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# Renewing of Library Service



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## Key enablers –

- Easy Online Access to the All Libraries of the west Bengal.
- One stop location for the Community Information System.
- Centralized Management System for all Libraries in West Bengal.
- Virtual Library Accessible from anywhere in the world.
- Low operational cost.
- Easy Maintenance.
- Expanding the scope of access to the various innovative aspects around the globe.

## West Bengal – Brief History about Public Library

West Bengal has an enriched tradition of library movement. As per descriptive account of Fa Hien in the 5th century we came to know that there was a good library in the "Tamralipta Mahabihar". This place is currently known as Tamruk, a small town of East Midnapore District.

The journey continues with the formation of Asiatic Society in 1784 with the establishment of Fort William College Library in 1800 and several other academic libraries.

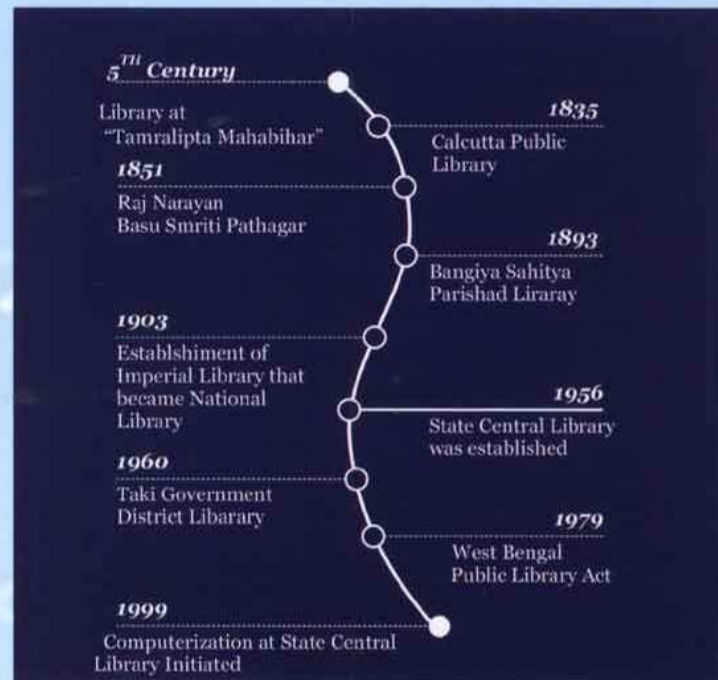
Concept of first public library was initiated during the year 1835. The necessity of common people to have access to the knowledge platform was recognized in a public meeting held in 1835. As a result, the Calcutta Public Library was established in the year of 1836 at a residence of a Civil Surgeon of 24 Parganas Districts. The library was later shifted to Metcalf Hall at Strand Road during 1841.

A large number of public library creation have started after the successful establishment of Calcutta Public Library in 1936 followed by the enactment of Public Library Law in England in the year 1950. The following list are the few examples of the public library established after 1850

Name of The Library	Establishment Year
Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar	1851
Hoogly Public Library	1854
Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library	1859
Serampore Public Library	1871
Indian Association Library	1876
Taltala Public Library	1882
Bali Public Library	1884
Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library	1893

West Bengal Public Library Act was passed in the year 1979. West Bengal was the 5th State in India after Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra for enacting the Public Library Act. The First Computerization at state Central Library was initiated in the year 1999.

## ROAD MAP



## Existing library setup in Bengal

The diagram below shows some of the most important facts about the West Bengal Libraries.

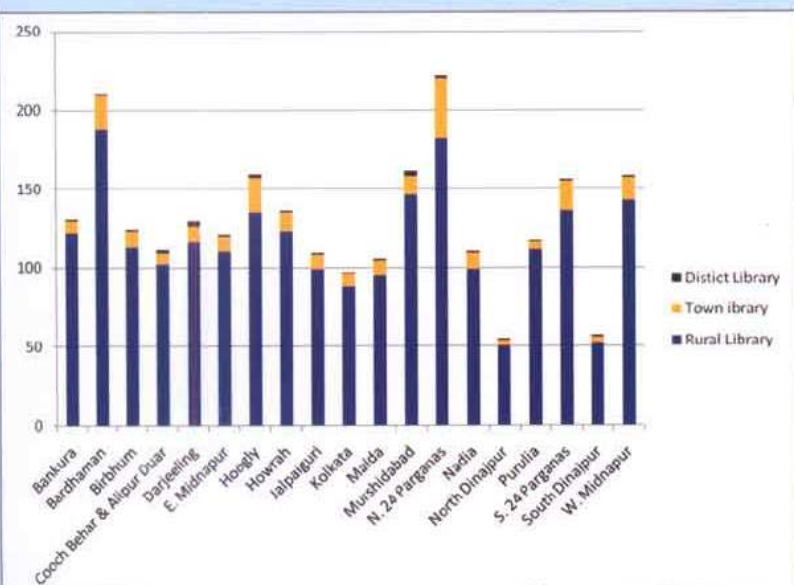




The diagram below shows the different tiers of libraries managed by West Bengal Government.



The Diagram Below provides district wise break up for the District, Town and the Rural Libraries of West Bengal



## The initiative taken so far

### Computerization Project for Public Libraries –

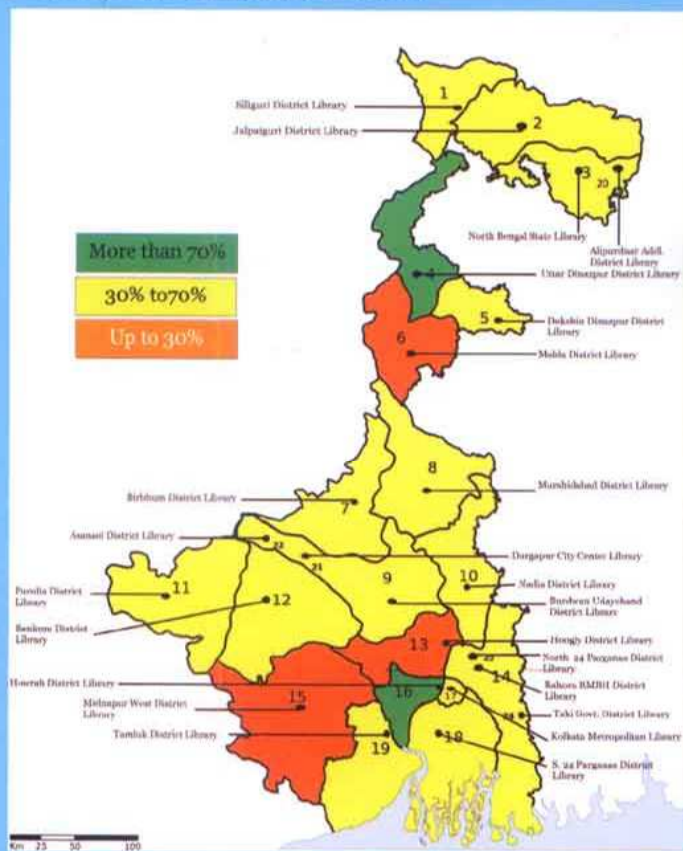
The purpose of this initiative was to introduce the scope of computerization across all tiers of libraries in the state of West Bengal. The scope was extended to State Central Library, District Libraries and Town and Rural libraries. The facts below shows some of the achievements at the respective years.

- 1999 – The Computerization of Libraries started its journey by introducing a server with 4 GB of hard disk space and few computers with 2 GB of hard disk space at State Central Library. The operating system for these computer was Windows 97. Microsoft Office 97 was used for documentation purpose. CDIS/ISIS was used as library management software during that period. A significant number of bibliographic records were entered into the system via the user interface provided by library management system.
- 2006 – During this period, the old library management software was replaced by using modern Library Management Software. The new management software that came into use was Libsys. At the same time, old computers was replaced with the new higher capacity system.
- 2009 – The scope of computerization was not restricted to the urban environment. The scope was extended to 25 district libraries across all the 20 districts in the state. Libsys was used as Library management software for district libraries as well. A 5 year computerization project was also introduced during this period.
- 2010 – A web portal <http://www.wbpublibnet.gov.in> was introduced to disseminate various information of libraries. Digital Library, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), community information system along with various other functionalities were hosted using this portal. Presently there are over 5,00,000 visitor per year for this system.
- 2011 – The scope was extended to over 170 Town libraries. The open sources Library Management Software Koha was used for town Library.
- 2013 – The scope was extended upto the level of rural library. 200 more libraries were brought under the light of computerisation.





The Map below shows that location of the District libraries and the status of computerization for town libraries.



### Digitization Project –

The initiative to digitize primarily involved the activity to scan rare collection of books and make it available to the readers. The activity helped to preserve some of the rare manuscripts which are quite challenging to maintain at the physical state.

- 2007 – Urgency to preserve the rare books was realized during this period and the idea of Digitization was introduced. The State Central Library, North Bengal SL and Uttarpara JPL were included in this scope.
- 2014 – The activity was extended and over 36,000 rare collection of books were scanned and preserved.
- 2016 – Ongoing activity to digitize over another 5000 rare books.

### Network Connectivity Project-

After going through the phases of computerization and digitization, now the necessity to establish collaboration among the libraries grew up. The National Knowledge Network was supportive to provide the high speed internet connectivity for the State Central Library.

- 2010 – The concept of networking kicked off. Connectivity was established among the State Central Library and 25 District Libraries.
- 2014 – The connectivity was extended among the SCL and 170 TLs

### Retro Conversion Project –

The cataloguing activity was aimed at categorizing the books under different heads so as to make it easy for a user to select the book of choice without much of an effort.

- 2014 – The first phase of classification of books started across all the DL in the state. About 9 lakhs of books were classified by the end of August.
- 2016 – Over another 12 lakhs of books are targeted to be classified by the end of January 2017. This activity is extended across 100 libraries in the state.

### Community Information System

The Community Information System is the information hub of the Library platform in the state. It is a central repository to some of the basic utilities and topics of interest for the users. The section is linked to some of the topics of interest like Bengal Heritage, Districts of West Bengal as well linked to some prime utilities like Career Guide, Citizen Awareness, Police and Disaster Management and so on. The users can make use of this segment as a one stop bay to knowledge, recreation as well as citizens' help corner.

The section is present under the public domain at <http://wbpublibnet.gov.in/>.

### The New Initiative –

#### Centralized Library Management Software –

The objective of this initiative is to create a centralized umbrella to host all the various library entities. By implementing this process, the registered users will be able to access any library in the state from any corner. The users will get to see the list of available books from any library in the state using common online public access network (OPAC). User can choose any single library, a group of libraries and all library to check the availability of any book. The user will have the privilege to hold a book for a specified period from any library which is located at a far distance for the user's location and visit the library later on to collect it.

#### Virtual Library-

A virtual library is a hub for resources hosted at the digital platform which the registered users can make use of by means of an interface. The users will get the feel of navigating a library on the online platform and search for and read any book of their choice from the provided list. This implementation will give the users the feel of a virtual rack with the relevant collection of books sorted out in the proper order, just as it is on any physical library rack.

#### Advantage of Virtual Library

- Virtual library can have lakhs of books in digital format for each segment of society.
- Provide library facilities to maximum people of the society, by saving their time and journey. A member can access Virtual Library from anywhere in the State, need not come physically.
- The users will develop the reading discipline by following the library rules.
- Persons can avail facility through mobile application and will be interactive on 24\*7 basis.