

Chapter- II

Organizational and Administrative Structure

Organizational Structure:

The organizational structure of the Varendra Research Society was reasonably taken from, no other than the Asiatic Society of Bengal. But not only Varendra Research Society, similar kind of institutions established in 19th and 20th centuries, influenced by the structure of Asiatic Society, share similar kind of organizational structures.

The following accounts for the exact structure of the Varendra Research Society:

Patron→Vice-patrons→ Vice- presidents→Ordinary Members→ Associate Members→ Honorary Members.

Patron: From the dawn of its establishment there was a patron of VRS who was the Head of the province, i.e. the Governor of Bengal. Lord Carmichael was the first patron of VRS.¹ In order to witness the society's activities in 1912 he came to Rajshahi, and the archaeological artefacts collected by the society pleased him much.²

Vice-patrons: Mainly, the District Magistrate/Divisional Commissioner and the donor Zaminders and the Zaminders associated with the spread of knowledge were supposed to be selected to this post. FJ Monahan, the friend and admirer of the society in its calamitous opening days, was the first Vice-patron.³ In this post simultaneously at best five people had extended their helping hand.⁴ But in 1927 this post was extinct. The last Vice-patron was Pramadanath Roy of Dighapatiya.⁵

Vice presidents: This honorary post was created in 1915-16. Justice Sir J.G. Woodroffe had the credit to adorne this post at first .⁶ Later on this post was occupied by the Superintendent

of the Archaeological Survey of India and distinguished scholars. At the same time three people at max occupied this post.

Ordinary or paying members: All the subscribed members fall into this category. These members are divided in two classes:

a) Resident (in Rajshahi Town) and

b) Non-resident ⁷

In fact the subscription money of these ordinary members' fuelled the treasury of the society.

From these members the President, Director and Secretary, Treasurer and others were elected for the Council of Management. The maximum number of members (123) was enlisted in 1933-34.⁸

Associate members: The members under the above head were connected with the VRS but they were not bound to pay the subscription money like other ordinary members. They were not even bound to attend all the meetings of the society. But these people helped the society on several occurrences.⁹ In the period of 1932-1937 their maximum number which was 11, is listed.

Honorary members: Famous scholars but Interested in the activities of VRS were given this honorary post. Incidentally, French scholar A. Foucher adorned this post for a long time as one and only member. Later this number was increased to the maximum of three.¹⁰

Administrative structure:

To administer the activities of the Varendra Research Society, there was a Council of Management. At the outset there were 11(eleven)¹¹ members and subsequently the number

revolved to 12(twelve). However, Mukhlesur Rahman talked about 13 members (of the Mangement Council) which is not confirms by means of the evidences.¹² Possibly he included the Assistant Librarian in the list. But it is not mentioned in a single document that the Assistant Librarian was the member of the Council of Management. Even the Annual Reports do not expose an indication of it. Whatever the case may be, the Council was consisted of the following members:

1.	President
2.	Director
3.	Honorary Seretary
4.	Assistant Honorary Secretary
5.	Honorary Treasurer
6.	Honorary Librarian
7.	Honorary Keeper
8.	Member(ordinary)
9.	Member(ordinary)
10.	Member(ordinary)
11.	Member(ordinary)
12.	Member(ordinary)

Table no -1

The President and the Director of the Council were used to be elected from the ordinary or paying members designed for a three years occupancy during the annual general meeting and the rest for a year.¹³ It may be mentioned that both the stalwarts namely, Sarat Kumar Ray and Akshaya Kumar Maitra got the opportunity to enjoy the posts of

presidentship and directorship respectively till their last days of their life. In other words, throughout their tenure of office both Sarat Kumar Ray and Akshayay Kumar Maitra were elected every year in the posts mentioned. However, in the last few years of his life, Akshyaya Kumar Maitra could not play an active part in the activities of VRS. And after his death (1930), the post of Director was moved out. It was replaced by a post of Vice President in the Council.¹⁴

There was always an honorary auditor in the Society to audit the financial credit of the same. Intended for the apposite maintenance of the Society's museum, the Government of Bengal approved a post of curator in the last month of 1924. Accordingly, Nanigopal Majumdar, a salaried(Rs. 250/- per month) curator was appointed in the commencement of the year 1925.¹⁵ Anyway, in 1926 and 1927, both the year when Nanigopal Majumdar, the salaried curator went away to the excavation at Mehenjodaro along with the Archaeological Department of India(four months each year), Kshitish Chandra Sarkar acted as honorary curator in the absence of the former.¹⁶ Nanigopal Majumdar was succeeded by Nirodbandhu Sanyal as curator who rendered his service in the post for about 23 years(1927- 1950).

To handle the affairs of the office and maintain the security of the museum and the garden, the VRS had some subordinate personnel as under:

Number of Persons	Name of Post	Working place
01	Clerk	Office
01	Peon	Office
01	Durwan	Museum
02	Mali	Garden

Table- 2

The museum and the library of the Society came under a separate Committee of management in 1937 since the Society approached the Provincial Government to take over its

museum under Charitable Endowments Act, 1890, with certain reservation of rights and provisions. Keeping the conservation and development of the museum in view the said proposal was approached. An Endowment (Varendra Research Museum Endowment¹⁷) was also created for the administration of the museum to which an amount of Rs. 30000¹⁸ was charitably contributed by the executors appointed under the will of Basanta Kumar Ray of Dighapatiya.¹⁹ By the notification (Government of Bengal) no 3227 Mis. Dated the 6th November, 1937, the administration of the museum was entrusted to a Committee comprising of:²⁰

i) The Magistrate of Rajshahi district who was elected as the chairman of the Museum administration. The first chairman was R. H. G. Johoston.

ii) Principal of the Rajshahi College.

iii) The Superintendent of Archaeology, Eastern Circle. Although it was replaced by the Superintendent of the archaeological section of Indian Museum by the Government notification No. 242 Tmisc. dated the 13th October, 1939.

iv) A representative of the Trustees of Kumar Basanta Kumar Ray Fund and in the absence of any such Trustee a representative of the descendants of Raja Promoda Nath Ray Bahadur in the male line. It was Mahendra Kumar Saha Chaudhury who was nominated as the first representative of Kumar Basanta Kumar Ray's Trust Fund to the committee.

v) Sarat Kumar Ray and after his death a representative of his family in the male line.

vi) Two representatives of the Varendra Research Society. It is to be noted that Rai Bahadur Brojendra Mohan Maitra and Durgadas Bhattacharyya were elected first as the representatives from Varendra Research Society to the Committee of Management of the Museum.

vii) Three representatives (non-official) of the following three divisions of Bengal- Rajshahi, Presidency and Burdwan- which were to be nominated by Provincial Government. Accordingly, Saradindu Narayan Ray, the Zamindar of Dinajpur, J. C. Maitra, the Principal of Berhampur College and Taraknath Mukherjee, the Chairman of Hugli District Board were nominated first as the non-official representatives of the Government of Bengal to the Committee from Rajshahi, Presidency and Burdwan divisions.²¹

viii) Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda, one of the founder members of the VRS and after his death a representative of the Calcutta or any other duly constituted University to which the Rajshahi College was for the time being affiliated.

ix) Curator of the Museum was appointed as the secretary to the Committee. Naturally, Nirodbandhu Sanyal, the then curator became the first secretary of the Committee. But it is noticeable that the secretary had no voting right.

Sketch of the Committee of Mangement of Varendra Research Museum

Serial No.	Members	Important Designation
1.	District Magistrate of Rajshahi	Chairman
2.	Principal of Rajshahi College	
3.	Superintendent of Archaeology, Eastern Circle	
4.	A representative of the Trustees of Basanta Kumar Ray Trust fund	
5.	Sarat kumar Ray, founder member	
6-7	Two representatives of the VRS	
8-10	Three representatives of Rajshahi, Presidency and burdwan divisions	
11	Ramaprasad Chanda, founder member	
12	Curator of the Museum	Secretary

Table-3

In the post independence phase there were few alterations in the membership of the Committee of Management of the museum owing to the partition. However, the basic structure remained unaffected. The alterations were:²²

- i) Superintendent of Archaeological section of Indian Museum was replaced by Superintendent of Archaeology of East Pakistan.
- ii) Earlier there was the provision to elect three members from three divisions (Rajshahi, Presidency & Burdwan). But after the partion all three members of this category had to elect only from Rajshahi division.

iii) Following the death of Ramaprsad Chanda (1942), the founder member, a representative of Calcutta University was in the Committee of Management. Since the Calcutta University along with whole Calcutta was included in the Independent India, a representative of Dacca University (1947- 1953) was included in the Committee. And after the establishment of University of Rajshahi, the membership was transferred to a representative of the same.

It is to be noted that though the museum came under a separate Committee of Administration in 1937, the number of subordinate staff in the museum remained same as it was under the management of Varendra Research Society i.e.-

1 Clerk

1 Office peon

1 Durwan²³

2 Mali and

1 Sweeper.

However, the newly formed administrative committee appointed another committee in 1938 to frame rules for the management of the museum and library. The rules and by-laws prepared by the committee were adopted with some modifications by the administrative committee of the museum. Besides the framing of the rules and laws, the administrative committee of the museum also appointed the following standing sub- committees:²⁴

i) Building sub-committee

ii) Library sub-committee and

iii) Publication sub-committee.

After the formation of the library sub- committee, a number of steps were taken to re-organize the library. The library sub-committee classified the collections of the library into three sections:

- i) Valuable books and documents which had gone out of print long ago,
- ii) Books which were available in the market but were very important and expensive and
- iii) Ordinary books which could be replaced more easily.

After classifying the books, the library sub-committee framed some norms for the issue of the same. It was decided that the books of category- 1, should not be issued outside the reading room and books of category-2, might be loaned out only on production of full value of the book as security money and ordinary books might be loaned on signing a receipt which should contain an undertaking to repay the value of the book to the museum in case it was not returned.²⁵

It may be pointed out that there were very few examples of museums in India privately endowed like Varendra Research Museum. It was a general matter in U. S. A. ²⁶ But in India it was one of the rarest examples since most of them were organized, administered and financed by the various governments and states.²⁷

Till the transfer of the museum to the authority of the University of Rajshahi in October, 1964, the Varendra Research Museum and Library was governed and functioned according to the above stated administrative composition.²⁸ However, there was a change in 1950 in the staff pattern of the museum. Salaried curator was replaced by the honorary curator.²⁹ Actually, in 1950, the then curator Nirodbandhu Sanyal migrated to India and no one was appointed in the vacant post of salaried curator. I. H. Zuberi was appointed but as

honorary curator. One more addition was come about. The Committee of Manzement formulated a post of assistant curator in which D. K. Chakravarty was appointed first.³⁰

Following the reassignment of the museum and library to a separate administrative body, even though merely on paper, there was few automatic alterations in the configuration of the Council of Management of Varendra Research Society. In fact, till 1937, the whole thing (including the museum abd library) of the VRS were conducted by a single administrative body. The curator and librarian were important members of the Council of Management of the VRS. But in the altered arrangement, the stated two posts (i.e. curator and librarian) lost its utility in the Council of VRS. Consequently, these two posts were dissolved from the Council of Management of VRS.³¹

It is to be noted that in the post independence phase, the Council of of Mangement of the VRS adopted an added re-organization scheme to infuse a new life in the activities of the Society. Accordingly, the activities of the Society were grouped under following sections: ³²

- i) History and Archaeology
- ii) Literature and Philosophy
- iii) Art
- iv) Ethnology and Anthropology
- v) Natural Science.

Moreover, aforementioned each section was placed under a member to take initiative in organizing research, discussion, meetings, lectures, conferences and exhibitions.

Notes & References:

1. *Annual Report for the year 1925-26.*
2. Panchkari Bandopadhaya, *Vangyer Vaskarjya* in *Shahitya*, volume- 23, No. 7, Calcutta, 1319 B.S.(1912), pp. 554- 572.
3. Ramaprasad Chanda, *Gaudarajamala*, VRS, 1912, republished by Nababharat publishers, Calcutta, 1975, see *Upakramanika*- 0.37.
4. Girishchandra Vedantatirtha (ed.), *Taratantram*, VRS, 1914, See Coverpage. See also Coverpage of *Kashikavivarana Panjika* of Jitendra Buddhi, Volume- II, Part- 1.
5. *Annual Report for the year 1926- 27*, VRS, p. 1.
6. Srishchandra Ckaravarti (ed.), *Kashikavivarana Panjika(The Nyasa)* of Jitendra Buddhi, Volume- 1, Part- V, VRS, 1916, See Coverpage.
7. *Annual Report for the year 1925- 26.*
8. *Annual Report for the year 1933- 34.*
9. *Annual Report for the year 1929- 30.*
10. This figure was touched two times. Firstly, in the period of 1930 - 37 when Sir John Marshall and Ramaprasad Chanda were nominated along with A. Foucher. Secondly, after independence U. N. Ghoshal, Radhagovinda Basak and Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharyya were selected as honorary members.
11. Srishchandra Chakravarti (ed.), *Bhasha- Vritti* of Purushottamdeva, VRS, 1918, See Coverpage. See also *Kashikavivarana Panjika*, op. cit.

12. Mukhlesur Rahman, 'The Varendra Research Society and Museum Rajshahi' in *Studies in Modern Bengal*, edited by S. A. Akanda, The Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, 1981, p. 250.
13. *Annual Report for the year 1925- 26, 1926- 27 & 1929- 30.*
14. *Annual Report for the year 1930- 31.*
15. *Annual Report for the year 1926- 27.*
16. *Annual Report for the year 1927- 28.*
17. *Annual Report for the year 1936- 37 & 1937- 38.*
18. *Annual Report for the year 1935- 36.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Annual Report for the year 1936- 37 & 1937- 38.*
21. *Annual Report for the year 1938- 39.*
22. *Report of the Working of the VRM* (from August 14, 1947 to June 30, 1969), University of Rajshahi, 1969, p. 33.
23. The number of menials (*Durwan*) of the Museum increased 1 to 2 by 1949.
24. *Annual Report for the year 1938- 39.*
25. *loc,cit*
26. *loc.cit.*
27. *Annual Report for the year 1939- 40.*

28. *Report of the Working of the VRM* (from August 14, 1947 to June 30, 1969), University of Rajshahi, 1969, p. 33.

29. *Ibid.* p. 4.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Repot of the working of the Varendra Research Society*, 1949, p. 8.

32. *Ibid.* p. 9.
