Book Numbers in India with Special Reference to the Author Table for Indian Names Designed and Used by the National Library of India

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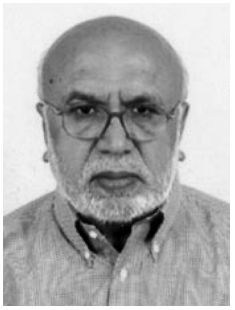

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ABSTRACT: A book number takes shelf arrangement of documents to a point where classification *per se* cannot. Class number alone is not able to uniquely indivdiualise a document on the library shelves. The function of a book number starts from where that of the class number ends. An author number also brings together all the books by one author in one specific subject. A chronological book number will clearly portray the development of a subject over a given period. Book numbers are indispensable for a shelflist. The National Library (NL) of India at Kolkata has a collection of about 3 million documents. For organizing its contents it uses the *DDC* and the shelf arrangement is by Cutter's three figure author table. For Indian names it uses its home-made author table described here. Though the National Library table is designed especially for Indian names across all religions and regional cultures, yet its use outside the National Library has not been reported mostly due lack of marketing. Since 1961 the Indian cultural names have undergone many changes. The need is to revise and update the table to reflect the current culture and new authors across India.

1. The Role of a Book Number

A book number has a very onerous role in shelf classification. It takes shelf arrangement of documents to a point where classification *per se* cannot. Class number alone is not able to uniquely indivdiualise a document on the library shelves. A book number determines the unique relative place of a document in the library store. A library may have say ten books on British India or five general biographies of Mahatma Gandhi by different authors. The question is how to further subarrange different books having exactly the same class number. If these books within the same class are not finely and discretely arranged then the purpose of classification is defeated. We will have pockets of chaos on the shelves. We need a devise to sub-arrange these documents to a logical end. Broader classes may rather require more fine book numbers. This devise of sub-arranging documents having the same specific class number is called book number. A book number may be based on either one or all of the characteristics of a document such as author, title, year of publication, language, form, volume and edition. The function of a book number starts from where that of the class number ends. Book numbers are satellites of class number, so have no independent value.

Though quite indispensable for shelf-listing and book shelving, book numbers have been meted out a step-motherly treatment in the larger house of knowledge organisation. The golden age of book numbers happened in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century--the time of origin and development of the modern library classification. The early 20th century witnessed the emergence of some new systems of book numbers, such as those by the English librarian James Duff Brown (1862-1914), S. R. Ranaganathan (1892-1972), and the American librarian Fremont A. Rider (1885-1962). None of these later systems is popular. The two major rival systems of book numbers are (Satija and Comaromi 1992):

– Alphabetical arrangement by author or title; and,
– Chronological arrangement by year of publication or in the order of accession in the library.

An alphabetical author-marks system perfected by C. A. Cutter was first published in 1892. Later it was expanded to Cutter-Sanborn three-figure author table, and again modified into a three-figure table by Cutter himself. Of all the versions ,Cutter-Sanborn is the most popular. Library of Congress *Classification* (1901+) has popularised this system in its most simplified form as part of its class number. W. S. Biscoe (1853-1933), a close colleague of Melvil Dewey, with his support, designed a chronological table to sub-arrange books by their year of publications. S R Ranganathan took this art to its last perfection in designing a complex chronological book number in his *Colon Classification* in 1933. In practice there are numerous local variations and adaptations of these methods suiting local needs. Following is a list of major book numbering system of the world (Satija 1990):

– Biscoe Time Numbers (1885).
– Cutter-Sanborn Three-Figure Author Table (1896).
– Cutter's Three-Figure Alphabetic Order Table (1901).
– Brown Biographical Numbers(1906).
– Brown Date Table (1906).
– (W. S.) Merrill Book Numbers(1912).
– Dickinson Author Numbers(1916).
– Ranaganathan's Colon Book Numbers(1933).
– Bertha R. Barden's Special Schemes(1937).
– Rider's Book Numbers (1961)

2. Functions of Book Numbers

Book numbers indvidualise a book so that it "may be quickly and accurately placed, called for, found and charged," wrote Melvil Dewey in 1898. Miss Bertha R. Barden (1937) in her enduring study of book numbers has described the following six uses of book numbers which are wonderfully valid to this day:

– To arrange books in order on the shelves.
– To provide a brief and accurate call number for each book.
– To locate a particular book on the shelf.
– Provide a symbol for charging books to borrowers.
– To facilitate the return of books on the shelves.
– To assist in quick identification of a book when inventories are taken. It helps in stock-taking.

In addition to these, an author number also brings together all the books by one author in one specific subject. A chronological book number will clearly portray the development of a subject over a given period. Book numbers are indispensable for a shelflist.

3. Indian systems

The *DDC* was introduced in India by an American librarian Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960) who was appointed librarian of the Punjab university Lahore in 1915. His work inaugurated an era of modern librarianship and classification in India. He devised a special author table to suit Indian names which he included in his famous book *Punjab Library Primer* (1916). It was a sort of special Cutter table, though it still contained European names mostly. This small table with brief author numbers was simple to use. In this table every name was denoted by an alphabet followed by one numeral (in case of I, U,X, Y and Z) and two in other cases (Satija 1990):

Irwin	I7
Ulrich	U2
Abraham	A15
Norman	N74

Padmashri Professor S. Bashiruddin (1902-1984) designed in 1928 various authors' tables for books in Sanskrit, Hindi Urdu, Arabic, Persian and even English for the Aligarh Muslim University library. In

each language table he assigned a value of two digit numerals to each alphabet, e.g., 11 to A, and 36 to Z to construct the author number, e.g.,

Akbar	A21	(K is 21)
Shakespeare	S18	(H is 18)
Sharma	S18	"

Nothing could have been easier or more simple. Perhaps pure alphabetical author numbers of one or more alphabets would work better.

S. R. Ranganathan (1892-1972) designed a complex looking but complete system of book numbers as compared to author tables. This chronological system based centrally on the year of publication includes almost every bibliographic oddity such as language, form, volume, copy and sequel documents. It is effectively able to individualize the documents in a given class. Its main advantage is that it is applicable to documents in any language. Though designed as complement to his Colon numbers, it can be used with minor modifications with any other classification system.

4. The National Library of India

The National Library (NL) of India at Kolkata (earlier capital of India) completed 100 years of its establishment on 30 January 2003. The only *de jure* national library, it now is an autonomous institution established under a 1976 act of the Parliament. Managed by a Board and Executive Council under the Department of Culture, Government of India, a director (usually an eminent scholar) is the executive head. The (National) Librarian supported by a large contingent of professional, technical and ministerial staff works under the Director (Vashisth 1990).

The NL formally started working when the Calcutta Public Library (1836) merged with the Imperial Secretariat Library (serving the Government Departments since 1891) to be founded as the Imperial Library in 1903 by the Lord Curzon (of Kedleston) (1859-1925), then the Governor General of India (1898-1905). After Independence it was renamed and designated National Library of India under the Imperial Library (change of name) Act of 1948. In the same year it was shifted to the present building in a 30 acre campus at Belvedere which earlier was the Viceregal Lodge. The old building which is four kilometers away from the main building now servers as a newspaper reading room. The NL was formally thrown open to the public on 1st February 1953 by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, then Education Minister of India.

4.1 Collection

This, the largest library of India, has a very valuable and rare collection of about 3 million documents of every sort in English, Arabic, Persian, a few European and all Indian languages. It also houses collections of many scholars and has separate subject and linguistic divisions including one on Indology. It legally receives free of charge a copy of each book (and first issue of a periodical publication) published anywhere in the country under the Delivery Books Act (Public Library) (1954). Every year it adds about 20 thousand more publications in every form. It serves as a permanent repository of all reading and information material published in India, or written by an Indian living anywhere in the world or on India published anywhere in any language (www.nlindia.org).

The Library remains open to its 50,000 bonafide members and other citizens for borrowing, reading and consulting books and other documentary heritage. The NL provides wide variety of services to the common public. It is unusual for a public library to lend books for home reading. (But it is considered a vestige of its public library past). It also has a children's section. Apart from many of its published catalogues and other scholarly publications, since 1958 it has had the responsibility of bringing out (now almost defunct) the *Indian National Bibliography* (*INB*). For organizing its contents it uses the *DDC* and the shelf arrangement is by Cutter's three figure author table. For Indian names it uses its home-made author table described here.

4.2 The Author Table of the NL

Cutter's author table is not suitable for Indian names as it was constructed with Anglo-Saxon surnames as the basis. Therefore, the National Library at Kolkata designed and issued in 1961 its author table for Indian authors writing in vernacular languages (India 1961). In design it is based on Cutter's Three Figure Author Table (1902). It is claimed that this table provides distinct author numbers for every author having the same surname but different forenames. Used only for works of authors in Indian languages, the table is based on literary warrant as the real Indian names from different linguistic, cultural and regional groups have been culled from various bibliographies and catalogues. The names have been transliterated into

Roman script by the Hunterian systems, which now seems no more in vogue. Sir William Wilson Hunter, ICS, LLD (Glasgow and Cambridge) (1840-1900) is one of the well known Indologists of the 19th Century. He is known as the author of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* 14 vols. (1885-87), and a history of the British India. He remained Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University (1886) and Vice President of the Royal Asiatic Society. With his writing in lucid style he was a well read writer on Indian matters in England. He is known for representing India in right perspective to the West. He adopted a system of transliteration of vernacular names and words which became famous by his name (Buckland, 1972). Since 1961 the table has not been revised.

Mercifully, diacritical marks have not been used. For example, see the following names:

Modern Name	Hunterian transcriptions
Krishna	Krsn
Nehru	Nehravu
Sharma	Sarma
Das Gupta	Dasa Gupta
Chattopadhyay	Cattopadhyaya
Bannerjee	Vandopadhyay
Bose	Vasu

Sanskritised forms of names have been used though diacritical marks have been avoided. Indian Muslim names are entered under their personal names:

Abdul Gahaffar
Muhummad Masud Siddqui

Some Western Christian names have also been included:

Walker
Waterman
Wilson

Names have been arranged alphabetically in letter-by-letter order. Multiworded names such as Raman Nayar, Dasa Adhikari, Madhva Panikkar have been treated as a single word and listed accordingly. It means Dasa Adhikari will follow Dasa, Y. In the schedule above names are written as one word without space, i.e.:

Dasaadhikari
Madhuapenikker
Ramannayar

Each letter has 729 names except E, F, H, I, L, O, Q, U, W, X, Y and Z as these letters do not have enough Indian names to begin with. These are:

E	11-99
F	11-99
H	111-699
I	111-699
L	111-699
O	11-99
Q	11-99
U	111-499
W	11-99
X	11-99
Y	111-299
Z	11-99

All other alphabets have numbers 111 to 999.On the other hand for the large number of Indian names that begin with letters, A, B, D, G, K, M, P, R and V two schedules of numbers are provided. In case of S there are three such schedules. Table of such schedules is given below:

Letter	*1st Schedule*	*2nd Schedule*	*Pages*
A	A-Ak	Al-Az	1-9; 10-18
B	B-Bg	Bh-Bz	19-27; 28-36
D	D-Dg	Dh-Dz	46-54; 55-63
G	G-Gh	Gi-Gz	66-74; 75-83
K	K-Kg	Kh-Kz	105-113; 114-122
M	M-Md	Me-Mz	129-137; 138-146
P	P-Pd	Pe-Pz	157-165; 166-174
R	R-Ram	Ran-Rz	176-184; 185-193
S	S-Sar	Sas-Sj	194-202; 203-211
		Sk-Sz*	*212-220
V	V-Vd	Ve-Vz	234-242; 243-251

In each of these schedules names are distributed over the numbers 111 to 999. The second or third schedule means names are again distributed over 111 to 999. Some numbers are lying vacant throughout the table.

4.2.1 Structure of the Author Number

In the tri-columned table author numbers obtained are not uniform in structure. Ordinarily an author number is to consist of an initial alphabet of the author's name followed by three Indo-Arabic decimal numerals, e.g.:

Bhargava	B341
Iqbal	I512
Yusuf Husain	Y289

But in the case of E, F, I, Q, W, X and Z each alphabet is followed by two numerals only. For example:

Ekant	E36
Fakhruddin	F48
Wadia	W12
Zarina	Z56

In case of alphabets having two or more schedules the first two letters of the name are to be used preceeding three decimal numerals for the second schedule. For example:

Abbas Ali	A113	(1st Schedule)
Alag	Al113	(2nd Schedule)
Banarasi Lal	B561	(1st Schedule)
Bhau	Bh561	(2nd Schedule)

In case of S there are three such schedules though in both the second and third schedules the first two initial letters are used:

Sabar	S121	1st Schedule
Sastri	Sa121	2nd Schedule
Sobha	So121	3rd Schedule

In the operational manual it has been explained as to which names will begin with two initial letters. But this has not been reminded in the schedules.

It is likely that a classifier may use only one initial letter for the names in second and third schedules without any on the spot reminder. However, for the names falling between the following alphabetical order, the two letters of the alphabets are used: Al-Az, Bh-Bz, Dh-Dz, Gi-Gz, Kh-Kz, Me-Mz, Pe-Pz, Ran-Rz, Sas-Saz and Ve-Vz. For example:

Dilbag	Di536
Phukan	Ph234
Venkataraman	Ve289

4.3 How to Use the Table?

The names are given in letter-by-letter alphabetical order. To assign an author number to a name, look for that name in the schedules. If the name is found exactly then using the prescribed one or two initial alphabet(s) put the numerals against that:

Ekant	E36
Bhagat Singh	Bh148
Nurul Hasan	N984

But it is unlikely that every author's exact name is found in the schedules. No claim has been made, nor can be made for exhaustively listing all the Indian names. Obviously and inevitably post-1960 authors are missing. If the exact name is not found which is more likely, then the earlier upper number in the schedules is used. This is just in accordance with the Cutter method. In such cases locate the two consecutive numbers between which the given name falls. Then use the upper number for the name. For example, the name Fazalelahi falls between:

Fazald	79
Fe	81

Our author number for Fazalelahi will be F79. Similarly, for Shakespeare it will be Sh618 as this name falls between:

Shaikh	S618
Shakil	S619

4.4 Future Expansions

As already stated no such table can be exhaustive of all the names. Apart from giving the upper number to a name not found in the schedules, all numbers can be expanded decimally beyond three digits in case of justified literary warrant. For example:

Modi, M	429
Modi, R	431

For Narender Modi, i.e. Modi, N we can decimally expand 429 to 4292, or to anything between 4291-4299. Hence for Modi, N we have Mo4292. Similarly between:

Kaula, P	778
Kaula, P R	779

Kaula, P N can be given the author number K7782. As another classic provision, there are frequent gaps here and there for expansions, e.g.:

\LAKSMIRATAN, B	416
	417
	418
	419
LAKSMIS	421

But as it happens the gaps are not where the schedule is already crammed.

4.5 Book Numbers

Strictly speaking, an author number is only a part of the book number. This Table provides guidelines for using the author number in making a book number by adding the initial word of the title, after the author number:

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*	Sh 618H
Tulasidas' *Ramayna*	T933R

Not only this, it provides guidelines for keeping together the various translations of a publication, keeping together the various commentaries of a classic; and also the various biographies of a person.

4.6 Translations

For a translation the name of the original writer is used for the author number, while initial of the translator's name is used after the title, e.g.:

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* translated by Harivansh Rai Bachan	Sh618 HB
Hamlet, translation by Nanaji Deshmukh	Sh618HD

It thus keeps together all the translations of a given work.

4.7 Biographies

It keeps together all the biographies of a luminary written by different authors. The biographee's name is used to construct the author number. An initial of the author's name is used after the author number:

Biography of J L Nehru by B R Nanda	N762N
Biography of J L Nehru by M J Akbar	N762A

4.8 Commentaries

Critical commentaries of a book can be kept together by letter Z put after the initial of the title of the book. Initial letter of the title may be followed by the initial letter of the commentator's name.

Tulsi Das' *Ramayana*	T933R
A commentary on Tulsi Das' *Ramayana*	T933RZ

Z may be further individualized by the name of the critic or commentator, e.g.:

M R Anands' commentary on Tulsidas' *Ramanyana*:	T933RZA
Rajagopalachari's commentary on Tulsidas' *Ramayana*	T933RZR

In this way all the commentaries on Tulsidas' *Ramayana* will come together and get arranged alphabetically by the commentator.

4.9 Arrangement of Author Numbers

Since some names use two initial letters, and some use only one, therefore, to keep them in the desired order, an alphabet has been given higher ordinal value than a numerical digit. For example:

Saligram	S391
Satapathi	Sa155
Sohan Singh	So135

These names will be arranged in the above order. Similarly, if a number is expanded beyond three digits it will file before the work number, e.g., the following two author numbers.

K7782
K778L

will file in the above sequence as 2 has less ordinal value than L.

5. Conclusion

The table is modeled on the Cutter and Cutter-Sanborn tables which are quite popular in India

along with the *DDC* which is a highly used classification system, despite Ranganathan's scientific and Indian System. In fact, once, India was the largest user of the *DDC* in Asia. Though the National Library table is designed especially for Indian names across all religions and regional cultures, yet its use outside the National Library has not been reported mostly due lack of marketing. Since 1961 the Indian cultural names have undergone many changes. The need is to revise and update the table to reflect the current culture and new authors across India.

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