



THE NEWSLETTER

JULY - DECEMBER 2010



Government of India
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
KOLKATA

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The front cover shows the new building of the National Library.

The back cover shows the aerial view of the heritage building of the National Library.

The third cover shows the press release of North-East programme on conservation.

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Photographs courtesy Reprography Division.

EDITORIAL

The last six months have been busy at the National Library. The procurement of hardware, the switch of platform and installation of application software for the current phase of the ICT project are complete. These would make access to the more than 5000 e-journals and databases at the library easier. There are now over 8 lakh searchable bibliographic records in the web catalogue, in addition to what is available in the library *in situ*. All books in English and in Indian language for which there were catalogue cards have been posted. The non-book materials will be uploaded next. The following quarter will see the commencement of an ambitious digitization programme and the production of microfilms and digitized images simultaneously with the help of a hybrid microfilm camera.

The new Gift and Exchange policy was approved by the Advisory Board in August. Since then we have received important gifts, of which the 46 reels of microfilm positives donated by the South Asia Microform Project of Chicago is perhaps the most significant. These contain 900 manuscripts of Bengali medieval literature collected by the great scholar Sukumar Sen. We have also been gifted four valuable manuscript books by Ashima Goswami of Srirampur, and offered some private papers of the anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Basu.

At the same time, the National Library is making its presence felt in the intellectual and cultural life of the city, if not of the country. Two major exhibitions on Acharya Praphullachandra Ray and Rabindranath Tagore were held during the period, and a few more are planned for January. One of them would co-incide with an international workshop to be hosted at the library in partnership with Jadavpur University, King's College London, University of Technology, Sydney, Witwatersrand University and New York University. A national seminar on the impact of Tagore on other Indian literatures will bring writers and scholars across the country to the library in January. In early 2011, the library shall also be taking part in the 52nd conference of the Bangiya Granthagar Parishad and the Kolkata Book Fair. A few important publications are under way, and advance information regarding these has been included in this issue. Alongside such programmes, we soldier on with innovative plans relating to conservation, outreach, user services, staff development, library management, and administration.

None of this would be possible without the support of the Ministry of Culture, the encouragement provided by Sri Jawhar Sircar, the Secretary, and the unfailing co-operation of Dr T. Kumar, the Joint Secretary. Last July saw the signing of a significant cultural Memorandum of Understanding between India and England in New Delhi. We shall be hosting a workshop with the delegates of the British Library in January 2011 to explore the possibility of a project of joint digitization of early Bengali printed materials. This will be the first such workshop held under the purview of the Memorandum. We hope that the exercise will lead to a genuinely productive collaboration between the two premier institutions.

Swapan Chakravorty

31 December 2010

NATIONAL LIBRARY
Government of India
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(This number of the Newsletter covers the period July 2010 to December 2010)

PROJECTS

Retro-conversion of Bibliographical Records

The administrative approval and expenditure sanction of the entire Retro-conversion Project has been received from the Ministry of Culture in August 2010 (F. No. 12-10/2005-Lib dated 16th August 2010). The Ministry has clarified that the budget for the current financial year will remain Rs 150 lakh to begin with.

By the end of December 2010 4,93,083 bibliographical records in MARC 21 format have been captured by four agencies; 1,51,000 records have been uploaded in the server; 31,141 records have been validated. Data available in local discs for validation are 43,000.

The accessioning and processing of Imperial Library collection, Indian Official Documents, Foreign Official Documents publications comprising British, United Nation and United State documents in English are under way.

Enhancement and Up-grade of ICT System

During the period under review the ICT infrastructure in the library saw significant improvement. Hardware, software, network, DBMS, and internet leased line were acquired and a dynamic website introduced and activated. All major hardware and software components were procured, delivered and installed. The LAN was also extended. The server-storage system has been made operational.

In the dynamic website of the National Library (www.nationallibrary.gov.in), an On-line Public Access Catalogue is now accessible through Internet (Web-OPAC). This was made possible when NIC agreed to host a National Library database in its server. The website, along with the search and retrieval programme, has been designed by NIC, Kolkata. The Web-OPAC now contains about 8,00,000 bibliographic records. Apart from these, the static part of the website has been thoroughly edited and corrected.

From this year, the National Library is subscribing to the 10 MBPS Internet leased line (ILL) from BSNL to provide internet connection to users and members of the staff. With the help of its upgraded network, all desktops that are connected to the LAN can access the Internet with effect from October 2010. ILL is also a basic pre-requisite for accessing on-line journals.

Rapid Conversion of Card Catalogues

The Rapid Conversion of Catalogue Cards (RCCC) Project was conceived by the Advisory Board at its first meeting. After the announcement of the Hon'ble Prime Minister in January 2010 that the National Library Catalogue would be made accessible through the Internet the project was taken up. After receiving final clearance in the last week of June 2010, the project converted all English monographs, along with all other books in Indian languages that had cards. A total of 8,00,000 entries are now available in the website of the library for users.

Digitization of Rare, Old and Brittle Books

National Library in its third phase of digitization is in the process of floating tenders of digitizing 10 lakh pages (around 2500 rare books). The programme was delayed because no bidder was found suitable after the last tendering process.

Backlog of Unaccessioned and Unprocessed Books

The library received the revalidation of administrative approval and expenditure sanction of Rs 10,422,369 for accessioning and processing backlog publications of language divisions of the National Library. More than 7000 books in Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi and Oriya were accessioned and 5000 books have already been processed. The work is in progress.

Catalogue of Modern Manuscripts

A two-volume catalogue of modern manuscripts in the library was completed in the first week of November 2010. These contain all the items in the Jadunath Sarkar Collection (419 folios), the manuscripts of Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Jibanananda Das, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay, Satischandra Mukhopadhyay, Subhaschandra Bose, Bisnu De and others. Each item is numbered, dates and dimensions are recorded, and the opening lines of ephemeral items given. Prior to this, all books of the Rare Books Division have been accessioned. This is the first time that these manuscripts have been recorded in an itemized catalogue.

Rare Books

There are about 4700 monographs and 3000 manuscripts in the Rare Books Division, set up 1973. The library is on the verge of shifting the Rare Books Division from its present location to the basement of Bhasha Bhavan and is poised to evolve a set of guidelines to identify and segregate the remaining Rare Books in its collection. The library also intends to prepare a National Standard for Rare Books and to be placed before the Advisory Board. A committee has been formed for identifying rare books in the library.

Stock Verification

The tender process such as finalization of tender notice, approaching DAVP for advertisement has been completed in connection with the stock verification of the library. The library has received administrative approval and expenditure sanction of Rs 30,00,000 (Rupees thirty lakh only) for stock verification in the month of August 2010.

