



Ranganathan and Classification: A Chronology 1924-1992

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Based on a number of sources given in the introduction the dates of Ranganathan's development in the field of library classification are given together with a short description of their impact and significance. The chronology which has been structured according to some periods of his life determined mostly by location lists also the relevant publications of Ranganathan and mentions some post mortem events. (I.C.)

0. Introduction. Purpose and Sources

The purpose of this chronology is to catalogue Ranganathan's achievements in the discipline of library classification, and consequently to trace the evolution of his thoughts in this area. The chronology was compiled on the basis of several sources: (1) on general chronologies, especially the one by Kate Wood in *S.R.Ranganathan, 1892-1972*, ed. by Edward Dudley, London: Library Assoc. 1973, and the one by P.N. Kaula appended to *S.R.Ranganathan's Autobiography: A librarian looks back*. New Delhi: ABC 1992; (2) on Ranganathan's own books, especially those reviewed in M.P. Satiya: A note on Ranganathan's reprints. Int. Classif. 17(1990)No.3-4, p.182-183; and (3) on M.A. Gopinath's article on *Ranganathan, Shiyali Ramamrita* in the Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, ed. by Allen Kent et al., New York: Marcel Dekker 1978. Vo.25, p.58-86.

1. The Teacher of Mathematics Becomes a Librarian. Madras 1924-1944

Jan. 1924: Ranganathan joins as librarian of the Madras University.

1924-1925: Studies at the School of Librarianship, University College, London. W.C.B. Sayers (1881-1960) taught him classification.

1924: Idea of a faceted classification conceived to cope with the inadequacies of a classification after using the DDC-11 (1922).

Dec. 1924: The Colon Classification (CC) conceived, and its design begun.

2. Experimenting with the CC

1925-1932: Period of development, experimentation and application of CC.

Febr/Mar. 1925: Ranganathan prepared sample sche-

Int. Classif. 19(1992)No.1

Satiya: Ranganathan Chronology

dules for different facets and experimented with synthesized class numbers. He also classed the library of the ship *SS Dumana* on his way back from England to India; and also assigned class numbers to about 30,000 books listed in the printed catalogue of the Madras University Library which he had with him.

1926-1932: CC applied to about 60,000 books of the Madras University Library (MUL). Open access was introduced in the library and reaction of the library users was noted while doing reference service to them.

1927: The first formal schedules of different main classes completed. Ranganathan consulted the experts such as Professor Edward B. Ross for general layout, mathematics and general science, Prof. M. S. Sabestan in Botany, Dr. B. B. Dey in Chemistry, Prof. S. Kuppuswamy Sastriar for Indology and Sir Sivaswamy Ayyar and Sir S. Vardachariar in Law.

1929: The School of Library Science of the Madras Library Association (MALA, established in 1928) was set up. The school taught both the CC and the DDC. Strong features of the CC over the DDC were highlighted. The teaching also provided an opportunity for an academic exposition of CC and its critical evaluation.

1931: Ranganathan incorporated into the CC new findings gained by observing the readers and the suggestions put forth by them. The schedules were recast or readjusted wherever necessary in the light of experience gained.

1931-1944: Head of Library School, University of Madras.

1932: A press copy of the CC was finished with the help of library colleagues who volunteered to help Ranganathan at his residence.

1933: *Colon Classification*, 1st ed. Madras: Madras Library Association. 3 parts in 1 volume.

3. Toward a Theory of Library Classification

1933-1937: Period of formulating the theory of library classification.

1935: Henry Evelyn Bliss (1870-1955) writes to Ranganathan and enquires about the theory behind his Colon Classification (1933). Ranganathan starts writing the explicit theory of his Colon Classification.

1937: *Prolegomena to Library Classification*, 1st ed. Madras: Madras Library Association. XVI, 305p.

This book enshrines the theory of classification in

general and of the CC in particular. The book transformed classification from an art into a science. It is considered Ranganathan's *magnum opus*.

1934-1944: Comparative study and teaching of DDC and CC; CC applied to about 4000 micro documents (non-book documents like journal articles) and pamphlets.

1939: *Colon Classification*, 2nd ed. Madras: MALA. 154+180+149p. The book contained many new ideas and listed about 3000 elaborated examples. The book was vetted against the norms formulated in *Prolegomena* (1937). And in turn the Canons and principles got refined while preparing the 2nd ed. of the CC.

1944: The concepts of 'phase', 'facet', 'focus' and the Five Fundamental Categories (FFC) were formulated. Ranganathan also hit on the concept of 'Three planes of work in classification: Idea Plane, Verbal Plane, and Notational Plane'.

The first attempt to examine the mode of development of the universe of subjects was made.

During the Sixth All India Library Conference (1944: Jaipur) a symposium named "Decimal and Colon Classification in Perspective" was organized. About a dozen papers were presented on the comparative study of the CC and the DDC. The merits of the CC were highlighted.

Dec.1944: Ranganathan delivered the Extension Lectures on classification which were printed in 1945 as the famous *Elements of Library Classification* (1945).

Library Classification: Fundamentals and Procedure, with 1008 graded examples and exercises. Madras: MALA 496p.

This book was epoch making: It brought to surface several unsolved problems needing fundamental research. It presented a refined account of facet analysis and gave also some inkling of the postulate of the Five Fundamental Categories.

4. University Librarian and Professor of Library Science at BHU

Aug.1945-June 1947: Ranganathan worked in Banaras Hindu University for about 20 months as librarian and professor of library science. As this university library had a different kind of collection than the one at Madras, the work turned out as an educative experience of considerable professional value. The BHU library presented many classification problems at depth level. Ranganathan classified a promiscuous collection of 100,000 books single handed in about 18 months. He reported in *Prolegomena*, 2nd ed., Sect.774: "Continuous work at such high pressure on such a variety of materials gave a remarkable insight into the structure and development of the universe of knowledge. It impressed upon me the versatility needed in notation. This was indeed an unusual and unexpected experience of immense richness."

1945: *Elements of Library Classification*. 1st ed. Poona: N.K.Publ.House. 112p. (cf: Bombay University Lectures, 1944).

5. 1947-1955 Professor of Library Science at the University of Delhi

June 1947-1955: On the invitation of Sir Maurice Gwyer, Ranganathan joined the University of Delhi as Professor in Library Science. The Department instituted Diploma, (now B.Lib.I.Sc.), Degree (now M.Lib.I.Sc.), and Ph.D. in Library Science - the later two degrees for the first time in the entire British Commonwealth. The Delhi School provided him the opportunity to continue teaching the CC and the UDC.

The concepts of 'Rounds', 'Levels', and 'Zones' were formulated and the concept of 'Fundamental Categories' was further refined.

Oct.1947: Invitation from F.Donker Duyvis, Secretary FID to attend the FID Conference and to prepare a paper on Classification and International Documentation.

1947-1958: Work on abstract classification, and symbolic metalanguage for precision in classification and attraction to depth classification.

1948: Founding of the Library Research Circle at Delhi. This informal group used to meet at Ranganathan's residence C-6, Maurice Nagar, University of Delhi on every Sunday afternoon. The group used to discuss practical problems of every sort, especially on library classification. Considerable work was done by this group and the subsequent findings were presented in the All India Library Conferences in 1951 at Indore and in 1953 at Hyderabad.

Also in 1948, Ranganathan visited the UK for the first time after 1924 and the USA. He met many important people such as Julian Huxley, then the Director of Unesco and Head, All Souls College, as well as representatives of the Carnegie Trust and the Rockefeller Foundation. This helped to discover new directions in classification.

1948: "...the rigidity imposed by the facet formula given under each main subject of the CC was discovered, and the concept of 'optional facets' evolved". (M.A.Gopinath)

1948: Classification and International Documentation, 24p. (FID Publ.No.227)

1949-1953: A tripartite journal, "Annals", "Bulletin", and "Granthalya" of the ILA (Indian Library Association) (in short: ABGILA) was edited by Ranganathan. In ABGILA many important articles and new findings in classification were published.

April 1950: Consultant to Unesco for the preparation of a document on the place of machinery in literature search and the subsequent publication of *Classification, Coding and Machinery for Search*. Paris: Unesco. 58p. (UNESCO/NS/SL3).

July 1950: Golden Jubilee Address to the Classification and Cataloguing Division of the American Library Association, Cleveland, Ohio.

1951-1961: Ranganathan worked as Rapporteur General of the Classification Committee of the Fed. Int. de Doc. (FID/CA). He regularly drafted its reports chalking out the progress made in the preceding year.

1951: General Theory of Classification. FID/CA Report No.1,16p.

Classification and Communication. Delhi: University of Delhi. 291p.

Philosophy of Library Classification. Copenhagen: Munksgaard. 132p.

Public Library System and Documentation Problems. Papers presented at 9th All India Library Conference (Indore, 1951). Delhi: Indian Library Association. 223p. The conference also discussed issues relating to classification especially those conceptualized in the deliberations of the Library Research Circle.

1951: Chatterjee, A.N.: *A Review of Literature in Colon Classification.* ABGILA 2(1951)No.6, p.167-172. An almost exhaustive bibliography of the CC enlisting all references from 1924 to 1950.

1951: Palmer, B.I., Wells, A.J.: *Fundamentals of Library Classification.* London: Allen and Unwin. 114p. The first whole length interpretation of Ranganathan's theories in classification in the West. The book introduced Ranganathan to the world outside India and won him many admirers and adherents.

1952-1957: Work of classification separated into three planes of work. This theory was initially stated in Ranganathan's article "Optional Facets in Library Classification(9). *Annals of Indian Library Association* 2(1952) Sect.720.

1952: Principle of inversion discovered and incorporated in the 4th edition of the CC (1952).

1952: *Colon Classification*, 4th ed. Madras: MALA. 4 parts in 1 volume. 127 + 155 + 50 + 149 p. This edition introduced many new concepts in the idea plane and techniques in the notational plane. Important among them are: 'Five Fundamental Categories', 'Rounds' and 'Levels'. Introduction of three more connecting symbols, viz., (Comma for Personality), ; (Semi Colon for Matter), . (dot for Space and Time) and : (Colon), exclusively reserved for the Energy Category. This step broke the rigidity of the facet formula and simplified the CC Class Number to a great extent. The concept of 'Anteriorising' and 'Posteriorising Common Isolates' was also introduced, as well as the concept of Partially Comprehensive Main Classes' denoted by letters of the Greek alphabet.

1953: *Depth Classification, Reference Service, and Reference Material:* Papers for discussion at the 10th All India Library Conference, Hyderabad 1953. Delhi: ILA. 444p. (edited by Ranganathan)

1954: *General Theory of Classification:* FID/CA Report No.4. Copenhagen: FID 1954. Also published in *Annals of Libr.Sci.* 1(1954)po.65-80.

1954: *Annals of Library Science.* Ranganathan was founder editor of this scholarly journal. It is published quarterly by INSDOC, New Delhi and continues under the name *Annals of Library Science and Information*. It published many eminent papers on classification by Ranganathan and his schoolmen. (See M.P.Satija: Ranganathan in the Fleet Street. *Herald of Library Science* 24(1985)No.3, p.166-173)

6. Ranganathan two Years in Europe (1955-1957)

1955-1956: Ranganathan stayed in Zürich, Switzerland. Some important European librarians came to consult him to prepare schedules for special classifications, e.g. D.J.Foskett for "Occupational Health", and D.W.Langridge for "Management".

1955: D.B.Krishna Rao (d.1985) completed his Ph.D.dissertation on the depth schedules of agriculture under the supervision of Dr.S.R.Ranganathan and S.DasGupta (1912-1966).

"Common Isolates in Documentation Work 1: Terminology and Anteriorising Isolates. (FID/CA Report No.4 on General Theory of Classification). *Review of Documentation* 22(1955)p.18-25

"Zones in Array: FID/CA Report No.5 on General Theory of Classification". *Annals of Library Science* 2(1955)No.1, p.33-39.

Mixed notation and Zones in an Array: FID/CA Report No.5 on General Theory of Classification. The Hague: FID. 14p.

Classification Research Group (London): The need for a faceted classification as the basis of all methods of information retrieval. (UNESCO IAC. Doc. Ter. Pas. Memo 320/5515); also published in *Library Association Record* 57(1955)p.262-268.

1956-1960: Postulational approach formulated. Principles of Facet Sequence discovered.

Separation of problems needing fundamental research from those needing routine investigations in building up schedules for common energy matter and personality isolates.

1956: Common Isolates in Documentation Work (2): Anteriorising Isolates: FID/CA Report No.4 on General Theory of Classification. *Review of Documentation* 23(1956)p.43-48

Common Isolates in Documentation Work (3): Time Isolates. (FID/CA Report No.4 on General Theory of Classification. *Rev. of Documentation* 23(1956)p.70-79

General Theory of Classification: Zone Analysis and Efficiency Tables. The Hague: FID. 18p.

1957: The International Study Conference on Classification Research in 1957(Dorking, England) provided a forum to discuss his theories on classification with a large and varied group of experts working in various disciplines. In 1957, the "age of faceted classification" was declared.

The conference conveners stated: "This conference will be a development of all of Dr.Ranganathan's work in the last 20 years, and it will be a means of spreading interest in his work and appreciation of it." Ranganathan delivered the opening address. Facet analysis was accepted as the basis of classification.

The recognition inspired Ranganathan to continue his work to meet the challenges of documentation for information in industry and advanced research.

1957: *Colon Classification*, 5th ed. Madras: MALA. Vol.1. Basic Classification. 148 + 179 + 136p. *Prolegomena to Library Classification*, 2nd ed. London: The Library Association. 487p.

Explicitly stated the idea of semantically empty digits and the Sectorizing Device for hospitality in array. This concept existed in a rudimentary form in the 2nd edition of the CC already (1939).

1957: *Classification of Commodities and Services*: 7th Report FID/CA on the General Theory of Classification. The Hague: FID. 4p.

Common Isolates in Documentation Work (4): Space Isolates. FID/CA Report No.4 on General Theory of Classification. *Rev. of Documentation* 24(1957)p.18-28

7. Years of Lecture Tours and various Visiting Professorships (1957-1961)

1958: *Classification of Environmented Entity*: FID/CA Report No.8 on General Theory of Classification. *Annals of Library Science* 5(1958)p.113-121 and *Review of Documentation* 25(1958)p.122-127, also published as a report by FID, The Hague, 6p.

1958: the idea of Absolute Syntax of facets mooted at the Conference on "Retrieval of Scientific Information" (Washington).

1959: The indicator digit for [T] changed to " " inverted comma at the suggestion of P.B.Roy of Calcutta. *Classification and Retrieval: Problems for Pursuit*. FID/CA Report No.9 on the General Theory of Classification. The Hague: FID. 13p. Also published in *Annals of Library Science* 6(1959)p.33-43

1960: *Common Property Isolates (1)*. FID/CA Report No.10 on the General Theory of Classification. New Delhi: INSDOC. 14p.

Colon Classification, 6th ed. Bombay: Asia. 3 parts in 1. 124 + 172 + 126 p.

Elements of Library Classification. 2nd Indian ed. Bombay: Asia. 108p.

Vickery, B.C.: *Faceted Classification: A guide to Construction & Use of Special Schemes*. London: Aslib. 70p.

1961: *Facet Sequence and Telescoping in the Schedule*. FID/CA Report No.11 on the General Theory of Classification.

8. Founding a Residence for CC in Bangalore (1962-)

1962: Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC) established at Bangalore as a unit of the Indian Statistical Institute Calcutta. DRTC is a unique institute of library and documentation research and teaching. It provided Ranganathan an opportunity for formal and institutionalized team research. DRTC work is as fundamental as it is famous. Here, the development of depth schedules for various subjects began to take shape. *Elements of Library Classification*, 3rd ed. Bombay: Asia. 168p.

1963: The guided design of Depth Schedules begins at DRTC.

1963: Greek letters for new main classes and partial comprehensions were replaced by the digit pairs formed with the help of emptying digits.

Colon Classification, 6th ed., reprinted with amendments. Bombay: Asia. 3 parts in 1 vol. 28+124+172+126p

1964: Ranganathan served as chairman of the International Study Conference on Classification Research held in Sept.1964 in Elsinore, Denmark.

Classification Research 1957-1963: Trend Report. Copenhagen: Danish Centre for Documentation, 11p.

Library Scienc with a Slant to Documentation.

A quarterly journal founded and edited by Ranganathan, and sponsored by the Sarada Ranganathan Endowment in Library Science. During his last years, it was almost an exclusive vehicle of his ideas and papers. The journal is still known for its rigorous standards. It published many depth schedules of the CC. It has now been renamed: *Library Science with a Slant to Information*.

1964: Period of Applied Research and Development

1965: *Colon Classification*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 300 p. (Rutgers Series on the Systems for the Intellectual Organization of Information, edited by Susan Artandi).

1967: *A Descriptive Account of the Colon Classification*. Bombay: Asia. 300p. (Earlier published in the USA under the title "Colon Classification".)

Prolegomena to Library Classification, 3rd ed. Assisted by M.A.Gopinath. Bombay: Asia. 640p.

1971: *Colon Classification, 7th ed: A Purview*. Bangalore: Sarada Ranganathan Endowment. 52p.

1972: *Library Classification: Evolution of a Dynamic Theory*. Delhi: Vikas. 222p. (by R.S.Parkhi, but completed by S.R.Ranganathan).

Sept.1972: Ranganathan died on 27th Sept.1972 at Bangalore after a brief illness.

9. Post Mortem Events

Impact of Growth in the Universe of Subjects on Classification. FID/CR Report No.12. Copenhagen: Danish Center for Documentation, p.1-20 (Published as a Ranganathan Memorial Publication).

1985: International Conference on "Ranganathan's Philosophy: Assessment and Relevance", organized by ILA and others in Nov.1985 at New Delhi.

1987: *Colon Classification*, 7th ed. Edited by M.A.Gopinath. Vol.1: Basic and depth version. Bangalore: Sarada Ranganathan Endowment, XIV, 332p.

1991-1992: The Ranganathan Birth Centenary celebrations take place in many countries of the world.

Aug.1992: 2nd International ISKO Conference to be held in Madras, as "the grand finale for commemorating the birth centenary" (Suseela Kumar).

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Int. Classif. 19(1992)No.1
Satija: Ranganathan Chronology