

# History of Nepal Dental Association

**Dr. Rabindra Man Shrestha**

Department of Orthodontics, Kantipur Dental College, Kathmandu Nepal.

Correspondence:

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

Nepal Dental Association (NDA) is a non-government organization dedicated to Nepalese dentistry. It aims for the rights and welfare of the Nepalese dentists; acting as the professional umbrella organization. It has a long-standing history, through which the organization has traversed the stumbling blocks.

A group of pioneer Nepalese dentists gathered for a sole purpose to establish a professional dental organization in Nepal. On 10th June 1971 A.D. (27th Jestha 2028 B.S.), they formed “Nepal Dental Society.”

A general meeting of Nepalese dentists formed an ad hoc committee under the chairmanship of late Dr. Basanta Bahadur Rajbhandari on 8th Oct. 1971 (22nd Asoj 2028) B.S.). The committee proposed ‘Dental Health Care Program’ to then His Majesty’s Government (HMG). It planned to establish a dental hospital that would subsequently transform into dental college.

After a period of relative inactivity of a decade, the society participated in First National Scientific and Technical Exhibition organized by Royal Nepal Academy of Science & Technology (RONAST) on 14th August 1984 (30th Shrawan 2041). The RONAST granted Financial support to Nepal Dental Society in the initial crawling period. The society took part in First National Workshop on Oral Health organized by HMG/N and WHO during 23-27th December 1985 (8-12th Poush 2042).

The Society began to draft the proposal for its constitution since 1984 (2041 B.S.); which however failed to register with District Administrative Office (DAO) despite the repeated efforts. On 12th October 1984 (26th Asoj 2041), Nepal Dental Society was renamed “Nepal Dental Association.” The association redrafted the constitution, however the bid to register was refused again by DAO,

stating that ‘some of the government employees taking part in forming an NGO’. The political regime of that time used to restrict such activities.

With the dawn of democratic era, Nepal Dental Association was formally registered with District Administration Office, Kathmandu on 14th September 1990 (29th Bhadra 2047). The 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 organizing various oral health awareness programs by conducting free dental camp, dental health rally etc to mark the anniversary.

Association’s establishment led to an enthusiasm among the dentists to work more for dental community and to the profession. On 6th July 1991 (22nd Asar 2048), the association decided to hold regular clinical meetings, publish dental bulletin, and strive to establish the dental council.

Setting up of dental hospital or clinic and dental college were primary agenda of the association. Many efforts were also underway; one such plan was in joint collaboration with Rotary Club during the year 1991 (2048 B.S.); however such plans could never materialize. Thus in 1993 (2050 B.S.), association dropped the idea to open dental college, and by the year 1997 (2054 B.S.) the association also dropped the idea to set up a dental clinic.

Since its first anniversary on 14th September 1991 (29th Bhadra 2048), the association began a trend to organize annual general meeting, issue annual Financial report and schedule election to elect the Executive Committee. The association formed Executive Committee on unanimous vote until the election of fifth executive committee in

2002. The association then onwards elected the executive committees through electoral process.

On the occasion of second anniversary in Sept 1992, NDA published "Dental Bulletin" as its first publication; which was not continued after the maiden issue. In the year 1998, NDA started publishing "Journal of the Nepal Dental Association, JNDA" annually. The scientific journal started publishing twice a year since its tenth volume in the year 2009. In 2005 and 2006 NDA published dental health awareness magazine "BITES"; which transformed as "Dentistry Nepal" in 2008 and 2011. Besides, NDA published "Dental Directory Nepal" periodically in 2004, 2009 and 2013 with the details of fellow members. NDA launched its website "www.nda.org.np" in 2005.

In 1998, NDA decided to organize dental conference annually. Since then the association has been organizing annual dental conference hosting scientific session, trade exhibition and social gathering of the dentists. The First National Dental Conference and Scientific Meeting of NDA was held on Sept 19, 1998 at Dhulikhel. Federation Dentaire Internationale (FDI), the World Dental Federation organized continuing dental education (CDE) in Nepal in conjunction with NDA for the first time during 5th Annual Dental Conference in Kathmandu on 15-16 Feb, 2003. The association has been organizing CDE programs on various occasions. Furthermore, the association has been felicitating the senior dentists time-to-time since 2002 in recognition of their contribution to dental service in Nepal.

Dentists used to be represented occasionally in Nepal Medical Council (NMC) in the past. In 1994 (2051 B.S.), NDA demanded regular dental member representation in the medical council. In the year 2000 (2057 B.S.), NMC formed Dental committee, constituted two nominated members from dental fraternity and allowed NDA President as ex officio NMC member. In 2005 (2062

B.S.), NDA teamed with NMC in listing and preparing the database of dental service providers in Nepal. It was aimed at identifying and regulating the dental practitioners in the country. NDA has worked for promulgating the Dental Act and establishing the Dental Council; however the formation of "Nepal Dental Council" is a dream so far.

Ten years after its registration, constitution of NDA was amended on 14th September 2000 (29th Bhadra 2057). The association was registered with Social Welfare Council of Nepal Government on 13th July 2005 (29th Asar, 2062) and registered with Internal Revenue Department, Kathmandu on 27th February 2006 (15th Falgun 2062).

Nepal Dental Association has always recommended more dental units and jobs for dental surgeons in government service. It has worked with Health Services Department, Nepal Government in formulating Oral Health Policy in 2004.

The search for Association's permanent office space began since its initial days. The NDA office had been in space of its members' clinics in initial decade; during 2000-2003 NDA shared office room at Nepal Medical Association's building. NDA Finally fulfilled the dream to own its office space in 2004 at Sunrise Homes, Lalitpur. On 13th April 2004 (1st Baisakh 2061); the office was inaugurated.

NDA had decided to bid for the regular membership of international organizations since the beginning. However, the association had to fight hard as the Nepal Oral Health Society was already a Member of FDI (World Dental Federation) and APDF (Asia Pacific Dental Federation) representing Nepal. NDA finally became Regular Member of World Dental Federation in 2000 and Member of Asia Pacific Dental Federation in 2004 proving its legitimacy.