Towards a Seamless National Collection:
Assessing Online Discoverability &
Inter-Library Loan of South Asian Language Periodicals
Introduction

South Asian language periodicals constitute a major area of collection development activities for bibliographers of South Asia. These periodicals are collected in nearly all languages and from all regions of South Asia and constitute some of the earliest research literature from the region.

In order to acquire these periodicals, bibliographers rely primarily on the cooperative acquisitions programs coordinated by the Library of Congress (LC) offices in New Delhi and Islamabad. These programs are highly relied upon for South Asian imprints, in general. In a recent survey of South Asia bibliographers, 91% of respondents said that they utilize the LC programs to acquire material from South Asia—monographs, audio-visual materials, periodicals, and cartographic materials.\(^1\) In terms of periodicals, the New Delhi and Islamabad offices make available 1,214 and 403 South Asian language periodical titles (i.e., non-English language titles), respectively.\(^2\) In addition, both offices provide extensive serials lists of available titles.

The combination of LC being the primary source for acquiring these periodicals and the fact that there are extensive serials lists provided by the offices allows for an in-depth assessment of these periodicals both in terms of online discoverability and access. At a time when the Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation (CONSALD) is discussing cooperative collection development at a national level, this report aims to broaden the discussion to periodicals as well. Indeed, assessing the discoverability and accessibility of these periodicals is imperative for ensuring researchers a seamless national library collection of South Asian materials.

Towards this end, this report attempts to answer four basic questions about these periodicals:

1) Can all titles be located in the OCLC or LC online catalogs?
2) How many institutions hold each title?\(^3\)
3) Do LC and/or CRL hold a title?

And, as a corollary:

4) To what extent can periodicals circulate via ILL among CONSALD members?

The first question is important for obvious reasons of discoverability for research. The second question allows us to identify titles that may be at risk of becoming inaccessible. We need to

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\(^4\) I’d like to thank Mary Rader, University of Wisconsin-Madison, for her comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this report.

\(^1\) This study was undertaken by Mary Rader, University of Wisconsin-Madison, in 2007.

\(^2\) Some of the data collected for this paper was prior to the beginning of FY10 and so may not represent the most current numbers of available titles through these offices.

\(^3\) The number I use for this is the number of holding institutions listed in OCLC or a title in the LC catalog but not in OCLC. I do not produce numbers gathered from individual university library catalogs. I also do not gather holding statements from individual institutions.
know if a title is only known to be held by one institution so that we can communicate
collection development changes and ensure continued subscription to a title among CONSALD.
The third question gives us data on LC and CRL. As their focus is already at the national level, it
is important to gather data on their collections' holdings of periodical titles.

As a corollary to these questions, the report also investigates the extent to which periodicals
can circulate via ILL between CONSALD members. This question allows us to understand more
clearly the life-cycle of research activity and assess whether the researcher is able to
ultimately receive and gain access to a title—this would mostly be in the case of requesting
bound volumes rather than a known article, which would be delivery electronically.

The findings of the report are presented in both list and graph form below. These findings are
based on a large amount of data gathered from the OCLC and LC catalogs, which is organized
into Excel spreadsheets—this data accompanies the report.

I conclude the report by discussing the findings and the implications for collection
development activities.

Methodology

In order to assess the discoverability and accessibility of these periodicals within the limits of
those titles available via LC, this report utilizes a large amount of data gathered from OCLC and
the LC catalogs.

Once identified, the report assigns a specific set of information to those titles:

1) OCLC number of each title, if available
2) Number of institutional holdings per title according to OCLC, if available
3) Notation of Yes (Y) or No (N) if held by LC and/or CRL
4) Notation of 3rd institution
5) Subscribing Institution(s) [if not in OCLC or LC]
6) Publication note [if not in OCLC or LC]
7) Additional notes.

Let me talk briefly about numbers 4 – 7 above. The notation of a ‘3rd institution’ is intended to
supply a field for noting three aspects: (a) if a title is not held by either LC or CRL, I note which
institution(s) holds that title; (b) if a title is held by LC and an institution other than CRL, I
input the name of institution. If 3 or more institutions hold a title in this case, I merely note
the 3rd institution as ‘various’ (though some spreadsheets list all names). ‘Subscribing
Institutions’ is used for listed the names of subscribers to a serial if that serial title cannot be
located in OCLC or LC catalogs. ‘Publication note’ gives information about a title that cannot be
located in OCLC or LC catalogs. This information is often the name of the publisher and
frequency of publication. Additional note is used in two instances: (a) when a title cannot be
located in OCLC and LC catalogs, the field will contain the assigned LCCN number; (b) other
relevant information for the reader.
The major methodological assumption of this study is that OCLC provides a complete account of holding institutions. While this is not ideal, it is nevertheless an unavoidable assumption—the study cannot search all local catalogs; it is simply too time consuming. In order to mitigate this restriction, the study searches the LC catalog when a title cannot be located in OCLC.

**Search Method**
The search method for a title begins in OCLC, employing a number of delimiters and—upon no success in locating that title—removing those delimiters, as well as employing wildcards.

**Step 1**
In OCLC:
1) Advanced Search is used
2) Title is entered into field—limit is ‘keyword’
3) Language of the title is chosen as a limit
4) ‘Serial Publication’ is chosen as a type limit

**Step 2**
If unsuccessful, limits are selectively removed:
1) Language limit is removed and/or
2) Title words are reduced to 3-4 characters and wildcard is used (*)

**Step 3**
If unsuccessful:
1) LCCN is searched in LC catalog
   a. If the numbers after the hyphen are less than six, zeros are added directly after the hyphen
   b. Hyphen is removed

**Step 4**
If unsuccessful:
1) Search in local catalogs of institutions listed as subscribing institutions (not yet possible with LC, Islamabad titles)
2) If successful—Enter alternate title, ISSN, OCLC# back into OCLC

**Step 5**
If unsuccessful:
1) LCCN is entered into spreadsheet along with publication information
2) Names of subscribing institutions are entered in spreadsheet
Geography of South Asia

For our purposes here, South Asia is defined as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China.

Findings Outline (Sections I, II, III)

This study divides the findings into three sections:

Section I. List of the number of periodicals per country by language specifying:
1) Number of titles not found in OCLC or LC catalogs
2) Number of titles held by only 1 institution

In the interest of space, this section does not list the individual journal titles or publication information for periodicals that fall within these two areas. The reader is asked to locate the titles and other bibliographic information in the spreadsheets, where she can manipulate the data and discover more detailed information for each title.

Please note that the phrase “held throughout” (used in Section I) means that all journals in a certain language are held by more than one institution and bibliographic information is discoverable online in OCLC or LC catalogs.

Section II. Graphs by country displaying the percentages of titles that are:
1) Not listed online in OCLC or LC
2) LC only
3) CRL only
4) LC & CRL only
5) Held by other Institutions (can include LC, CRL)

This section concludes with a graph of South Asia as a whole. It is important to keep in mind that because the serials lists supplied by LC Islamabad do not include ‘subscribing institutions’ like LC Delhi, I am not able to perform targeted searching of local holdings as I did for LC Delhi periodicals. In the case of LC Delhi this allowed me to locate titles in local catalogs that were problematic in the OCLC or LC catalogs. This then gave me information such as the ISSN, alternative title, which allowed me to locate the title in OCLC. When the lists from LC Islamabad do include this information, a reassessment of these periodicals is required—with the possible result of reducing the number of periodicals labeled as ‘not listed online’ from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Section III. Inter-Library Loan Documentation

This section aims to provide some basic data regarding the ability of inter-library loaning these publications in a physical format. The issue of electronic delivery of scanned articles is
not address in this section. The emphasis is rather on examining how much support there is for browsing periodicals from South Asia.

Findings, Section I

List of the number of periodicals per country by language specifying:
1) Number of titles not found in OCLC or LC catalogs
2) Number of titles held by only 1 institution

Afghanistan
- Pashto (23 periodicals)
  - 8 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 9 held by one institution only
- Persian/Farsi (107 Periodicals)
  - 41 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 50 held by one institution only

Bangladesh
- Bangla (135 periodicals)
  - 8 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 35 held by one institution only

Bhutan
- Bhutanese (2 periodicals)
  - 2 held by one institution only

Burma (Myanmar)
- Burmese (1 periodical)
  - 1 held by one institution only

India
- Arabic (7 periodicals)
  - Held throughout
- Assamese (10 periodicals)
  - 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 2 held by one institution only
- Bangla (98 periodicals)
  - 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 28 held by one institution only
- Dogri (3 periodicals)
  - 1 held by one institution only

- Gujarati (37 periodicals)
  - 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 1 held by one institution only

- Hindi (341 periodicals)
  - 13 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 57 held by one institution only

- Hindi Dialects (3 periodicals)
  - Held throughout

- Kannada (51 periodicals)
  - 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 17 held by one institution only

- Kashmiri (2 periodicals)
  - 2 held by one institution only

- Konkani (9 periodicals)
  - 10 held by one institution only

- Malayalam (37 periodicals)
  - 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog

- Manipuri (1 periodical)
  - Held throughout

- Marathi (52 periodicals)
  - 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 16 held by one institution only

- Multiple Languages (1 periodical)
  - Held throughout

- Nepali (3 periodicals)
  - Held throughout

- Oriya (28 periodicals)
  - 19 held by one institution only

- Panjabi (24 periodicals)
- Persian/Farsi (2 periodicals)
  - Held throughout

- Rajasthani (4 periodicals)
  - Held throughout

- Sanskrit (21 periodicals)
  - 2 held by one institution only

- Sindhi (6 periodicals)
  - Held throughout

- Tamil (48 periodicals)
  - 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 9 held by one institution only

- Telugu (33 periodicals)
  - 12 held by one institution only

- Tibetan (36 periodicals)
  - 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 12 held by one institution only

- Tribal Language (1 periodical)
  - 1 held by one institution only

- Tulu (1 periodical)
  - Held throughout

- Urdu (87 periodicals)
  - 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 14 held by one institution only

**Maldives**
- Divehi (1 periodical)
  - 1 held by one institution only

**Nepal**
- Nepali (58 periodicals)
  - 4 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  - 21 held by one institution only
• Newari (2 periodicals)
  ○ 1 held by one institution only

Pakistan
• Panjabi (6 periodicals)
  ○ 3 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog

• Pashto (11 periodicals)
  ○ 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  ○ 8 held by one institution only

• Persian/Farsi (6 periodicals)
  ○ 1 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  ○ 1 held by one institution only

• Urdu (251 periodicals)
  ○ 27 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  ○ 57 held by one institution only

Sri Lanka
• Sinhalese (37 periodicals)
  ○ 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  ○ 13 held by one institution only

• Tamil (20 periodicals)
  ○ 2 not listed in OCLC or LC catalog
  ○ 9 held by one institution only

Tibetan Autonomous Region of China
• Tibetan (13 periodicals)
  ○ 5 held by one institution only
Findings, Section II
Below are graph representations by country of the collected data. Please note that Bhutan, Burma, and the Maldives are not included below. Currently, these three countries have very few South Asian language periodicals available via LC. Bhutan has 2 periodicals, Burma has 1 periodical, and Maldives has 1 periodical.
India
(946 periodicals)

Nepal
(60 periodicals)
Findings II: South Asia (includes Bhutan, Burma, and Maldives)

South Asia
(1617 periodicals)

- Not Listed online: 47%
- LC only: 21%
- CRL only: 11%
- CRL & LC only: 4%
- Held by One Institution (excludes LC/CRL): 10%
- Other Institutions: 7%
Findings, Section III

Inter-Library Loan data for periodicals is presented below. This is based on a survey circulated among CONSLAD members and is not limited to only South Asian Languages periodicals. Out of 24 members, 14 members responded. The columns represent the survey questions.

Inter-Library Loan Data by Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Will Institution Send A Bound Volume?</th>
<th>Will Institution Send Multiple Bound Volumes?</th>
<th>Item search when Requested Volume Not On Shelf?</th>
<th>Bibliographer Contacted for Non-English materials?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>(up to 4)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>(up to 5)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emory</td>
<td>Y*</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>(up to 150 pgs copied)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-Asian Div (South Asia materials)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers</td>
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<td>BD</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Y*</td>
<td>Y*</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
BD = Bibliographer’s Discretion  
N = No  
Y = Yes  
Y* = Yes w/ limits  
O = Occasionally  
NR = Not Reported
Conclusions

A. Overview

The Findings of Sections I and II demonstrate that we are collecting periodicals in a large variety of languages and from all regions of South Asia. However, the section also demonstrates that this is on an uneven level. Some languages are collected in high numbers, other are collected in low numbers. This could be because the amount of output in these languages is low or it could mean that we are missing some titles being produced. Section I also identifies titles that are held by only one institution: this helps us share information about collection development changes and ensure comprehensive collection among CONSALD. Most importantly, Section II demonstrates that 11% of South Asian language periodicals available via LC are not locatable online in OCLC or LC. This is the case despite institutions subscribing to these titles. This highlights the need for cataloging these titles or uploading the records to OCLC. Another important piece of information from Section II is that CRL and/or LC are the only holding institutions for a full 35% of titles. This has repercussions for collection development activities discussed below. Finally, Section II highlights the fact that 32% of titles are held by only one institution. This means that these items are “at-risk” of being unavailable among CONSALD members if collection development activities or priorities change.

The Findings of Section III demonstrate that there is—in theory—a solid level of infrastructure for distributing bound volumes of periodical titles among CONSALD members. This is obviously crucial for access but it is also crucial for supporting researchers who need to browse relevant items, in the absence of indexing sources. However, some of the limitations on loaning periodicals exist. Most notably, if bound volumes are in storage off-campus or if they are recent volumes, there is a strong possibility that these volumes do not circulate. Perhaps most surprising in this data is that the LC-Asian Division will circulate bound volumes of periodicals from among its South Asia collection. This is significant as LC is often the only holding institution for a periodical title (see Section II) and means that a high percentage of periodical titles will circulate. This has the potential to change collection development decisions across many institutions.

B. Impact on Collection Development

An oft-repeated concern with respect periodicals in South Asian languages (i.e., non-English language periodicals) is that they are simply not used or used at an extremely low rate. This concern is not unfounded. While research works on South Asia by western scholars tend to use South Asian language monographs extensively, this use does not translate into an increased use of South Asian language research periodicals. The reasons for ignoring periodical literature remain unclear, but it has been argued that this is because of the idea of English as the research medium par excellence in South Asia since the time of British Colonialism.  

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Because of this situation and the low cost of these titles, a certain amount of flexibility should be possible for cooperative collection development decisions regarding these periodicals. Some benefits to cooperative collection development are repurposing collection resources for new periodical titles produced in South Asia, lesser known titles, and/or titles in languages less taught or studied. Cooperative collection development would also reduce the possibility that a title subscribed to by one institution would be cancelled and not picked up by another institution.

C. CONSALD Collaboration

A natural home for these discussions will be on the newly designed CONSALD website. This site could host sharing of content pages of periodical titles as well as document which new titles members have subscribed to or list title that members have decided to cancel. The CONSALD website could run dynamic pages from a database; this would be a robust method for sharing these collection development decisions.

In any case, I urge the reader to examine the data set that accompanies this study for identifying additional collection development issues and ideas related to South Asian language periodicals. This report and the data set are hosted by UW-Madison on the cooperative collection website at: http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/SoAsia/cooperation.htm.