

Nepal Dental Association

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although pioneers such as Asta Man Rajbhandari of Naghal Tole were known to be practising dentistry in Kathmandu since the 1920s it was only much later, almost half a century to be precise, that a small group of qualified dental surgeons finally united for a common purpose, namely establishment of a professional association. Attempts were made even earlier to organize but the meeting held on October 8, 1971 (Aswin 22, 2028) in Hotel Shankar proved to be a turning point in the history of dentistry in Nepal.

The first General Assembly came up with a number of decisions:

1. Preparation and submission of a comprehensive plan to His Majesty's Government for better dental health care in the country.
2. Proposal to His Majesty's Government to start a Central Dental Clinic which could later be converted into a Dental Hospital and eventually to a Dental School.
3. Formation of an ad hoc committee to look after the activities of the association.

The ad hoc committee in the second General Meeting held on Jestha 27, 2029 agreed on the name "Nepal Dental Society" for the newly set up organization. An executive committee was also formed in accordance with the suggestion of the first General Assembly. The society then

submitted a plan "Dental Health Care Programme in Nepal" to His Majesty's Government for necessary action and implementation.

After that the society of dental surgeons passed through a long period of torpidity, but between Paush 13-20, 2040 the organization participated in the first National Scientific and Technical Exhibition organized by RONAST.

Nepal Dental Society also participated in the First National Workshop on Oral Health jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Health and WHO from December 23-27, 1985. The workshop submitted to the Ministry of Health a number of recommendations:

1. Formation of a standing committee to organize oral health activities.
2. Improvement of existing dental departments.
3. Development of dental and para-dental manpower within the country.
4. Establishment of a Dental Hospital & mobile dental camps.

During this period every effort was made to register, but recognition did not come easily and it took several years and scores of attempts by dedicated dental surgeons before the dental profession could taste the success.

The efforts at acquiring certification for the professional organization became more coordinated and gained momentum; and on Jestha 27, 2046 the logo of the association was presented and unanimously approved. On Asar 2, 2047 what had so far been known as the "Nepal Dental Society" was renamed "Nepal Dental Association" and this

proposal too, was accepted with unanimous approval. On the same day, a new revised constitution of the association was drafted, adopted and forwarded for registration.

Dentistry in Nepal turned over a new leaf on Bhadra 29, 2047 when Nepal Dental Association was finally, formally registered with the District Administration Office of His Majesty's Government.

The sole objective of establishing this organization has been to contribute the dental profession's share to the progress and development of the country by improving the dental health of its people. In addition to this Nepal Dental Association has also set up certain aims and objectives for the organization.

1. To work for the improvement of dental health.
2. To provide advice and help, whenever possible, to the health services and various governmental organizations.
3. To actively participate in solving professional problems of dental surgeons.
4. To proceed to form Dental Act and Dental Council.
5. To establish and develop relations with international dental associations.

In order to fulfill these objectives and take care of various issues a number of committees were formed:

- i. Clinical Meeting Committee
- ii. Dental Library Committee
- iii. Dental Council Committee
- iv. Dental Bulletin and Journal Committee
- v. Social Service Committee

PRESENT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

Since the registration of Nepal Dental Association two executive committees have completed their terms in office. The present executive committee elected to office in December 1997 has been working on a number of important issues and has formed

several sub-committees to address to these issues.

- i. The Dental Council Sub-committee is working with Nepal Medical Council and the Ministry of Health and has prepared basic guidelines on dental education including curriculum requirements for training dental professionals. These guidelines are also intended for use in the establishment and functioning of a Dental Council which is considered by Nepal Medical Council and the Ministry of Health as an essential step in the regulation of this profession.
- ii. The Membership Update Sub-committee is collecting records of all dental graduates in the country and encouraging dental professionals to be members of Nepal Dental Association in order to enhance membership status.
- iii. The Sub-committee on External Relations has been formed to keep in touch with professional bodies and organizations for the benefit of dental professionals at home and abroad.
- iv. In order to pursue continuing dental education and promote research, clinical studies and dissemination of information the Scientific and Journal Sub-committee intends to hold an annual Scientific Meeting and publish a bi-annual Journal of Nepal Dental Association.
- v. Financial Sub-committee is formed to raise fund to sustain the association financially & fulfil its office expenses.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

Depending on the need of the hour, the functions of Nepal Dental Association may change constantly. Its activities are essentially continuing functions and the following outline lists some of the basic activities of NDA that are already operational and others that have potential for future utilization.

Functions

The Association is responsible for maintenance of a National body representing organized dentistry in Nepal as well as a Central Office. It has to maintain international relationships and provide administrative support for the Executive Committee and the Association's Committees. Besides managing the Association's finances, it is also required to maintain continuing communication with the members.

Representation

The association should seek representation in the Ministries and participate in national councils and committees. It should seek international representation in various international organizations and keep a watch on dental legislation, if any. Seminars and workshops should be conducted for determination of views of the dental profession and policy generation regarding education matters and manpower requirements.

Liaison

Liaison with various societies can help NDA undertake joint sponsorship of lectures and promotion of the Association's undertakings. Communication with statutory bodies such as Nepal Medical/Dental Council and association with other bodies like Nepal Medical Association can be used for mutual benefit.

Services to Members

Nepal Dental Association's services to the members have already begun with the maintenance of membership records and publication of a Dental Bulletin and more recently the Journal of the Nepal Dental Association which will serve as a vehicle for publication of scientific papers and dissemination of professional information. NDA can also publish handbooks, manuals etc. and collect relevant data that will be of

use to the dental profession. Steps have been taken to promote continuing education with overseas guest lecturers being made available whenever possible. The Association can also serve members by keeping records of its history and activities as well as responding to enquiries and requests for information by organizations, dental surgeons or general public from home and abroad.

Activities of Committees

Because the Committees are dealing with the changing functions of the Association, these activities cannot be specified definitively. However, the following summarizes current activities of the NDA committees as well as duties that can be performed if the need arises.

The Dental Journal Committee is responsible for publishing the Journal and other publications, reviewing frequency of publication, advertising and editorial policies. The Congress Organizing Committee organizes and administers congresses and scientific meetings of NDA. The Dental Education Committee collects information, maintains records and advises the Dental Council in all matters relating to dental education and, in particular, to manage visits by overseas lecturers. It also works for improved liaison with governmental committees and communication with overseas associations as well as for the initiation and encouragement of oral health education programmes for school children and the general public. Another important activity of the committee would be to develop a resource library. The Dental Health Services Committee monitors the dental health services, reviews employment conditions for dental surgeons and collects information on practice and personnel. Its activities may include manpower reviews, advertising by professionals and fee surveys. The Legislation Committee is responsible for maintaining an overview of any legislation relating to dentistry.

CONCLUSION

Nepal Dental Association, the professional organization of Nepalese dental surgeons, has been established to work for the welfare of the nation and contribute their share to the progress and development of the country by improving the dental health of its people.

The Association considers all matters affecting the life and work of members of the dental profession and endeavors to safeguard legitimate professional interests. It promotes the spirit of harmony and cooperation among individual members of the dental profession as well as between various institutions. It encourages members of this profession to maintain the highest standard of professional conduct and give the health of the patient the first consideration. NDA encourages research and studies and acquisition of knowledge by all possible means and helps in making the development, utilization and training of all

dental and para-dental personnel in Nepal of a high standard and in line with national interests. The Association encourages the development and extension of preventive and curative dental facilities and improvement of the existing infrastructure in the country. It also works to initiate oral health programmes and generate public awareness. NDA is also willing to offer its services and cooperation to the government and perform any other function which may improve the dental health of the nation.

Since its birth on October 8, 1971 Nepal Dental Association has come a long way, and it is the moral duty of dental practitioners to nurture this organization so that its full potential can be realized. This can be achieved only if the dental profession is prepared to work for the ideals of solidarity, fraternity and selfless dedication and through the concerted effort of one and all.

