

SYSTEM OF NATIONAL SERVICE LIBRARIES

S R RANGANATHAN

1 Need for a System of Multiple National Service Libraries

The time has already come when even a National Service Library becomes too large and too unwieldy for efficient service. Therefore, a single National Service Library should be replaced by two or more National Service Libraries, each devoted to restricted subject areas such as, Natural Sciences, Humanities and Generalia, and Social Science. As time goes on, the number in the system of National Service Libraries may have to be increased gradually.

2 System of Multiple National Service Libraries in Denmark

Even as far back as 1948, I found that Denmark was maintaining two National Service Libraries—one for Natural Sciences and the other for all the other subjects.

3 System of Multiple National Service Libraries in U S A

U S A has begun to develop what are virtually National Agricultural Service Library and National Medical Service Library, quite independent of the Library of Congress—the old single National Central Library.

4 System of Multiple National Service Libraries in U K

Even in the conservative U K, as far back as 1956, Dr Urquhart had been endeavouring to have a National Science Service Library. He has now succeeded in his endeavour. He has further demonstrated that this has resulted in some national economy. For, it functions as a National Central Service Library in Science with the functions such as those described in connection with the State Central Library.

5 Unconscious Attempt in India

India entered into library field with some zest only during the last few decades. She was in a state of cultural exhaustion before that. This does not mean that India should wait for a few centuries to have a multiple system of National Service Libraries, as some of the countries in the West did. On the other hand, pressure of fast developing scholarship has already resulted in consciously or unconsciously thinking of independent National Service Libraries for Pure Natural Sciences and for Medical Sciences. The Indian Council of Social Science Research, formed in 1969, is working actively for a National Service Library for Social Sciences.

6 Need for Conscious Attempt in India

The idea should be consciously and deliberately developed by the library

profession, and the authorities should be persuaded to give effect to their finding. As time progresses, similar National Service Libraries for other subject areas may become necessary.

7 Subject Field for the Present National Library

Perhaps the now existing National Library may be made to function as the National Service Library for Humanities and Generalia. In doing this, many of the volumes in its present stock will have to be distributed to the National Dormitory Library and to the National Copyright Library. Of the remaining volumes in current demand, books in subject-fields other than Humanities and Generalia will have to be distributed to the respective National Service Libraries in different fields in Natural and Social Sciences.
