LIBRARY HOUSING AND DOCUMENTATION
STANDARDS

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[Describes the scope of the papers presented to the session of the Bangalore Indian Standards Institution Convention of 1965 on library housing and documentation. States that the dimensions in the Indian Standards on library housing are based on Anthropometric and Bibliometric data and the needs of the psyche of the reader's personality. Appeals to library authorities and architects to respect these standard dimensions and points but that these will not freeze the creative freedom of the architects. The documentation papers concern problems confronting independent India today—the presentation of technical reports made necessary by industrialisation and urge for self-sufficiency, the need for coining technical terms in Indian languages and for establishing standard glossary for diverse subjects, the abbreviation of the titles of periodicals in Indian languages and the problems arising in the establishment of Subject Headings in the Indian languages with the aid of Chain Procedure.]

0 Introduction

Establishment of standards and of their simplification and reduction to as few as possible, have come into vogue during the last hundred years. Country after country has realised the great national economy made possible by standardisation and simplification. Standards can cover not only commodities, but also processes. They can cover not only manual and mechanical processes, but also repetitive mental processes not involving creative work.

1 I S I and Documentation Sectional Committee

India was not one day too late in realising the value of standardisation and simplification. The very year in which we became independent, the Government of India established the Indian Standards Institution. In its very first year, this institution realised the importance of correct communication of thought among the thinkers and workers in the country. Correct communication of thought requires expert documentation. This in its turn requires standardisation and simplification in the production of books and articles, in the production of the catalogues of documents, in their classification, in the mechanical sides of the distribution of documents among the readers, and in the repetitive operations of all kinds in a library. Therefore, in its very first year, the ISI established its Documentation (Sectional) Committee. This Committee had been active all these eighteen years. More than a dozen standards have been formulated and some of them have become the basis for international standards.

2 Library Buildings, Fittings and Furniture Committee

By 1957, the University Grants Commission began to spend large sums of money on the university and college libraries in the country. In 1958, this Commission appointed a Library Committee with me as Chairman to advise it

on library matters.   One of the subjects referred to the Committee was library housing.   This Committee consisted of librarians only.   I felt that this Committee could not do full justice to library buildings, fitting and furniture.   Therefore, with the concurrence of the University Grants Commission, I passed this subject on to the Indian Standards Institution.   This body appointed a Committee on the subject consisting of librarians, architects, engineers, and furniture-makers, with me as Chairman.   It has already established five standards.—1   The basic elements in the design of library buildings, 2   Library fittings and furniture, 3 Vehicle for use of travelling library, 4   Bag for transporting of books, and 5 Special needs of archival libraries.

3 Standards for Library Housing

The standards for library housing are governed essentially by the needs of the Human Personality, Anthropometry, and Bibliometry. It goes without saying that the design of the buildings and the furniture should be fully functional and should be conducive to economy in man-power, materials, space, and time. It is also well known that a building should be designed, so to speak, 'round the fittings and furniture'.   In other words, the overall dimensions of the several rooms in the building should have modular relation with the dimensions of the fittings and furniture to be put in them.   For doing efficient metal work, the field of the psyche of a reader may be taken to be about two and a half square meters.   This psyche-field should be free from the corresponding field of any neighbouring reader.   This is secured by providing for each reader 100 cm length of table space, 70 cm depth for the table, 50 cm depth for the chair, and 50 cm width for the gangways in front of the table and behind the chair.   These are the requirements of the psyche of the reader.   Anthropometry determines the height of the table to be about 75 cm and the height of the seat of the chair to be 45 cm.   Again, the normal height of an adult indicates that the height of a book-rack should not exceed 220 cm.   Further, the width of books indicates that the depth of the book-shelf should not exdeed 23 cm.   Bibliometry gives also indications about the display gallery in the reading tables of the periodicals reading room.   The position of windows and gangways is indicated by considerations of natural light, of avoidance of direct sunlight, and of ventilation.

4 Bangalore Standards Convention

The standards recommended by the Indian Standards Institution have taken all such points into consideration.   They relate only to the dimensions. They do not freeze the freedom of the architect to do his own creative work in the design of the buildings and of the fittings, and furniture. Conformity to the standards fixed by anthropometric and bibliometric factors will not in any way take away the freedom for creative design.   In spite of this, it has been found that these standard dimensions have been violated far beyond the 'limits of tolerance'.   Perhaps this is due to the library authorities and the architects not having a full insight into the anthropometric and bibliometric factors forming

the basis of the recommended standards. Therefore, the 1965 Bangalore Convention has five papers on the subject, in order to make the natural basis of the standard dimensions as widely known as possible. It is hoped that library authorities, librarians, architects, and engineers will take part in the discussion of these papers so that the standards may be respected in future and amended also wherever found necessary.

41 TECHNICAL REPORTS

Industrialisation is putting on full steam since our Independence. We have also begun to realise the need for self-sufficiency, not merely in commodities—be it for Defence or Nation-Building purposes—but also in know-how, in design, and in the pure and industrial research forming their essential basis. This calls for projects of various kinds—trial, pilot, and commercial scale. In order to audit their efficiency, technical reports on such projects are naturally increasing in number. It will lead to great economy in time and mental strain if the presentation of such reports follows an agreed standard. This has nothing to do with the thought-content of the report. If a technical report follows the standard, it will be easy for the top management as well as the design engineer, production engineer, commerical man, and the research worker himself to pick up the exact pieces of information needed at the moment from all the relevant technical reports. To turn thought on this subject, two papers are coming up before the Bangalore Convention.

42 TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY

It is only during recent years that the value of a standard technical terminology is being realised all the world over and that standard glossaries of technical terms are being published in several subject-fields. The Documentation Committee has already two standard glossaries to its credit—one on classification terms and the other on cataloguing terms. Three of the papers for the Bangalore Convention consider standards for the presentation of glossaries.

In India, our languages have begun to revive only in recent years. During the last three centuries of scientific and technological advances,they have not been used as media for expression. Therefore, they are lacking in technical terminology. Since science and technology are international on the one hand and have to permeate among the people of India on the other, we have to devote our thought to the establishment of technical terminology in the Indian languages. These may have to absorb many foreign terms which have become international. These will of course belong to thought of a very deep and learned nature. In ordinary level of thought we have to develop proper terminology in our own languages. In any case this presents a colossal problem. Therefore, three papers to the Bangalore Convention are turned on this subject. Two of these are on the Canons of Terminology to be used as guide-lines in coining terms.

43 ABBREVIATIONS OF THE TITLES OF PERIODICALS

The number of learned periodicals has now crossed the hundred thousand mark. Many of them have long titles. Economy in calling for periodicals and

in printing their names in documentation lists calls for abbreviations of the titles of periodicals.   This work has been in progress at the international level during the last twenty years.   Some general standards have been established.   India has also a standard for titles in the English language.   But learned periodicals are beginning to sprout in the Indian languages themselves.   About five years ago, the Documentation Committee took up the standard abbreviations for their titles.   The Annual Directory of the Registrar of Newspapers formed the basis. It lists several thousands of periodicals.   All the titles in each of the Indian languages have been examined.   The learned periodicals have been sifted out. They are less than a hundred in most of the Indian languages.   However, the grammatical features of the words in Indian titles — particularly the coalescents — are presenting problems not found in the abbreviation of titles in most of the European languages.   The members of the committee on this subject are presenting papers to invite suggestions from the delegates of the Bangalore Convention.

44 ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBJECT HEADINGS

A more technical subject concerns the establishment of Subject Headings or Class Index and Subject Entries in catalogues — their choice, rendering, and style of writing.   One of India's most important contributions in this field is the Chain Procedure.   Its application to deep subjects presents some difficulties. Its application to the Indian languages is receiving investigation for the first time. Experience gained so far in this field is covered by nine of the papers presented to the Bangalore Convention.