

Flood of discoveries in Nepal!

Access to full text of world's 7000 leading journals will revalue the role of TUCL

Krishna M Bhandary

S G ALBERT IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID that research is to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought. And, thinking to generate new ideas should always be preceded by looking at the generated ideas. Since new knowledge is mostly announced via journals, they are indispensable components for scientists and experts both to get generated knowledge and to publish their new ones. Recently, there has been a remarkable progress in the former in Nepal.

In February 2003 the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), a cooperative network established in 1992 by the International Council for Science (ICSU) as a programme of the Committee for the Dissemination of Scientific Information (CDSI), nominated Tribhuvan University Central Library (TUCL) as National Coordinating Institute for the implementation of its Program for Enhancement of Research Information (PERI). The purpose of this collaboration is availability of new knowledge in digital form to Nepal.

After the PERI is fully implemented in September 2003, the full texts of 7,000 scholarly journals as well as abstracts and contents of 20,000 journals from around the world will be accessible at TUCL and certain other centres designated by TUCL. The journals are primarily technical, and represent a broad range of scientific fields, including medicine, agriculture, forestry, natural resource management, and engineering, as well as other fields in the social sciences, humanities and business administration.

As the increasing gap between haves and have-nots poses an increasing threat to world stability, it is essential that Nepal and other developing countries take steps to

strengthen their scientific base. Researchers, academicians and students in Nepal are expected to benefit greatly from the program. At present, they cannot purchase subscriptions to western journals even if they wish to. This availability of full-text database can radically alter the way they think and the way they conduct research, eventually leading to better designed research projects and to more productive application of established ideas. To a significant extent, this program is expected to fulfil the demand for research results in Nepal.

The information resources of PERI would normally cost over one million pounds sterling. PERI pays this sum to the publishers. These resources have been made available to us for £27,500. INASP has made arrangements with Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA) to cover costs for 2003. Bravo, DMFA! Although there is some hope of obtaining funding for 2004 and 2005 from DMFA and the International Department for Foreign Affairs (DFID), it would be wisest to think consider how costs can be met if donors do not materialize. Once the information resource is available, TUCL can offer access to other institutions at no further cost. TUCL is working out details for extension of access to all libraries, research institutions, colleges and not-for-profit educational institutes throughout Nepal.

Promoting quality publications in the countries where the programme is implemented is also one of the objectives of PERI which puts them on its website for worldwide dissemination. This would benefit Nepalese publication to get international recognition. ■

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List of selected PERI resources for Nepal

EBSCO	Full text of 6000 journals; abstract and content of 7300 journals in all branches of science, technology, medicine, social science, humanities
Blackwell Synergy	Full text of over 600 leading journals in natural, physical, and social sciences; technology; medicine; and the humanities
Springer Verlag	Full text of 432 high-quality journals in many disciplines
Oxford University Press	Full text of over 120 leading journals in science, technology, medicine, humanities and social science
Emerald	Full text of 100 journals in marketing, business, engineering, material science
CAB Compendium	Many journals in agriculture, forestry, management, and conservation of natural resources
Cochrane Library	Good resource for medical and health science

Marketing science journals

The wide circulation of a journal is as important as its publication

Bharat B Shrestha

A HUGE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION IS generated every year in the field of science and technology. Many scientists from different countries are working on similar topics either in co-operation or independently. The research findings of one scientist are important for others in solving many problems. Research communication also avoids overlap in research and saves time and resources. The exchange of information and ideas among them is very important to achieve goals earlier. Regular meeting between them is, however, impossible. Publication in electronic media or in printed form (e.g., journals) and wide circulation is the most appropriate means of communication. Primary information is mostly fragmentary. These fragments should be distributed to the interested peoples. Research results will not have any meaning unless they are published and circulated. A good journal is a forum in which peoples from different regions can communicate, share ideas, discuss and solve problems.

There are a large number of good journals in the international market but very few have found their place in libraries of our university and research centers. This terrible lack of access to such journals hampers our research and education although their availability is not going to make a great contribution to our research and development. This is because there is a huge gap between the studies addressed by such journals and those conducted by our scientists. Journals published in Nepal are therefore critically important, for they can be a platform for our scientists.

When we count the number of science journals published in Nepal, perhaps we are not poor. This is good news. But the bad news is that many of them are very poor in quality, irregular in publication and have very limited distribution. They are printed on low-grade paper with a short lifespan. Many annual journals are published at an interval of several years. For many journals a single issue becomes the first and last. The Ministry of Science and Technology published the first issue of *Scientific World* in 1999 and a second issue has not appeared yet!

Limited distribution of published journals is a major problem in scientific communication. A journal is published, piled up in the publisher's office and ultimately damaged by silverfish or sold to a paper collector as waste paper. A better approach can be sale at reduced price or free distribution to interested people. The proceedings of the first (1988) and second