

**Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference**  
**"Impact of Culture on Parliamentary Libraries of Asia and the Pacific"**  
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## I. CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

### 1.1 Culture

"Culture involves all the arts, beliefs, characteristics of a community", defined in the Oxford Dictionary.

Niue is an isolated Pacific Island of about 100 square kilometers, hidden away in the corner of the Pacific Ocean therefore Niuean culture and development is somewhat isolated and hidden too.

### 1.2 Overview of the National Culture.

The people of Niue are Polynesians and it believed that Niuean is a race that is originated from Rarotongans, Samoans and Tongans hence the Niuean culture sometimes displays some traits of the above groups. Much can be seen in ways of dancing, language and organisation of special feasts.

However it is a matter of concern at this point and time that the Niuean culture is slowly fading out mainly because the people are adopting Western lifestyles.

Niuean language is one of the main factors that are slowly fading away, much of the young generation of Niueans use very little Niuean language. In schools Niuean language is only used as a teaching mode in the infant level (year 1 – year 3) after that English is the main language used for teaching.

Cultural practices are also fast disappearing, e.g. the making of traditional food – Arrowroot Making.

This is disappearing because the people nowadays are more dependent on processed food.

Traditional food and things like handcrafts are somewhat treated like novelties on Niue.

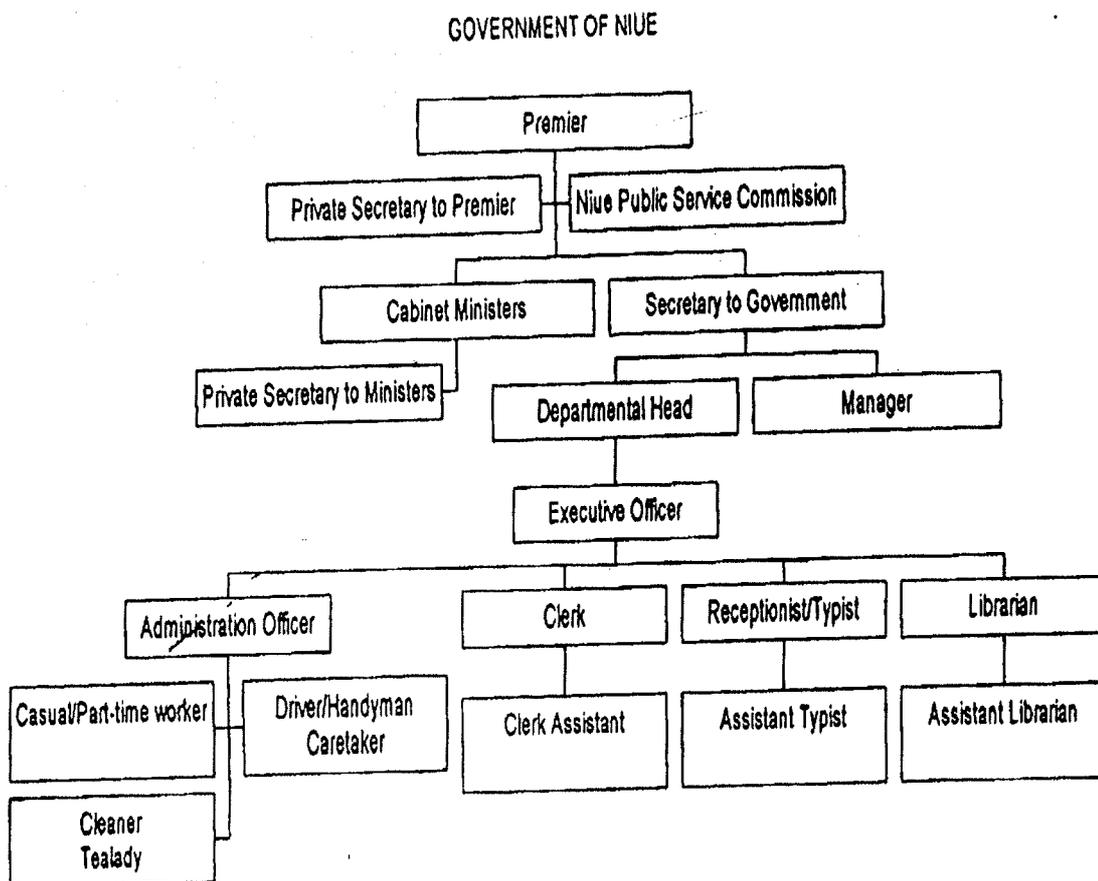
It is very disappointing that this is happening.

### 1.3 Legal Foundations of Culture

Niue is still its initial stage of making constitutional provisions on cultural preservation and development. Much emphasis is on land on issues like customary title to Niuean Land and also alienation of Niuean land.

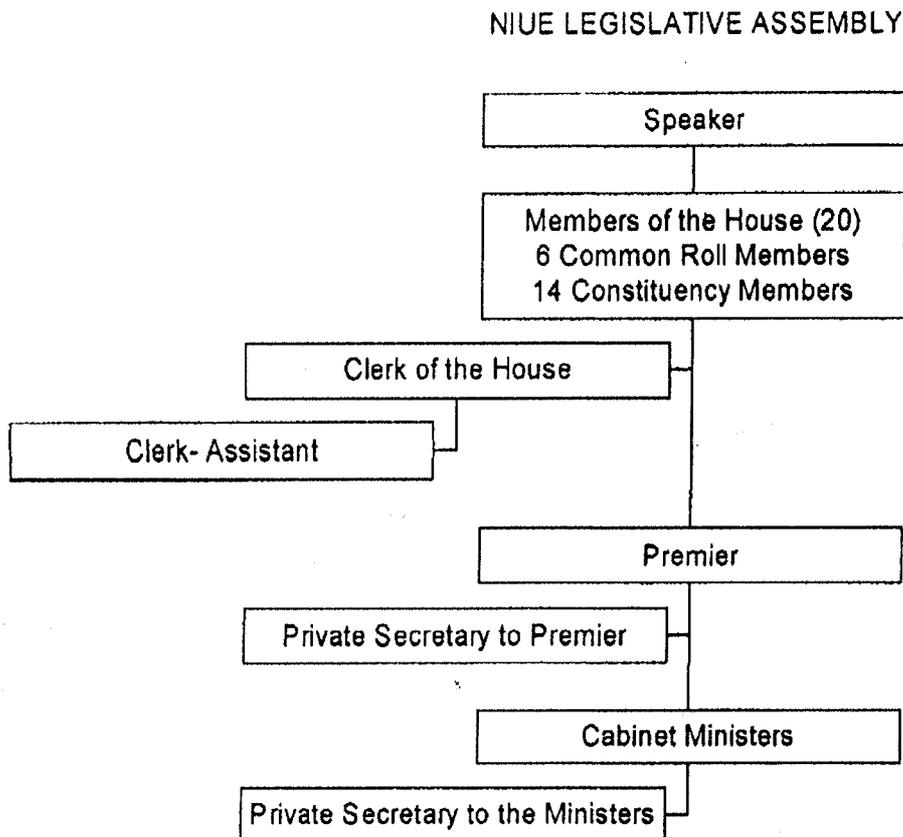
## II. PARLIAMENTARY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Organistational Structure of Government



## 2.2 Organisational Structure of the Secretariat of the Legislature

There are 20 Members in the Niue Legislative Assembly, 4 of these Members are Cabinet Ministers and 6 are Common Roll Members.



### **2.3 The Role of Parliamentary/Library in the Secretariat Vision, Mission and the Objectives of the Library**

The library is one of the important assets in any organisation.

The Niue Legislative Assembly since its opening in 1978 has no library and this is one of the reasons why I wanted to attend this Conference to familiarise myself on the issues concerning libraries, i.e - how to start, manage and maintain a library.

Our Legislative Assembly gets a lot of books, journals, articles and some videotapes and floppy discs from other Parliaments of the world but there is no special place for them. At the moment part of the Public Gallery is used for storing some of the books that could not be fitted in the Speaker's Office.

### **2.4 The Library in the Legislative Process**

In terms of Members having access to reference or information from the library the Niue Legislative Assembly has very limited possibility in providing the Members with a service that is of quality. Being Clerk- Assistant to the Niue Assembly for over two years now meeting the Members requirement for reference materials or providing information for them is rather a frustrating task mainly because there is no library. Trying to locate references dating 6 to 10 years old can be a very hard task. There is an archive but the materials need to be properly labeled and stored.

### **2.5 Role of the Parliamentary Library in Society**

The Parliamentary Library should be opened society under special conditions like the people should make prior arrangements with the librarian stating their specific requirements.

We have had requests from Secondary School Students for some information from our Assembly and we could just hardly manage to provide the students with what they required.

## **III. PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF PARLIAMENTARY/ LIBRARIANS**

Niue has not reached this level but I would prefer that a Parliamentary Librarian should be specially trained to take on the role.

**IV. PRESERVATION OF LEGISLATIVE HERITAGE**

I would like to recommend that Niue should be provided with some advice on this matter.

**V. PROSPECTS**

The only effect of culture on the Parliamentary Library of Niue is that there is limited funding and ideas to start a library in terms of Development plans, programs and projects of the library.

I welcome suggestions/recommendations from other Parliamentary Libraries on Developing a Library.

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