

19th Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania  
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Hosted by National Library of Korea

Country report: Nepal

**1. General Overview in Fiscal; Year 2009/010**

In Nepal, 83 Percent people live in the villages where there is no infrastructure for the easy access to information to update their knowledge; they even have to make a day long journey to make a phone call. In many cases the use of PCs are still for secretarial purposes. This small country with an area of 147,181 square km where 28 million people have more than 100 mother tongues. The economy of the country is mainly agro-based. Besides the traditional libraries established earlier, schools and colleges are also establishing their own libraries. New public libraries are being opened in the initiation of local people and somewhere with the assistance of some NGOs. Rural Education and Development Nepal (READ) helped community libraries whereas Room to Read established thousands of libraries in the community schools in the villages. Both these INGOs also provide assistance to the already established community and school libraries. The READ Nepal an INGO opened 50 community libraries in 39 remote districts of the country, whereas Room To Read opened 2902 school libraries in 24 districts of the country. The government of Nepal distributes some money among public libraries of different districts as grant in an ad hoc basis. National Policy on Library and Information Services 2007 is an important government document in the library and information sector.

Development in the 21st century can not be envisaged without the development and expansion of telecommunication technology: Therefore, The Three Year Interim plan aimed to establish telecentres all over the country to provide different ICT-related telecommunication services. During the tenth plan period (2002-2007), internet/email services were made available in 59 districts and the 1,831,000 pages of newspapers were archived in CD.<sup>1</sup>

There are many public/community libraries registered in Nepal, however, most of them exist only in name. Moreover, those which are functional are either poorly equipped and/or do not cater to the needs of a modern society, In fact, there is not a single modern public library in the country that caters the need of various sectors of the society.

**2. National Library**

The national library of Nepal under Ministry of Education is located at Lalitpur district in Katmandu valley with 23 staff members of which three including chief librarian are qualified librarians, six others are semi-professionals and rest of others are of

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<sup>1</sup> . Nepal National Planning Commission (NPC). Thee Year Interim Plan (2007/8 – 2009/010). Kathmandu: NPC, 2007.

administrative nature. There is no legal depository law in the country. The Library and Information Policy 2007 was approved by the government. Except some sections in the Local Self-Governance Act 1999, there are no other legal provisions governing the library services in the country.

### **2.1. Organizational structure**

The national library is under the ministry of Education directed by a senior librarian and assisted by a bibliographic officer and a library officer. However the collection of this library has been divided according to the languages, because its collection comprises of various languages in different scripts like English, Newari, Maithali, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali. The library staff does not possess modern training to update their traditional knowledge of librarianship.

Because of lack of specified mandate given by the government this library could not function effectively. It lacks well-trained human resources to perform its functions. The library publishes National Union Catalogue and NNL News (half-yearly). None of the collection of this library has been digitized. Its collection comprises of CD Databases and audio cassettes. The local database could be accessed both in English and in Devanagari.

### **2.2 Collection profile**

The collections of most of the libraries do not exceed 50,000. However, some libraries have good collection of national as well as international publications. The Tribhuvan University Central Library has the largest collection (300,000) of books and journals. Nepal National Library has 90,000 collections of books and serials in different languages. There is no national database as such however each library has its own bibliographic databases. Entire collections of Nepal National Library, Kaiser Library, Madan Puraskar Library and Dilliraman Kalyani Regmi Memorial Library could be accessed through OPAC. The special library like the Documentation Centre of ICIMOD has been well managed for the better services.

Madan Puraskar Library, a private library has a unique collection of items published in Nepali and the ancient historic photographs. It has about 30,000 volumes of books and periodicals.

*Dilliraman Kalyani Regmi Memorial Library* also has a good collection of 30,000 books and journals donated by Dr. Dilliramn Regmi.

*National Archives* is a government institution with a collection of ancient rare manuscript. Its collection have been microfilmed and kept safely for future generation. Asa Archives, a privately run library has a good collection of palm leaves and manuscripts. Its collection has been digitized with the financial support of the Japanese group.

*Kathmandu Valley Public Library (KVPL)*. This library was established in 2003 with the active initiation of intellectual groups of Nepal including former diplomats, professors, journalists, industrialists and member of civil society. It has more than 45,000 books, reports and periodicals. Monthly visitors exceed 3000 in this library. Its collection now can be accessed electronically.

### **2.3 Services of the Nepal National Library**

National Library provides only reference service to its users. It provides ILL service globally and mobile services in the Kathmandu valley. National Union Catalogue published by the national library has become an important tool for the referral services. In the absence of Legal Depository Act, this library is not in a position to provide bibliographic services like production of national Bibliography. Two week long training every year is being provided by this library for the working staff of small libraries in the remote districts.

Some libraries have borrowing facilities whereas others do not have such facilities. Most of the academic libraries check out their books to the students and to the teachers. Some public libraries also provide this service including the KVPL.

### **2.4 Promotional campaign**

In cooperation with the NGOs and the INGOs a programme called National Reading Campaign is being performed by the national library. There is no National IFAP Committee, but the concept of Information Literacy is being spread over the community slowly.

The FM radio newspapers and the television stations are promoting the library services in the country. From 2009 onwards, Nepal began to celebrate Library Day ( 15 Bhadra, late August) according to Nepali calendar as annual programme to mark the importance of library service among the public. Under the UNDP support all the District Development Committee has established District Information Centres in all the 75 districts of the country.

### **2.5 Library budget**

The acquisition budget for the last fiscal year remain unchanged i.e NPRs 0.74 million (USD 10,500.). Total budget of the national library is less than 6 million NP Rupees which comes to less than one percent of the total education budget.

### **2.6 Projects seminars, workshops, etc.**

Tribhuvan University Library Science Students' Alumni Association (TULSSAA) team visited eastern region of Nepal and provided consultancy services and held a talk programme in Jhapa. National library and Kaiser Library provides one week basic library management training for the staff of the libraries in the remote districts.

## **3. Library at the national level**

The public libraries have to be registered at the respective District Administration Offices. Total number of different types libraries comes to be nearly 1200, of which the number of public libraries is not more than 6000. Although there is no library council in Nepal, there are library association, TULSSAA and LISSA. Of the five universities, the oldest Tribhuvan University's library is worth mentioning. Many schools do not have library as such. Religious places like Bihars Temples have collection of religious books. The Cyber cafes are widely used by the youth.

### **3.1 Library and human resource development**

Almost all the professional librarians obtained their academic degree from the universities before their recruitment. They obtained their academic degree from India, USA, UK or from Nepal (after 1995). There are quite a few opportunities to update their traditional knowledge. The SAARC Documentation Centre in New Delhi has regular annual programmes to provide training including the 2 years' academic course. The staff of National Library, Tribhuvan University Central Library and other professional librarians from other Departmental libraries obtains such opportunities to refresh themselves. Some international conferences held in Kathmandu are other opportunities for the librarians of Nepal. Mr. Pradeep Bhattarai is doing his Master's Degree in New Delhi (2010-2011). A four day TOT programme was organized by the Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (RECPHEC) for the library professionals in Kathmandu this year.

### **4 Infrastructure**

After the Information Policy 2000 (revised 2010), Telecommunication Policy 2003, Science and Technology Policy 2005, Cyber Law 2005 and the amendment in the Telecommunication Act, ICT services have been flourished in the country. Telecom Companies have distributed 7,23, 648 PSTN, 41,63,495 GSM mobile, 7,22,841 CDMA Mobile, 2,45,025 CDMA Fixed 1,517 GMPCS by mid-March 2009. The total number of telephone users are 58,56,526 by this period.

Total internet service users are 249,385 in 2007. Out of 3915 VDCs 3,479 of them have telephone services whereas all 58 Municipalities have telephone services. Nepal Telecommunication Authority has issued 165 licenses including 33 ISPs in the country. Including the ADSL of Nepal Telecom there are 115,818 internet subscribers.<sup>2</sup>

There are 24 TV channels (2 Government) in operation and licenses are issued for 556 cable TV transmission. Licenses for 321 FM radios were issued during the period of which 162 are in operation. Two state-run TV is being transmitted among 2/3 of the people and the Radio Nepal (government owned) with Short Wave and Medium Wave has been broadcasted to cover more than 85 percent of the total land area of the country. The Short Wave broadcasts 100 percent land area of the country. Regarding the IT facilities, the national library has a dial-up connection through W-Link and the 256 Bps ADSL service of Nepal Telecom.

#### **4.1 Physical infrastructure**

Most of the library buildings are not intelligent buildings. Only a few departmental libraries, some campus libraries and the Tribhuvan Central Library has functional buildings. The physical facilities can not attract the users towards the library.

### **5. Preservation and conservation**

The Government of Japan under its cultural Grant Aid programme provided microfilming equipment and biding machines for the National Library and the TU Central Library. National library, TUCL, Madan Puraaskar Library and National Archives have done

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<sup>2</sup> Nepal. Ministry of Finance. Economic Survey (2009-2010). Kathmandu: Ministry of Finance 2010.

microfilming of their rare collections. A seminar was organized on 11 December 2010 on “Preservation of Documentary Heritage and its Access in Nepal by Lotus Research Centre and Asa Archives. Mr. Akio Yasue of Japan, Mr. Bhim Nepal, Chiranjibi Neupane, Dasharath Thapa, Raju Shakya of Nepal and Ven Shucho Takaoka chairman of Buddhist Library Japan presented papers on this subject. The valuable and rare manuscript are well preserved by the Asa Archives in Kathmandu. The national library has signed an agreement with HealthNet Nepal to digitized 100 PhD Dissertation by the end of this fiscal year. Mr. Takao Marayama, a retired expert on preservation from National Diet Library worked at the national library and did remarkable task to preserve the collection of the library. The staff of national library and other professional librarians learnt some techniques of preservation. Although Kathmandu is earthquake prone area, there are no disaster preparedness in the country.

## **6. Education and Training**

Total number of professional librarians is about 300. A formal one-year Bachelor Degree was commenced in 1995 by the Tribhuvan University. This course has been replaced by two year Masters’ Degree and enrolls 22 students each year. This course has also been included in the certificate level after matriculation. There are various in-service trainings and the 35-Day training approved by the CTEVT is being organized by NLA, TULSSAA, LIMISEC and TUCL. National library provides one week training in the various remote districts of the country.

## **7. Copyright and Library Act**

There is no library law in the country except the sections in the Local Self Governance Act 1999. The attempt made by the national library to enact the Legal Depository Act could not be successful. After the new Copyright Act 2003, a separate Copyright Office has been established under Ministry of Culture. Based on the new copyright regulations Royalty Collection Society was formed in the music sector. The National Booksellers and Publishers Association and the Association of Photographers are planning to set up such societies.

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