

## SYSTEM OF NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARIES

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### 1 Days of Single National Central Library

Two or three centuries ago some of the countries in the West were in the active phase of their life. Each of them naturally wished to have a National Central Library. In those years, the number of printed books accumulated through decades was not very great. Nor was the annual addition very great. Therefore, naturally each country established a single National Central Library to serve all purposes—not only service to readers but also other purposes, such as those enumerated and described in the later sections of this paper.

### 2 Need for a System of Triple National Central Libraries

Today, the annual output of printed books in India is as high as 12,000. The annual output is the highest in the USSR—about 76,000. It is also very high in UK, USA—about 35,000 and 60,000 respectively—and other countries. Further the cumulated number of volumes of the past has gone beyond a few millions in the National Central Libraries of many a country. For example, in the Library of Congress (USA) it is about 60,000,000; in the Lenin Library (U S S R) it is about 25,000,000; in the British Museum Library it is about 9,000,000; and in the Bibliotheque Nationale (France) it is about 7,000,000. In India too it has already reached about three millions. In a library of such huge size, books without any demand will hide away the few thousand books currently in demand. With the result, the library is unable to discharge its essential func-

tion of serving readers. As the first step to get over the difficulty the single National Central Library should be divided into the following three kinds of National Central Libraries:

- 1 National Copyright Library ;
- 2 National Dormitory Library ; and
- 3 National Service Library.

### 3 National Copyright Library

A National Copyright Library will consist of all the books deposited under the Copyright Act and/or the Delivery of Books Act. Its books will not be lent out to any but a court of law. Usually, no book in its collection is given even for consultation within the library premises till the expiry of 10 years of its publication. The purpose of the National Copyright Library is to serve as a collection of the intellectual remains of the Nation and to show the cultural and authorial progress of the Nation. As this library will be ever-growing at the rate of about 25,000 volumes per year, as it is today, it will require an ever-increasing accommodation. It may therefore be located at some distance from Delhi, the Capital City, where land is cheap and available in plenty and to which access is not difficult. If any reader desires to have any books from it, they can be borrowed by the National Service Library.

#### 31 STATE COPYRIGHT LIBRARY

A State Copyright Library also may be maintained and managed on the analogy of the National Copyright Library.

#### 32 DELIVERY OF BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS ACT (1954)

Under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers Act (1954) four sets of copyright collection are to be formed and one of these sets is to be deposited in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, and Madras respectively. The Government of India appointed me as the Chairman of a Committee on the housing of the National Copyright Library in Bombay. I do not know whether any action has been taken on the recommendations of that Committee by the Government of India. However, this gave me an opportunity to study the utility of having four National Copyright Libraries. I found that one was sufficient. The other three appear to have no substantial purpose to serve, more than what a single Copyright Library can. On the contrary, the rate of annual growth demands an annual extension of the stack-room to house about 25,000 additional volumes received each year. This means finding additional building space, fittings, and furniture every year, and what is worse, additional cost every year. The Delivery of Books and Newspapers Act (1954) was a wrongly conceived one. Therefore, the Act may be either repealed or brought into inaction in any other way. Incidentally this would mean that the publishers need not give to the Government, three additional copies of every publication now liable to be demanded under the duress of law.

#### **4 National Dormitory Library**

A National Dormitory Library will consist of one sound copy of each of the books weeded out from any of the libraries in the country—whether public library or academic library or any other library. These books are mostly out-of-date ones. But there is need to preserve them to serve specialist readers engaged in antiquarian and bibliographical research. It is, however, important that the needs of such workers should be fully met. The annual growth of the National Dormitory Library will be very much larger than that of a National Copyright Library. Therefore, in view of this and of poor demand for the books in it, it may be located at some distance from Delhi, the capital city, where land is cheap and available in plenty and to which access is not difficult. If any reader desires to have any books from it, they may be borrowed by the National Service Library.

#### **41 STATE DORMITORY LIBRARY**

A State Dormitory Library also may be maintained and managed on the analogy of the National Dormitory Library.

#### **5 National Service Library**

After making the National Copyright collection and the National Dormitory collection independent libraries, the volumes left over will be those of current value and in fairly frequent demand. This residual National Library of live books will truly become a National Service Library. Its collection may normally be below 300,000 and occasionally it may reach 500,000.

Its outmoded books will be weeded out in the same way as in any other service library in the country. The size of its building will not go beyond certain limit. Indeed its size will be small enough to have it housed in the city of Delhi itself. In fact, it will have to be in the City to facilitate easy approach to its potential readers.

#### **51 STATE SERVICE LIBRARY**

A State Service Library also will be automatically formed on the analogy of the National Service Library.

#### **6 Break-up of the National Service Library into Several National Service Libraries**

The time has already come even for replacing a single National Service Library by a multiple system of National Service Libraries. This subject is discussed in detail in the next article.

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