that the states should have experience in these techniques. For this purpose the Government of India had a subsidiary scheme, wherein it recommended to the state governments to set up 'integrated library service' units in every area selected by them under the First Five Year Plan for intensive educational development."

"The 'intensive area' scheme was essentially an experimental project to watch the impact of a number of educational institutions in an area comprising about 100 villages. Besides the library unit and other educational services, the area was also to have 5 model community centres. It was intended that in every such area there should be a headquarter library with a network of branches in every community centre from which books would be distributed to 20 villages or so within reach of a community centre. These libraries were thus in the nature of a circulating library.
system, served through deposit stations and mobile vans or a fleet of cycles. This pilot project type of "integrated library service" was taken up in 29 areas in the country."

The scheme for the development of public library service came into force in 1952. But it made its mark only during 1953-54.12

By the end of the First Five Year Plan in March 1956, nine States including West Bengal had prepared plans for setting up their central libraries.13

All this improvement in library service had cost a little over a crore of rupees of which two-thirds had been contributed by the Government of India.14

"In 1952, the Government of India initiated the community development programme, 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."15

The second Five Year Plan (1956-61) was drawn up more systematically and methodically which for the first
time included a scheme for public library development, and this practice has since been continued though intermittently. The Plan envisaged three objectives. First, that state and district libraries would be set up in each state, second, that library service should be organized on the foundation of well thought-out legislation and third, that district libraries would be linked with village libraries on the one hand and with State Central Library and National Library on the other. The Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act (1960) modelled on the Madras Public Libraries Act reflected that idea.  

During the second Five Year Plan an important step was taken by the Government of India. A committee called Advisory Committee for Libraries was appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, under the Chairmanship of Sri K.P. Sinha to go into the whole gamut of libraries in India. The Committee submitted its report to the Education Minister, Govt. of India on 12 November 1958. The report was published in 1959.  

The Report is a landmark for the progress of libraries in India, having stated eight major recommendations for the establishment of an integrated library service in the country.
During the third Five Year Plan (1961-66) the Government of India realized that 'an adequate system of libraries is an essential part of any well-organized system of education.'

It was further conceded that during the Plan steps would be taken to set up or develop all four National Libraries at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

Provisions were also made for strengthening libraries at State headquarters and for increasing the number of libraries at the district and taluka levels. During this Plan some universities were encouraged for research in library science and facilities for training library personnel.

Meanwhile Library legislation was adopted by two more Indian states: Karnataka (1965) and Maharashtra (1967).

In 1960, following the recommendations of the Advisory Committee For Libraries, the Government of India appointed a committee for drafting a library bill. This was submitted to the Ministry of Education in 1963 and the ministry circulated the Bill for comments to state governments and professional associations in 1964. But no tangible result came out of this Bill.
Another attempt to draft a model Bill was made. The Planning Commission of India constituted a Working Group consisting of 18 members on 15 June 1964, to advise on the development of libraries in India during the fourth Five Year Plan. The Working Group submitted its report on 7 September 1965. Apart from suggesting a detailed library development scheme for establishing rural libraries and improving the existing libraries in the country it drafted a model Public Library Bill. It met with the same fate as the earlier Model Bill since no action was taken on it.23

In 1966 the Govt. of India set up a National Advisory Board for libraries which was to advise the central government and the state governments on all matters pertaining to libraries especially regarding establishment, improvement, re-organisation, popularisation and co-ordinated development of libraries. But nothing is made known of it. It is also not known whether the committee had ever met or submitted any report.24

In May 1972, an autonomous body called Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation was established by the Government of India in the erstwhile Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Culture. The objective of the Foundation is to support and promote library services in the country in co-operation with State and Union Territory
governments and other organisations working in the field. It has in its objectives twenty nine important clauses. An analysis of the objectives shows that the Foundation was envisaged as a promotional and consultancy organ, a financing institution and an executing body for library development in the country.25

As already stated the Foundation has in its objectives twenty nine important clauses. The fourth clause reads as: "to propagate the adoption of library legislation in the country."26 If we presume that the Foundation had made all possible efforts for the said propagation during the first fifteen years (1972-1987) of the Foundation, we shall have to admit that during this period the net result of all such efforts produced nothing tangible. Only West Bengal enacted a library law (1979) during this period but that she has done without any propagation from the side of the Foundation.

In 1977, Dr. D.R. Kalia was asked by the Department of Culture, Govt. of India to bring up-to-date information contained in his last survey of January 1965 and formulate the sixth Five Year Plan for public library development in the country. The following were the findings of Dr. Kalia set forth in the second survey:
1. "Only Maharashtra has adopted Public Library Legislation since 1965, but without imposing any library cess. Funds are provided out of the State revenue."

2. "Library legislation has not been introduced in any Union Territory."

3. "Of 22 States, 15 have state central libraries or 68% of them."

4. "Of the nine Union Territories, four have central libraries or 44% of them."

5. "Of 400 districts, 291 have district central libraries or 75% of them."

6. "Of 5,027 blocks, 1,798 have block libraries or 36% of them."

7. "Of 5,75,938 villages, 41,828 villages, having libraries or 7% of them."

8. "Of 2,643 towns, 1,280, i.e., 49% have libraries either run by State or voluntary organisations."

9. "102 Nehru Yuvak Kendras have libraries and 25 Bal Bhavans, children's libraries are established."
During the past three decades after independence the pace of public library development in India was no doubt very slow. The Government of India, as we all know, did not act on the recommendations of the committees set up to suggest ways for developing the public library system in the country. The net position was that four libraries Acts were passed during a period of thirty years after independence. Only less than one third of India in area and population was covered by the library Acts and so, by any library service worth the name. The rest of the country was left to its lot.

Library development in India during the period under review could have been accelerated if India had enacted a Union Library Bill at the centre; and a Public Library Bill in each of the constituent States forming the Indian Union. But, in India libraries are in the State List. They were not brought into the concurrent List along with the Education by the Amendment to the constitution. Hence, their progress was stunted and the Government of India couldn't do much except establishing the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation in 1972 to provide matching grants to the state libraries.

In the preceding paragraphs an effort has been made to trace the public library development in India in a general outline during 1947-77, first thirty years after independence.
Herein we shall further continue the same account in more detail about the position in West Bengal. In undivided Bengal, we have seen that the educated people of the State were library minded and the spirit of nationalism and political consciousness of the people was the main cause for the development of small subscription libraries in the State. But these libraries were deprived of government grants, and thus they survived only on donations and subscriptions.

The public library development in West Bengal which was rather feeble before independence, was accelerated and energized to some extent since the achievement of independence. The libraries in the State which so long received hindrance rather than help from the government, were given aid both in the form of money and book loans; district and rural libraries were established and a new inspiration was observed in the field of public libraries in the State.

As already stated the Union Government in its first Five Year Plan made provision for the establishment of new public libraries and development of a library system covering the existing public libraries in the States. In West Bengal, the first attempt for the development of public libraries was initiated in the first Five Year Plan when the West Bengal Government provided a grant of Rs.1,06,100 for this purpose in 1950-51.
Under the scheme of integrated library services inaugurated in 1952-53 the central library at Banipur 24-Parganas district and three area libraries at Kalanabagram, Burdwan; Sarisha, 24-Parganas; and Sriniketan, Birbhum, were established. Four area libraries attached to as many community centres in the Kalimpong area were also sanctioned.

From the report of the Director of Public Instruction, Government of West Bengal published in 1958 we come to know that the library development organization of the State was placed under the broad-based category of social education in-charge of the Chief Inspector of Social Education. So far as public libraries were concerned non-recurring grants ranging from Rs.600/- to Rs.200/- were made to the existing public libraries in the State with the object of enabling them to improve their stocks of books, and furniture etc. One of the conditions upon which such grants were sanctioned was that these libraries must maintain free reading rooms and offer special reading facilities to groups of neo-literates, women and children. The following figures will show the development that was very perceptible from year to year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of aided public libraries</th>
<th>No. of books in stock</th>
<th>No. of persons benefited</th>
<th>Total Amount (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>5,00,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>64,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>9,11,500</td>
<td>1,98,700</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this connection it may be noted that in order to be eligible for grant in aid a library had to fulfil certain conditions laid down by the government. The conditions were:

1) should have a properly constituted Managing Committee;

2) should be open to the public;

3) should preferably have its own building;

4) should have a registered body.\(^3\)

For the purpose of grant-in-aid, public libraries were divided into three categories. Those with a total collection of at least 10,000 volumes and with an annual budget of Rs.3,000 were placed in category A\(\text{a}\) and were generally given an annual grant of Rs.600/-. Libraries with at least 3,000 volumes and budget of Rs.1,000/- were included in category B and received a grant of Rs.400/- per year. Small libraries with a collection of at least 500 volumes and with an annual budget of Rs.300/- were classified category C and received annual grant of Rs.200/-. These grants were to be utilised for books, equipment and furniture.\(^3\)

The grants received by the public libraries from the government were inadequate. Such meagre grants only helped to maintain small and inefficient library units, even though
the libraries sought to augment their finances by subscrip-
tions.

During this period non-recurring grant of Rs.3,000/- to Rs.2,500/- were made respectively to the West Bengal Library Association and the Howrah District Library Association for co-ordinating the activities of the libraries affiliated to these bodies.  

Moreover under the Five Year Educational Development Plan, it was contemplated by the West Bengal Government to organise a state-wide library service by setting up a State Central library and district libraries in the districts ramifying into union or village libraries.

During the financial year 1956-57 the West Bengal Government sanctioned Rs.1,20,000/- as grants-in-aid for the development of the public libraries in the state. This grant was given by the Education Department. Besides the Development department of the Government released a grant of Rs.100 per Block Library.

With a view to appreciating the magnitude of what was actually done in public library development in the State by the West Bengal Government under the first two Five Year Plans (1951-56 and 1956-61), the Report of Advisory Committee for Libraries appointed by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, which went all round India after they had
circulated their long questionnaire is given below. The Report states:

"West Bengal has its State Central Library and a District Library in every district. Twenty-three Area Libraries have been organised in as many selected areas to bring library service closer to the people. Each Area Library has under it six Feeder Libraries. The Government is running directly the State Central and two Regional Libraries set up in two areas selected for intensive educational development, while it has entered into contractual agreement with voluntary organisations which have distinguished library service on their record, for setting up District Libraries and Area Libraries. Two hundred and sixty-four village libraries have also been set up by the State Government on thana-wise basis in rural areas. All these libraries are under the charge of the Education Department which has entrusted with the supervision of libraries to the Chief Inspector for Social Education. Apart from the libraries set up and sponsored by the Government, there are in West Bengal over 2,500 subscription libraries of various sizes."

The scheme of development of public libraries in West Bengal as envisaged by the first three Five Year Plans were as follows: the state central library at the apex and the district library below it with area libraries,
and rural libraries on thana-wise basis below them. The state central library was intended to be the controlling and coordinating authority for all public library development services and organisation in the State. The district libraries used to act as spearheads for library expansion and development in the rural areas and also to coordinate and develop all library activities within the district. The District Library Committee was a mixed body of a few officials and non-officials. Sub-divisional and town libraries were also planned on a smaller scale. Apart from the district libraries there were area libraries in selected areas. This kind of library would serve a smaller area covering a radius of 10 or 12 miles. To an area library were attached a number of smaller libraries situated in the inner and remoter parts through which books from the central pool were sent out to the reading public. The district libraries were the main developmental organisation for rendering library service to rural areas.

In the financial year 1969-70 a sum of 43,23,000 rupees was given in annual grants by West Bengal Government to the public libraries in the State. Along with the establishment of new public libraries, progress had also been made in the provision of library buildings, furniture and equipment. Over and above a reasonably coherent library system was established, with a state central library
in Calcutta, over 68 districts and area libraries and 579 rural libraries, with a total staff of over 1,500 at the end of fourth Five Year Plan. While it was a source of satisfaction that public library service had been created, it could not be denied that it was far from ideal. Since the entire service was under the Department of Social Education, the Directorate of Social Education at the district level was in overall charge of the district library and was under the District Social Education Officer who used to supervise the work of the district librarian. Thus there was a three dimensional control of libraries, under the district library by the District Social Education Officer, the Block Development Officer and the Circle Assistant, which was a problem in itself. The rural libraries were inspected by the Circle Assistant under the orders of the District Social Education Officer and used to give instructions for execution. The Block Development Officer used to send his staff for inspection and instruction as the rural library received grants from the National Extension Service, which was under the control of the Block Development Officer. The libraries received grants for funds for furniture and books from the District Education Officer. All these three agencies tried to help the nascent libraries, and the officers generally insisted that their instructions
regarding the functioning of the libraries being carried out. But it was very amusing to note that how self contradictory these instructions occasionally were, as none of these departments had professionally trained personnel for helping a library in the proper sense of the term. Library development in the true perspective could not be envisaged by the officers of the three departments as none of them had any idea as to the proper requisites of library development and hence no significant progress was possible and there was a constant hitch with the trained library personnel and the untrained supervisory staff. The District Social Education Officer, in overall charge of the library, seldom consulted the librarian of the district library in making decisions and as a result the natural progress of the library used to suffer very much.

Above all, the lack of a legislative and tax base necessarily made for uncertainty in future planning. 39

However, the rules of maintenance grants to sponsored public libraries were revised by the government in 1972. Earlier there was no fixed grants for the sponsored libraries. According to revised rules, the percentage in the rates of grants were unified for all the category of libraries.
The table below (Table I) will show the position of annual maintenance grants to different categories of sponsored public libraries in the state up to 1977.

### Table - I: Table showing Rate of Annual Grants (in rupees) up to 1977.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items of grant</th>
<th>State Central Library</th>
<th>Uttarpara J.K. Library</th>
<th>Dist. Library</th>
<th>Sub-Divisional/Town Library</th>
<th>Rural/Area/Primary - Unit Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books &amp; Periodicals</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>No grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding &amp; Preservation</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>No grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>31000</td>
<td>11000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Van</td>
<td>42000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No grant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grant for each Library.</td>
<td>123000</td>
<td>36000</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B.: Uttarpara J.K. Library (District Library Status), one of the oldest and richest public libraries in the State receive extra grants since the government had taken control of the library and declared it as a government sponsored public library in the State.
By 1977, there were 762 Government controlled and sponsored public libraries in West Bengal.41

Public libraries established during the year 1947-77 is shown below district-wise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Govt. Controlled/Public Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Parganas</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Dinajpur</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnapore</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role Played by Bengal Library Association

We have already discussed that with the establishment of the Bengal Library Association the root of organising a state wise library movement started gaining grounds in Bengal. The history of the organised library movement in West Bengal ( earlier Bengal ) is no doubt the history of the achievements of the Bengal Library Association.\(^{42}\)

Since, early thirties, the Association was striving hard for enactment of Public Library Legislation for the State. The Association realised that without library legislation no integrated library system can be developed. In 1932 Kumar Munindra Dev Roy Mahasaya's effort and in 1956 Prof. Nirmal Bhattacharya's effort went into wilderness.\(^{43}\) Prof. Bhattacharya, the then member of the Legislative Council of West Bengal, prepared a draft Library Bill for West Bengal. But the Bill also had the provisions for levying Cess which pertained to finance and as no such Bill as carried financial matters could be raised in the Upper House it could not be moved on technical ground.\(^{44}\) Ceaseless efforts to achieve this goal were made.

In the year 1958 during the Bengal Library conference held at Nabadwip in Nadia district presided over by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan the Association again contemplated over the issue. In the conference Dr. Ranganathan presented
a Draft Public Library Bill for West Bengal. After the conference was over Dr. Ranganathan met Roy Harendra Nath Chowdhury, the then Education Minister of West Bengal who was also once the President of the Bengal Library Association and requested him to take necessary steps for the enactment of library law in the State. But this time also the West Bengal Government did not proceed to promulgate such law.45

But the Bengal Library Association did not stop its efforts. It discussed the matters relating to library legislation besides other aspects of public library system encompassing the library legislation in its many conferences held between 1954-1977.46

Some more time elapsed and finally in 1979, the State of West Bengal became the fifth State in the country which introduced the public libraries legislation.

Library Science Education

Like other corners of library movement, the library science education also received patronage from different corners during the period under review.
In West Bengal, the growth of library services has resulted from the awareness within the people of the necessity for libraries. The training aspect in librarianship has naturally evolved out of this. The pioneers of the library movement in undivided Bengal were found busy actively advocating introduction of courses in librarianship in Bengal since the beginning of the 1930's. The first library science training course in Bengal was introduced by the Hooghly District Library Association at Bansberia in association with the Bengal Library Association in June 1934. Being encouraged at the success of the course, the Bengal Library Association started a certificate course in librarianship in 1937. The Imperial Library, Calcutta, started a training course for librarians which continued till 1945. The University of Calcutta started diploma course in library science in 1946.

However, an accelerated growth of library science institutions took place in the state since the achievement of independence. In 1955 a week-end training course in library science was introduced by Bengal Library Association in different camps in remote parts of West Bengal and in villages for the training of rural and other library workers who could not afford to avail themselves of the facilities of training provided by the Association at the Calcutta Centre.
In 1962, R.K. Mission Boys' Home District Library, started a certificate course in library science at Rahara, 24-Parganas, sponsored by the Govt. of West Bengal in order to cater to the needs of trained man-power for the public libraries in the State. It is a course mainly aimed at training the hundreds of untrained working librarians working in the public libraries in West Bengal. 50

The next landmark was the opening of the library science course by the Jadavpur University in 1964. The next move in the matter was taken by the Burdwan University in 1965, when it started a library science course under its auspices. 51 The University of Calcutta upgraded its diploma course in library science and the course was renamed as Bachelor of Library Science Course. The two year Master Degree Course in Library Science was started by Calcutta University in 1975. 52

In mid-sixties when none of the universities in Eastern India offered a masters level programme in Library and Information Science, IASLIC thought fit to start a one year course in Special Librarianship and Documentation. But it ran only for two years. 53
Library Science Literature

The output of literature in Library Science was impressive during the period under review. Bengal Library Association has done pioneering work in bringing out library science literature both in Bengali and English during the thick of the library movement and also after the formation of West Bengal. In the third decade of the century, when the Association came to exist in its present name Bengal Library Association (formerly the name of the Association was All Bengal Library Association), it started bringing out its official organ under the title "Bengal Library Association Bulletin - Bangiya Granthagar Parishad Patrika". It was then a bilingual journal, continued up to 1951 (1937 - 1951). From December 1951, the Association started publishing its organ under the title 'Granthagar', a quarterly journal in Bengali. Later on since 4 May, 1956, it became a monthly.54 'Granthagar' provided an opportunity to many professional enthusiasts to write articles in Bengali regarding the activities of the Association, government circulars, library movement, news regarding activities of various libraries, reviews on books on library and information science, etc.55

As stated earlier during the first three decades since independence there had been a substantial expansion
of library science education in West Bengal. As a result there had been a corresponding increase in the number of professionals who gave a powerful impetus to the library science literature in West Bengal, a wave set in. During the first three decades after independence many good books in Bengali on library science from the pens of scholarly librarians were published. Nearly 20-25 books written in Bengali were published during the period under review.  

Some of the good books published in Bengali between 1947-77 on library science are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sri Bimal Kumar Dutta</td>
<td>Granthagar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Rabindra Sahitye Granthagar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Granthagar-O-Prachar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl. No.</td>
<td>Name of the Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sri Rajkumar Mukhopadhyay</td>
<td>Granthagar Bijyaner Abhidhan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sri Subodh Kumar Mukhopadhyay</td>
<td>Granthagar-Bijyan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Sri Kunal Singha</td>
<td>Prachin Granthasangraha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Sri Aditya Ohdedar</td>
<td>Grantha Bidya.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other than Bengali a good number of books in English were also published on library science during this period.

Publication of reference books was also an important step during this period. During the thirties the first select bibliography was compiled and published by the Bengal Library Association to select good books. Another select bibliography was also published in 1962 by the Association. A comprehensive children's books in Bengali under the title 'Bangla Sisusahitya : Granthapurji' was published in 1965 by the Association. 57
The first Bengal Library Directory was compiled by the Bengal Library Association in 1942. Its second edition under the title 'West Bengal Library Directory' was published in 1963. The main information about libraries in West Bengal can be obtained from this admirable Directory that attempted to cover every type of library, irrespective of its stock or resources, status or standing.

Two important collections containing many important articles by library professionals were also published during this period, one on the occasion of the 18th Bengal Library conference held at Purulia in 1971. Another special issue was published in 'Granthagar' in 1975 during the golden jubilee celebration of the Association. It contained an updated history of several facts of library movement in West Bengal during the 20th Century.

In pre-independence days, when foreigners were ruling the country, no serious attention was paid to education. Their main intention was to administer India, for their benefit. They were not interested in socio-economic transformation of Indian society. Education then, was therefore, job oriented and no sincere attempt was made by the then government to bring about any quantitative or qualitative expansion of education, particularly at the grass-root level. The British Raj did not encourage the development of public
libraries under the psychological apprehension that free public library service might accelerate political urge for freedom. This was really so as many libraries established at that time all over Bengal was the product of voluntary effort. It was only after independence that the expansion of education took place. The library movement started gaining momentum with the advancement of education in post independence era. Immediately after independence a concerted effort was therefore, made by the central and state governments for the development of public libraries in the country. But the enthusiasm perceptible in the early years of independence did not last long. All the efforts wrecked mostly on the rock of finance. Despite the relentless efforts and thoughts given to this Subject, only four Acts had been passed during a period of thirty years after independence. The will was there, the sympathy was there but the problem hinged on library legislation. The Central Government wished to maintain a show of doing something by giving small doles to the states and union territories but that too not on a regular basis.

State Governments were no less active. Some of them set up committees, working groups and the like for reviewing library position and drafting of public libraries bill. Dr. Ranganathan so long as he lived went on submitting
bills after bills expecting that something would be done by the Government. Some individuals as well as professional associations also submitted draft bills hoping every time that something good would come out of it. But all the efforts floundered.

In West Bengal after Independence the State Government took some programme for development of public libraries from the First Five Year Plan. Though this step for library development was a departure from the preceding period under British rule, it can not be denied that it was far from ideal.

It had the following defects:

1) The long-felt demand for library legislation was not given due consideration.

2) Government sponsored public libraries were created unsystematically without judging the need and existing conditions of library services in the locality.

3) The public libraries in the State were operating in a scattered and unintegrated way. No organized library system did materialize covering all these libraries.

4) Non-sponsored public libraries in the State did not receive any assistance from the government. As the development of govt. sponsored public libraries were uneven
and not all parts of the State were covered, it was expec-
ted that these libraries would receive some sort of assis-
tance from the government. But their expectations were
not fulfilled. For want of an organized state library
system the non-sponsored public libraries were operating
on an individual basis.

5) Govt. controlled and sponsored public libraries
at that time were severely affected by financial crisis.
For example, Rural/Area Libraries, numbering 701 by the
year 1977, received no grant for purchase of books. They
had annual grant of Rs.600/- only for contingency expen-
diture. Town/Sub-Divisional and District Libraries had
meagre grant of Rs.1800/- and 3000/- respectively for
purchase of books every year. There were no grants for
furniture and preservation of library materials to any
of these libraries ( Table - I ).

6) Salary and service conditions of library staff
were extremely distressing.

However, with the zeal and struggle of the people
of the State, the West Bengal Public Libraries Act came
into force in 1979.
The efforts made by the stalwarts of the library movement in Bengal before the formation of West Bengal and the consistent efforts made by Bengal Library Association for getting the library law enacted needs special mention.

In the next chapter (Chapter - 6) an attempt is made to discuss the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in detail.
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46. Appendix - IV

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