



NATIONAL LIBRARY

(Republic of Mauritius)



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Annual Report to CDNL 2014-15

Name of Country: Mauritius

- Name of Library or equivalent national-level organisation: National Library
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General overview of recent major developments

Year 2014 has been a year, whereby the National Library, along with other parastatal organisations experienced several changes.

The number of visitors/users who visited the National Library in 2014 increased by some 18%. The Reading Corner has been replenished with several magazines for leisure reading.

In April 2014, the National Library and the Institut Français de Maurice (French Cultural Centre), organised a one-day workshop for people in the library field.

The World Book Day remains our primary activity, and it was organised in May 2015. The event attracted a big crowd despite heavy rainfall. Due to several external reasons, the National Library, this year could not organise same in Rodrigues.

Microfilming, which was one of the several methods of preservation of old and rare documents, had to be ceased because of the constant breakdown of our equipment.

The General Elections was held in December 2014 and the country experienced a complete change in the Government. The National Library Board was dismissed and the Chairperson resigned with effect from 24 December 2014.

Officially speaking, no new development could be held as from October 2014 to end of the year. The National Library Board has not yet been reconstituted.

Library's relationship to government

The National Library of the Republic of Mauritius is a corporate body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. It is funded by means of a grant received from the central government. The National Library maintains a very good relationship with all the other ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office. The Office of the "*Culture et Avenir*" of the Prime Minister's Office, invites the National Library to participate, free of cost, in its International Book Fair, whereby many foreign authors and publishers meet. Similarly, the National Library is often invited in various activities organised by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, Ministry of Information and Technology, etc. The services of the National Library are highly sought by the Supreme Court, Police Force, various ministries, tertiary institutions and the Press. The Website has been re-vamped to be in line with all other government websites.

Key facts and figures

The library collection which comprises of materials such as books, newspapers, periodicals, annual reports, government gazettes, audio-visual materials, photographs, manuscripts, maps, theses, dissertations, pamphlets and stamps has reached over 510, 000 items. The Collection annually increases by 5% through legal deposits and purchases.

The number of staff is: 27 (as at June 2015)

Total operating budget: Rs 20 million (Mauritian Rupees)

New developments in creating and building collections

Apart from collections regularly received by the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), Window of Shanghai (Shanghai Public Library), Nippon Foundation, the National Library aims to enrich further its Mauritiana Collection. Books published overseas by Mauritian authors settled abroad are constantly being purchased. The number of requests by overseas users is on the high rise.

New developments in managing collections

The digitisation process is still in the pipeline but due to unavailability of fund, the project has not fully started. The preservation and conservation processes of old newspapers and documents are still carried out methodically, since older documents are given priority. This is a long and slow process. Newspapers are microfilmed and other documents are being scanned.

New developments in providing access to collections

All the collection of the National Library are online and users can easily read all the titles and make their requests accordingly. The National Library is also contemplating to open till late in order to allow more people to visit the Reference Section. Requests are accepted by all types of communication – fax, mail, phone and letter.

Collaboration between the reporting library and other national collecting institutions

The National Library participated in several activities organised by the Ministry of Arts and Culture, such as National Day Celebration, Mother Tongue Day.

The National Library welcomed, in the month of September 2014, a delegation from the National Library of China and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two libraries in order to strengthen cooperation and exchange of training and skills.

A photo exhibition was held, in collaboration with the Mauritius Post to commemorate the 114th Birth Anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, in September 2014.

The National Library maintains a close and regular contact with the National Archives. Very often, the National Library directs its users to the National Archives for further search.

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the National Library also maintain very strong bond in matters of activities, publications and other help.