

COUNTRY REPORT

FOR THE 23rd MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS OF
NATIONAL LIBRARIES IN ASIA AND OCENIA (CDNLAO)

9-12 June 2015 Bangkok, Thailand.

Name of Country/Region: BHUTAN

Name of Library : NATIONAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF BHUTAN

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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The National Library & Archives of Bhutan (NLAB) was initially established in 1967 with the aim of safeguarding, preserving and promotion of cultural literary heritage by Her Majesty the Late Royal Queen Mother, Azhi Phuntsho Choden Wangchuck. It functions as a scriptural repository for the collection and preservation of ancient Bhutanese literature on religious and cultural heritage of Bhutan. It also endeavors to build a comprehensive collection of materials in foreign language on these subjects.

2.

The NLAB consists of the Archives Section, Research Section, and the Library Section. The Library consists of two sections *Choekey* (classical religious language) Section and English/Foreign Language Section. The *Choekey* section consists of the bulk collection of the Library with Buddhist scriptures, rare collections of eminent Tibetan scholars of different sect/schools, books and manuscripts written in *Choekey* and *Dzongkha* (Bhutan's national language) scripts.

English/Foreign Language Section has a general collection of Bhutanese literature, history, religion, culture and traditions written in English language. The National Library strives to maintain and develop its collections, to provide services as a public reference library, and to promote libraries in Bhutan.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT

- NLAB functions as a division under the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Home & Cultural Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

4. KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

- Total operating budget: Nu. 51.226 M
- Total number of staff : 37 personnel
- Total number of visitors daily: 90-100 including 10-15 readers/scholars.
- **Collection:**
 - Choekey/Dzongkha Section:** This section constitutes 12,427 volumes with 198,750 records. The collections in Choekey/Dzongkha comprise 20% rare manuscripts inscribed in calligraphic writing in *Daphne* (traditional Bhutanese paper), 20% manuscripts published from ancient printing press - printed in Bhutanese paper from wooden blocks from Bhutan and Tibet, 20% Buddhist texts printed in offset or facsimile prints on ordinary paper.
 - Foreign Language Section:** This section constitutes 40% of our holding in modern bounded books with 9000 titles.

5. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CREATING AND BUILDING COLLECTIONS

- Main efforts have been concentrated on developing collections on Humanities subjects including Buddhism and books on Bhutan and Himalayan studies.
- An annual budget of about USD \$8333 (Nu.500,000) is received by the *Choekey* and Foreign Language Section solely for the procurement of library books for these two sections.
- On an annual basis, around 600 titles are added to the collections of the NLAB.

6. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN MANAGING COLLECTIONS

The NLAB is in the process of digitalizing *Choekey* collections. Digitized copies of the *Choekey* collection will be accessible through the e-library network system. Chokey texts are compiled for wider readership through the act of which it is believed to accumulate merits. NLAB publications in pdf format will also be accessible through the e-library.

7. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PROVIDING ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

The NLAB, being the national repository of the country and as a resource centre, cater and provides reference resources to the needs of scholars, researchers and academicians. In order to cater to these needs of the wide range of users, and also to ensure strengthening a knowledge and information-based society, the NLAB is in the process of establishing a nationwide e-library system network in Bhutan in collaboration with the Government of India. Establishment of an e-library network system in Bhutan will facilitate the holdings of the NLAB to make accessible to a wide range users besides motivating and enhancing readership.

8. EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE REPORTING LIBRARY AND OTHER NATIONAL COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS (LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS)

The NLAB is in process of establishing an e-library system network in Bhutan in collaboration with the Government of India. Although the National Library and Archives of Bhutan is the only collecting institution in Bhutan as a library and as an archive, NLAB works in close collaboration with all the government-owned and the academic and public libraries and museums.

9. EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE REPORTING LIBRARY AND PUBLISHERS IN YOUR COUNTRY

- Since the passing of the Legal Deposit Act during the 77th session of the National Assembly in 1999 the National Archives also stores copies of material deposited under the provisions of that act.
- All Publishers deposits five copies of the printed matter to the NLAB as per the Legal Deposit Act of 1999
- As of February 2015, the NLAB has received 1432 titles under the Legal Deposit Act of 1999.