

**Country Report: Bangladesh**  
**for the 16th Conference of directors of**  
**National Libraries in Asia and Oceania (CDNLO)**

1. In 2007 the National Library of Bangladesh(NLB) got its new Director after 10 years and it formulated its own Act ( Draft )

The vision of the NLB is to enhance the total competitiveness of the nation as a whole through helping formation of an effective knowledge base Society in the country in addition to its primary mission of preserving and conserving nations creative works specially related to literature, culture, religion, and socio economic heritage.

**2. Country Overview:-**Bangladesh, official name, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, is situated in the North Eastern part of South Asia covering an area of 55598 Square miles. It lies between North 20 34' and 26 38' altitude and between 880' and 9241 east longitude. Its international boundaries are mainly with India in North, West and Eastern side and the Bay of Bangla in Southern side except for a small strip in the southeast by Myanmar. Its national language is Bangla, population nearly 140 million and adult literacy rate (15 years +) is 64%. Bangladesh is a deltaic plan land and a developing nation.

Its recorded history is traceable to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. with clear evidence of flourishing civilization, consisting of its palaces, temples, forts, seats of learning and monasteries. With the departure of British rule, the present Bangladesh territory (East Bengal) became East Pakistan as part of Pakistan in 1947. After a long movement of independence and subsequently a nine month long armed struggle, the country emerged as an independent sovereign state in 1971.

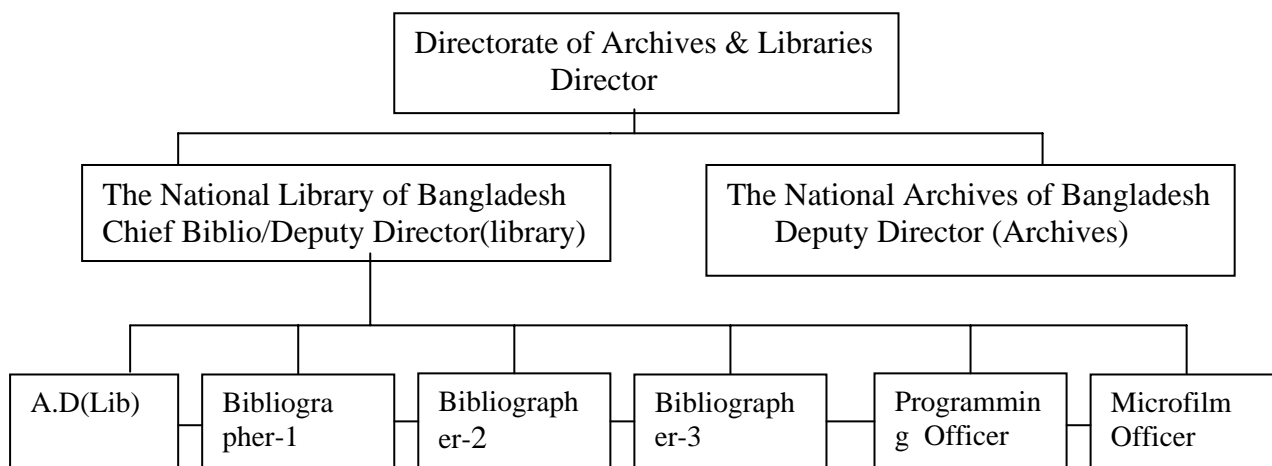
During Pakistan regime, the National Library of Pakistan was established in Karachi and a book deposit branch known as central library was set up in Dhaka to collect regional new publications under the copyright law of Pakistan. Actually that central library was the embryo as after the independence that was turned into the National Library of Bangladesh. The library started its functioning in 1972 and was declared as the National Library of independent Bangladesh through a gazette notification in 1975. The National Library of Bangladesh from its inception is one of the two important national institutions under the Directorate of Archives and Libraries. The Directorate at the outset was under the Ministry of Education and at present is functioning under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Government.

2.(b) The Naional Library of Bangladesh is one of the two components of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The Director of the Directorate exercises the administrative and financial powers delegated to the Heads of the Directorate of the Government.

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\* M. Latifur Rahman, Director(Joint Secretary)  
The National Library of Bangladesh

**Government of Bangladesh**  
**Ministry of Cultural Affairs**



2.(c) At present the National Library has following manpower. The total strength of manpower is 63 as follows:

Chief Bibliographer/Deputy Director (Library)	1
Bibliographer (Acqui -1, Compi-1, Publi- Ref.-1)	3
Assistant Director (Lib.)	1
Microfilm Officer	1
Programming Officer	1
Class III Technical/semi tech. staff member	27
Class IV Staff member	7
Grand total	= 41

In addition there are 22 officials for facility service in general.

2.(d) The users NLB are of multidisciplinary i.e. scholars, researchers, academicians professionals, policy makers, administrators, general readers, juvenile etc. The NLB has no branch in the country but its collection is of different characters. This characteristic is used to pull a good number of users from remote areas of the country. Its number of yearly users is around 6000. All information needing persons coming to the NLB have the access to its collection but regular users are advised to take membership.

2.(e) The Collection of Bangladesh National Library is the nation's pride. The principal characteristic of its collection is that it covers all major disciplines and branches of human knowledge i.e. Literature, Cultural Heritage, History, Arts, Archaeology, Science and Technology, Medical Science, Engineering, Economics, Agriculture, Library and Information Management, Development Administration, Environment, Woman affairs, HRD, etc and is preserved in scientific manner. In addition to country's all most all publications the library has a large collection of foreign representational publications especially on Asian countries and more specific related to South Asian Studies. The library enriches its collection by various means i.e. acquiring publication under copyright act, purchase, institutional/personal donations, complimentary copies etc.

2.(f) The NLB has a few unique and rare collections which have given it speciality from other libraries of the country. These collections have been entrusted to NLB as the most reliable concerned public institution of the country. The major unique collections are as follows:

- a) Collection of/on international philologist Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah.
- b) Collection donated by Bangladesh secretariat library
- c) Collection on/of Nabab Nowab Ali Chowdhury, the Dreamist of the establishment of the University, of Dhaka.
- d) Collection of multidisciplinary rare books, manuscript and other special materials i.e. maps of various period and place.

2.(g) National Library of Bangladesh has regular publication of Bangladesh National Bibliography. It has already published 15 issue including 2007 issue.

## 2.(h) Services

- a. Reader Service : Provides reader's services. It has three reading rooms (one for Bangla materials and one for English and one for Newspapers) covering 10000 sft space area. The Library maintains both card and sheaf catalogue systems.
- b. Reference Service: Reference service to individual and departments, institutions are rendered in the light of requirement .
- c. Special Bibliography: National Library provides special bibliography compilation service on request to the potential research scholars of various universities/ institutions.
- d. Lending: Lending of books to the Library members is yet to be introduced. However government office, libraries, institutions as exception can avail the lending facilities for official purpose.
- e. Photocopy Service: Members of the Library can have photocopy service for research purpose at the charge of TK. 1.00 per impression.
- f. *ISBN Service*: For standardizing Bangladesh's books internationally, ISBN distribution service is provided to the concerned publishers and individual authors from the National Library.
- g. *Microfilm Service*: Microfilm reading services on some selected subjects and areas are given to the concerned research scholars in the light of the requirement. One of the important services to the users is map reading service, which is given under special arrangement.
- h. NLB has international exchange service with the National Libraries of other countries.
- i. NLB has not yet undertaken any initiative jfor developing digital library.
- j. NLB is in plan to organiser national level seminar/workshop in very near future,

The NLB has sufficient physical facilities including its 2.70 acre building area, 10000 sft reading room area, 50000 sft Stack area, 3500sft exhibition gallery and 300 seat capacity A.C Auditorium including beautiful lawn in surrounding

. NLB has membership of IFLA, CDNLO ISBN agency, and cooperation with national and international other professional bodies.

NLB building is built in comparatively high land area which is considered as flood proven site.

NLB has a good number of audiovisual service components for its users community. NLB has its own customised software and service.

3. a) Institutional education and professionalism on library science started its journey in

Bangladesh in 1958 through the University of Dhaka. In Bangladesh at present there are two registered professional Associations. These are:

- i) Library Association of Bangladesh-LAB
- ii) Bangladesh Young Librarian Information Scientists and Documentation lists (BAYLID).

There is only one professional foundation in the name of late M. Siddique Khan Foundation. Late Khan the Pioneer of Library education and profession in Bangladesh received Independence Award in 2004.

b) There are 3(three) special field national libraries, 68 (including central one) govt

Public Libraries and about 150 community libraries, 75 University (21 Public, 54 private) Libraries, 1260 College libraries and 700 special libraries in Bangladesh.

New libraries are also being established with the growing number of educational institutions.

c) Digital Library initiatives have been taken in the country by the various institutions which are basically Non Government i.e. North South University ICDDRB.

A consortium on digital library has been formed under the auspices of University Grants Commission with some major library and research institutions

in Dhaka. NLB is in planning of digitization but it has not yet undertaken any digitization programme.

d) There are a few universities and training institutes which have been engaged in imparting degree, Diploma, certificate course of various term on library

science

and information management field. Some institutions use to organise in service

training and refreshment course.

4. In Bangladesh basic library network exist only in Line libraries. Telecommunication facilities e. i. dial up, broadband VSAT are not only major problem for library network in as a whole.

5. Preservation activities of NLB are still in traditional mode. Digital preservation measure yet not have been taken. NLB has reprography photography and microphotography service unites for the users.

6. The Department of Library science was set-up in Dhaka University the year of 58 with one year post graduate diploma course according to London University curriculum. Later on, Master's degree course in 1962, M.Phil in 76, Ph.D. in 79,

honours in 87, library science in graduate level in 92, practical class with computer use in 96 were introduced. About 120 Master degree holder, 350 Diploma holder and 100 Para professionals are coming out from one every year. At present Masters Degree, is offered from 3 and Ph.D from one universities respectively, Graduate from 15 colleges and Diploma form 12 institutes in addition to para professional certificate course. Courses of studies are incorporated topics on library automation, resource sharing, information technology at different levels. A good number of institutes related to HRD, education, research and library services organise in-service, refreshment training course for the library professionals.

7. The National Library Act is yet to be approved by the government. It is under process and so running by national consensus following National Library Act(s) of neighboring countries. The legal deposit act of Bangladesh is incorporated in country's copy right law. Since 2005 NLB is the single depository and repository institution of the country. The copy right clearance centre of Bangladesh is accomodated in the National Library Building.

The major change in the Copy Right laws held in 2005. Computer software were included in the copyright law and NLB was declared as the single depository and repository library of the country for the first time.

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