

## **Press Release: India-Bhutan e-Library Project**

The India-Bhutan e-Library, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his State Visit to Bhutan in 2014, was formally handed over by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to the Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan at a ceremony held in Thimphu on 26 June 2020, in the presence of Embassy of India officials.

Since, the establishment of the e-Library has witnessed the setting up of digital infrastructure in 49 central schools and 12 colleges in every Dzongkhag across the length and breadth of Bhutan. Salient stages in the e-Library project implementation by C-DAC an autonomous society of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology involved development of the e-Library portal, establishment of a Central Repository with high-end servers and robust data storage facilities. In addition, the e-Library was populated with the provision of e-contents at all grades from KG-Class 12 initially from the National Council of Education, Research & Training of India. Subsequently when e-books were provided by the Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) for classes pre-primary to Senior Secondary, these were also added to the e-Library as local content for Bhutanese students.

Creation of an e-Library studio & e-libraries in schools and colleges was the next stage in the project implementation wherein C-DAC technical expert visited schools and colleges in all 20 Dzongkhags of Bhutan to train the respective teachers and I.T. staff. Thus, training of local manpower on the management of e-Library infrastructure and digital content creation at schools & colleges has also been an integral part of this project, with 400 Bhutanese school & college personnel having received training in the day-to-day utilization of the e-Library. Hence, the coordination between C-DAC and Ministry of Education was seamless and continuous throughout the implementation of the project.

In response to a request of the Ministry of Education, RGOB the Embassy of India had also launched a group-wise training programme for I.T. laboratory assistants from Government schools of Bhutan at C-DAC NOIDA under the Government of India's ITEC Programme. The curriculum of the I.T. training was drawn up on the basis of the requirements shared by the Ministry of Education, RGOB to ensure need-based capacity building. The first batch 20 I.T. laboratory assistants completed their training at C-DAC in February 2020, additional batches are expected to undertake their training once the outbreak of COVID-19 recedes.

Speaking on this occasion, Ambassador of India Ruchira Kamboj said: "I am delighted that India could play a significant role in expanding Bhutan's digital footprint through the e-Library project. This bilateral initiative, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with more than 3000+ digital e-contents, will prove to be a major platform to support Bhutan's e-learning programmes and expand the outreach of online education, not least during the current challenging times of COVID-19".

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