

Thirty Glorious Years of Nepal Dental Association

Dr. Rabindra Man Shrestha¹

¹Chief Editor, Journal of Nepal Dental Association, Kathmandu, Nepal

Correspondence:

Dr. Rabindra Man Shrestha. Email: rabindraortho@gmail.com

The present article commemorates thirtieth anniversary of Nepal Dental Association; which is the mother organisation of all the dentists of Nepal. It highlights the historical events of the association since its inception to the present stage. The editorial finally discusses the way forward in future.

The Nepali history of traditional dental practice dates back to more than hundred years. It has been about 80 years since a qualified dentist started dental practice in Nepal, and fifty years since the Nepali pioneer dentists had attempted to organise. Nepali dental fraternity has witnessed thirty glorious years of togetherness through the establishment of Nepal Dental Association (NDA) in 1990. The association has evolved as the umbrella organisation of Nepali dentists in social and professional arenas. So far, there are 1623 Life Members of the association. Nepal Dental Association is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to Nepali dentistry. It aims for the fulfillment of rights and welfare of the Nepali dentists, and propagation of dental health awareness to the public.

There have been illustrious historical events in the foundation of dental association in Nepal. A group of pioneer dentists gathered for a sole purpose to establish a professional dental organisation in Nepal. Consequently, “Nepal Dental Society” was formed on 10th June 1971 A.D. (27th Jestha 2028 B.S.). On 8th Oct 1971 (22nd Asoj 2028), a general meeting of Nepali dentists formed an ad hoc committee of the society, which later proposed ‘Dental Health Care Program’ to then His Majesty’s Government. The society drafted its constitution, which however failed to register despite repeated

efforts. Nepal Dental Society was renamed as “Nepal Dental Association” on 12th October 1984 (26th Asoj 2041). The newly reconstituted association redrafted the by-laws. However, the bid to register was refused again by the District Administration Office. During that political regime, the dentists, many of them also being government employees were not allowed to form a Non-Government Organisation (NGO).

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal, Nepal Dental Association was formally registered with District Administration Office, Kathmandu on 14th September 1990 (29th Bhadra 2047). This date is recognised as the anniversary of NDA, which was called “Nepal Dental Health Awareness Day” in 2002 (2059 B.S.). Since then the association has been organising oral health awareness programs annually by conducting free dental camp, oral health rally etc., to mark the anniversary.

NDA constitution has the provision of ‘General Body’ comprising of all life members and ‘Executive Committee’ comprising of nine elected office bearers. The association has been organising annual general meeting, and issuing financial report every year on a scheduled date. The association formed Executive Committee on unanimous vote until the formation of fifth executive committee in 2002. The association then onwards entered the

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electoral process to elect the executive committee. The outgoing executive committee appoints the election committee to hold the election for the new executive committee as per the articles of the association.

The constitution of NDA was amended on 14th September 2000 (29th Bhadra 2057), ten years after it was founded. The association has been served by thirteen executive committees so far. Now it is on the verge to elect the fourteenth executive committee. The tenure of NDA executive committee is for two years, which used to be three years duration prior to the constitution amendment in 2000. Every executive committee had some contributions to pave the way for the association to reach the current position.

The association purchased its office space at Balkumari Lalitpur. It was inaugurated on 13th April 2004 (1st Baisakh 2061). Then the association was registered with Social Welfare Council on 13th July 2005 (29th Asar, 2062) and with the Internal Revenue Department, Kathmandu on 27th February 2006 (15th Falgun 2062). In the wake of decentralisation; NDA formed branches at different parts of Nepal in 2009. The association has extended ten branches; namely Sunsari (Dharan), Morang (Biratnagar), Jhapa (Birtamode), Dhanusha (Janakpur), Parsa (Birjung), Banke (Nepalgung), Chitwan (Bharatpur), Kaski (Pokhara), Rupandehi (Bhairahawa), and Kailali (Dhangadi).

Nepal Dental Association has been disseminating its activity reports, share public awareness messages and publish scientific information through the publications of magazine and journal periodically. NDA published “Dental Bulletin” as its first publication in September of 1992 on the occasion of its second anniversary. In 1998, NDA started publishing “Journal of the Nepal Dental Association (JNDA)”, which was inaugurated during the First National Dental Conference. The annual scientific journal started publishing twice a year since its tenth volume in the year 2009. The journal continues to publish and has reached the thirtieth issue this year. NDA published dental health awareness magazine “BITES” in 2005 and 2006; which was transformed as “Dentistry Nepal” published in 2008 and 2011. Besides, NDA has published “Dental Directory” in 2004, 2009, 2013 and 2018 with the demographic and professional details of fellow members. NDA

launched its website “nda.org.np” in 2005.

NDA started organising dental conference in the year 1998. The First National Dental Conference was held on 19th September 1998 in Dhulikhel. Since then the association has been organising annual dental conference hosting scientific session, trade exhibition and the social gathering. World Dental Federation (FDI) organised continuing dental education in Nepal in conjunction with NDA during the 5th Annual Dental Conference in Kathmandu from 15-16 February 2003. NDA organised First International Dental Congress during 19th Annual Dental Conference in Kathmandu in collaboration with all Nepali specialty dental societies on 11-12 November 2017. The association has organised conferences in other cities including Dharan, Chitwan, Bhairahawa, and Dhulikhel, besides the capital city Kathmandu. NDA has been organizing CDE programs on numerous occasions.

Nepal Dental Association’s representation is reserved in Nepal Medical Council (NMC). In the year 2000 (2057 B.S.), the government approved three-member-representation in NMC from the dental fraternity. It comprises of two nominated members and the NDA President as ex officio member. Furthermore, the association has been actively participating in national/international meetings on policy making and curricular development. NDA has worked together with Health Services Department, Nepal Government to formulate ‘National Oral Health Policy’ in 2004 and its revision in 2014. NDA has always lobbied for more dental units and jobs for dental surgeons in government service. The association initiated to recommend postgraduate programs in basic science subjects for BDS graduates in 2011-12. It has raised the voice for the standardisation and regulation of dental education in Nepal at all levels, especially for auxiliary dental courses. Its fight against unauthorised dental practice has always continued. NDA has also worked together with other organisations for mercury-free dentistry to fight against the health hazard of mercury. Recently, NDA published ‘Interim guideline for dental practices during COVID-19 global emergency in Nepal’ on 20th May 2020, which was endorsed by NMC and Ministry of Health. The association has been felicitating the senior dentists in recognition of their contribution to dental service in the country. NDA’s humanitarian help to the needy

people during devastating earthquake in 2015 was remarkable.

Nepal Dental Association is the Regular Member of FDI and Asia Pacific Dental Federation (APDF). However, the association had to fight hard to acquire this status as another dental organization, the Nepal Oral Health Society was already a member of FDI and APDF representing Nepal. Finally, NDA became Member of FDI in 2000 and Member of APDF in 2004 proving its legitimacy.

Despite numerous works and activities of Nepal Dental Association, the association needs to push hard for the promulgation of 'Dental Act' and establishment of 'Dental Council'. The formation of 'Nepal Dental Council' is of utmost importance for the professional development of dentistry

in Nepal. Formation of 'Oral Health Division' within the Health Services Department Ministry of Health is yet another requirement for the respectful position of dentistry owing to its due importance. Representation of dental fraternity in Medical Education Commission is another mandatory objective. Eradication of unauthorised dental practice by less-than-qualified operators or elimination of quackery is perhaps the greatest dream of all Nepali dentists. The association always needs to address and support its members on professional and medicolegal issues. Any progressive step towards these actions is highly anticipated.



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