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Use of Colon Classification

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Investigations on the use of the Colon Classification (CC) have not as yet been undertaken in a systematic way. In the article statistics on the use of the CC are given, based on some directories as well as other studies in a limited area (New Delhi and Rajasthan). The numbers obtained indicate that apparently the use of CC in India has been overestimated so far in the literature. It is suggested to include information on the classification system used in a library when compiling a new edition of the directory of Indian libraries. Concludingly the enormous value of the CC as a model by its realization of sound theoretical classification principles is pointed out.

I.C.

*"If anyone criticises the choice of Colon....,
I am prepared to argue with him." D.W.Langridge*

1. Controversial Views on the CC

There does not seem to exist any source from which a quantitative measure of the actual use of the Colon Classification (CC) today could be obtained. And to create such a source would not be an easy enterprise. Also, the quantum of the popularity of CC is elusive. Although it is world reknown as being the first and so far the only model of any analytico-synthetic general classification, there are many who have not seen the actual embodiment of this model, far from knowing, how it works. On the other hand, it is for many the only saviour of the dwindling ship of bibliographic classification, whereas for others it is regarded as a failure. There are librarians in India who have adopted the scheme as a religious and patriotic duty; while there are others who have avowed to defame the scheme by all means, although it seems at the same time that they do not understand it at all. There are people who commend the scheme but hesitate to apply it; while there are others who apply the scheme but do not recommend it. It is apparently a scheme for which librarians have more personal likes and dislikes than for any other scheme. In such clouded circumstances it is rather difficult to determine the extent of true use of the CC. This is indeed a vacuum in our library literature (1).

The CC is a relatively new scheme in many aspects: it is new in time and in methods. Very soon after its first publication, the scheme became already famous because of its revolutionary methods. Some of these methods (devices) have been used successfully in the meantime to rectify the defects and to improve the working of some of the already existing schemes such as DDC and UDC. The 2nd edition of the Bliss Classification owes also considerably to the CC. Special schemes based on the CC are quite numerous. As a model its use is increasing. Not only this, the classification theory pro-

pounded by Ranganathan has become synonymous with the general theory of classification as it was resolved at Dorking in 1957, about three decades ago. Enumerative classifications have become shibboleths of an outdated past. It seems now quite certain that the bibliographic schemes of the future will be analytico-synthetic in method. Also, from the theory of CC, subject indexing languages have emerged in the form of faceted thesauri (such as Thesaurofacet, Classaurus) as well as subject indexing systems such as Chain Indexing, PRECIS, POPSI. Thus Ranganathan's methods play a crucial role today in the organization of knowledge and consequently in its effective retrieval and usage.

The rudiments of the scheme are taught in most library schools the world over. In the U.S. where classification theory as a discipline of study, has always remained at a low ebb, Alan R. Thomas discovered that the CC is taught in 52% of the accredited schools there (2). In India it is taught in detail at every level of library science education. Research on CC is also undertaken in India, mostly at the Documentation and Research and Training Centre (DRTC) in Bangalore.

Some research in this area has also been done under the aegis of the Classification Research Group (CRG) in London and of FID/CR, especially under the chairmanship of Ranganathan (1951-1960). Considerable work was also done in India by the members of the Delhi Library Research Circle from 1951-1955 under the leadership of Ranganathan. Besides this, occasional research and publications on CC from 1970-1984 have been studied elsewhere (1, p.133-142).

Yet, this visible evidence in the use of the CC does not match at all its apparently not too numerous citation cases. Undoubtedly, it is a scheme more talked about than applied. One feels quite apt to quote Eric de Grolier who "noted last year (1975) that true to the dictum that no one is a prophet in his own country, the CC is hardly used in India itself..." (3). This is a somewhat exaggerated but undeniable and unenviable position of the CC. The etiology of such a deplorable state of matters has already been probed into and is commonly known (4, 5).

2. Sources for Studies on the Use of the CC

In India, no survey has so far been conducted like that of the DDC in USA and Canada by John P. Comaromi and his team (6); or like the DDC survey by Sarah K. Vann and Pauline A. Seely (7); or the survey on DDC in Great Britain by Keith Davison (8); or of the type which K.G.B. Bakewell used in Great Britain (9). Yet some limited studies, one by P. Dhyani (10) and another one by Krishan Kumar and S.D. Vyas (11) were conducted, especially of Delhi libraries. There is no latest directory of libraries in India from where the use of the CC may be construed. Unfortunately, the latest directory of the Indian Library Association does not give information on the type of classification used by the 1610 libraries included (12). (For any future edition it is recommended to add such an information for the benefit of the users!) Nor has the DRTC, heir to Ranganathan's regime maintained any register of libraries using the CC. Despite the fact that this very topic has been a theme of an IASLIC Seminar in 1967, the statistics on its use still remain quite hazy (13).

Conflicting claims have been asserted regarding the use of the CC in libraries. A quasi-official statement on the use of the CC has been attributed to M.A.Gopinath. I.Dahlberg, at present Chairperson of FID/CR, wrote in 1977: "According to Gopinath (1976) the CC 6th edition has been used in about 2500 libraries in India mostly in public libraries, but also in nearly 20 university, 200 special and 1000 college libraries" (14). This estimate is not based on any disclosed or documented source. No survey was ever conducted for this purpose. J.Mills does not seem to be far wrong in his opinion that the CC is used in "very few libraries" (15). This view has been challenged by N.K.Trivedi and M.K.Yadav, who claim that its use is "promising" (16). Dhanpat Rai states that the scheme has been scarcely used because of many inherent faults (17). P.N.Kaula hits the point in saying that the scheme was not taught in Indian universities in the earlier stages, so the elderly generation of the librarians lacked the know-how to apply this scheme. Hence the low use (18).

Only because Ranganathan had always been endeavouring to keep pace with the advancing frontier of knowledge, editions after editions appeared of the CC. However, more editions do not mean more utility and more demand of the book: the majority of the customers are library science schools making bulk purchases. There are only a few students who possess their individual copy. On the contrary, it has given an excuse for some librarians not to use it: "...there is a law in library classification which suggests that any degree of change in a scheme should be inversely proportionate to its degree of use and no widely accepted system can afford to recast its basic frame work", writes Arthur Maltby (5, p.136-137). In other words, in order to achieve popularity, integrity of concepts and their representations is a pre-requisite. In practice, Ranganathan seems to have paid a scant respect to this principle.

3. Some Statistics Based on the Sources

There are some sources from where the use of the CC may be inferred. For example, there are two library directories. One such source is a directory compiled by Ranganathan and others in 1951 (19). It lists 363 libraries; their classification schemes are as follows:

Scheme	No.of libraries using it	%
DDC	139	38.30
CC	31	8.50
UDC	7	2.00
Brown'ss SC	1	0.25
Cutter'ss EC	1	0.25
Other Methods	135	37.20
not known	45	13.50
Total	363	100.00

The fact that only 31 or 8.5% of 363 libraries use the CC constitutes certainly a small proportion. A further split (by kind) of these 31 libraries may be useful:

Academic	17	54.9%
Special	11	35.5%
Public	3	9.6%
	31	100.0%

This means that CC is used predominantly in academic libraries; it is used least by public libraries. The

list of libraries using CC at that time (1951) is given in Appendix I.

In 1962 a directory of special libraries was published by IASLIC, Calcutta (20). It lists 173 libraries out of which 23 were using CC. The complete split is as follows:

Scheme used	No.of libraries	%
DDC	76	43.9
UDC	35	20.2
CC	23	13.3
Brown's SC	1	0.6
Bliss BC	1	0.6
LCC	1	0.6
Self made	18	10.4
Not clear	1	0.6
No response	17	9.8
Total	172	100.0

This means that 13.3% of the research libraries were using CC in India in 1962. Apparently, it seems that over the course of a decade (1951-1962) the use of CC has increased by 4% in Indian libraries. As the later survey confines only to special libraries, so the 4% increase is not a real one. Yet the CC did improve its position with the coming of younger librarians. However, this also supports the belief that the CC is more attuned to the needs of special libraries. The list of libraries using CC according to this directory is given in Appendix II.

Another source is a directory of libraries in Delhi published in 1973 (21). Out of 332 libraries listed therein, only 35 (10.5%) are using CC (Appendix VI). The total picture is as follows:

Scheme used	No.of libraries	%
DDC	90	27.1
CC	35	10.5
UDC	32	9.9
Self made	11	3.2
Not known/no scheme used	164	49.3
Total	332	100.0

Another important source to infer the extent of the use of CC is a survey of the use of classification systems in India by Pushpa Dhyani (10 and 22). For her doctoral research (1982/83) she surveyed the use of classification schemes in Indian libraries with special reference to Delhi and Rajasthan. A select list of libraries is given in Appendix V. She found that of a total of 251 libraries surveyed 69 (27.5%) are using CC. The total picture is given as follows:

Kind of Scheme	No.of libraries	%
DDC	131	52.0
CC	69	27.5
UDC	30	12.0
LCC	2	0.8
Special Schemes	11	4.5
No schemes	8	3.2
Total	251	100.0

This is the highest use of CC ever reported. Below are her findings by kinds of libraries:

Kinds of libraries	Number	Number using CC	%
Academic	97	42	43.4
Special	126	22	17.5
Public	28	5	17.9
Total	251	69	

Of the 69 libraries using CC, a further split by kind of library is shown below:

	Number of libraries	%	% in rel. to 251 libr.
Academic	42	61	16.7
Special	22	32	8.8
Public	5	7	2.0

This confirms the findings of the first survey (1951) that the academic libraries are among the foremost users of the CC: 42 out of 97 academic libraries making 43.4% - a fairly high use. It is, however, doubted that this percentage is representative of all Indian academic libraries.

It may further be useful to study the data from the regional angle:

Region	Total No. of libr.	Libr. using CC	Regional %	% in rel. to 251 libr.
Delhi	130	21	16.1	8.4
Rajasthan	58	29	50.0	11.6
Other parts of India	63	19	30.2	7.5
Total	251	69		27.5

From the above table, it is obvious that the CC is quite popular in Rajasthan where 50% of the libraries are using it.

Another such survey including only Delhi University College Libraries was conducted by Krishan Kumar and S.D.Vyas in 1978 (11). Here, out of 66 colleges, 17 (26%) are using CC. It is worth noting that out of these, 16 libraries are using CC-6 and only one is using CC-5. It shows the late adoption of the scheme by the librarians, many of them might be direct students of Ranganathan. This may be seen in light of the following facts:

- Ranganathan had stayed in Delhi from 1947 to 1951 and wielded a considerable influence there
- The Department of Library and Information Science of the Delhi University gives high weightage to Colon Classification and the Classified Catalogue Code in its curriculum
- The University of Delhi Library System also uses the Colon Classification

Indeed, 26% use in Delhi University College libraries is no reason for an optimistic view. Nevertheless, it may be felt as a consolation to learn of the finding that 18 (27.7%) out of 65 (one did not respond) admitted that they would use CC for a new library (11, p.64). Most of the librarians also pleaded for keeping CC upto date (11, p.62). The list of Delhi Colleges using CC is given in Appendix III.

M.A.Gopinath has been quoted as stating that nearly 20 university libraries use CC. To the best of our efforts only 17 such university libraries could be listed out of 150 institutions deemed to be universities (Appendix IV).

This is a comparatively low figure, especially in the light of Ranganathan's indelible influence on Indian university libraries. The figure is also low in view of the

fact that Ranganathan had personal relations with most of the university librarians.

There are only three foreign libraries using the CC: two in England and one in Africa (23). Christ's College, University of Cambridge is using it as it has a strong Oriental collection. Another one is the library of Metal Box Co.Ltd., London which has constructed its specialised schedules approved by Ranganathan. The only African library using CC is the Library of the College of Agriculture Khartoum, Sudan. D.W.Langridge also reports of its application in UK to information files (23).

Besides its use as a shelf classification, CC numbers are given in every entry of the Indian National Bibliography, though its arrangement is by DDC. CC is also used to arrange entries in Indian Library Science Abstracts, (Q; 1967+) published by IASLIC, and in the Herald of Library Science, (Q; 1962+).

4. Future Use of the CC

It is difficult to forecast the future use of the CC. The survival and propagation of the CC definitely depends upon its new edition and some institutional backing as well. In the present stalemate some sections of influential professionals have started challenging the necessity of teaching the Colon Classification in library schools. If this opinion should prevail, it would lead to unfortunate developments, not only for Indian librarianship but for all scholars of classification.

Understanding the principle of CC will enormously facilitate and improve the understanding of other schemes. D.W.Langridge writes: "Previous knowledge of CC can be of great assistance in understanding the faults and in compensating for the deficiencies. In any case, these schemes (DDC, LCC and UDC) cannot be used to best effect without a proper theoretical understanding and this can best be acquired from the concrete model of Colon" (24, p.600-601). Despite its bleak prospects of bodily survival, CC in spirit will continue to command respect and form the basis of further research in classification. The Prolegomena have still the substance needed so badly today. To close

the argument one cannot do better than to quote John Metcalfe, Ranganathan's confirmed "bete noir", who writes: "Bliss stands or falls by library use of his BC for shelf arrangement and classified catalogue. But in Ranganathan there seems to have been for the first time a man whose fame and success in information retrieval ... is not identified with particular classification, even though he produced one" (25).

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Appendix I: List of libraries using CC in 1951

1. Agricultural College & Research Institute Library, Bangalore.
2. Agricultural College Library, Bapatla.
3. Air Headquarters Technical & Reference Library, New Delhi
4. Central Board of Revenue Library, New Delhi.
5. Deccan College and Postgraduate Institute of Research Library, Poona.
6. Delhi University Library
7. Ethiraj College Library Royapattah (TN)
8. Govt. College Library, Kumbakonam.
9. Gujarat Vidyapith Granthalaya, Ahmedabad.
10. Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad.
11. Hindu College Library, Guntur
12. Holy Cross College, Trichinopoly.
13. Madras University Library.
14. Maharashtra Granthalaya, Poona.
15. M.E. Society's College of Arts and Science Library, Poona.
16. Mysore Educational Library, Bangalore.
17. Nizam College Library, Hyderabad.
18. Nowrosjee Wadia College Library, Poona.
19. Poona University Library.
20. Ramakrishna Centenary Library, Madras.
21. R.A. Podar College of Commerce and Economics Library, Matunga.
22. Ratan Tata Library, Delhi
23. Salem College Library, Salem
24. Saraswata Niketanam, Vetapalem (TN)
25. Servants of India Society Library, Poona
26. Sher-e-Kashmir Library, Srinagar
27. S.R.R. & C.V.R. College Library, Darjeeling
28. St. Christopher's Training College Library, Madras
29. Teachers College Library, Madras
30. Technical and Industrial Institute of Lord Resy Maharashtra Industrial, Museum, Poona
31. Vivekananda College Library, Madras.

Appendix II: Special Libraries using CC (1962)

1. Alagappa College Library Karaikudi-3, Dt. Ramanathapuram
2. Annamalai University Library, Annamalai Nagar
3. Antibiotics Research Centre Library Hindustan Antibiotics (P) Ltd.
4. Armed Forces Medical College Library, Poona

5. Bai Jerbai Wadia Library, Fergusson College, Poona
6. Central Food Technological Research Institute Library, Cheluvamba Mansion, Mysore
7. Central Research Institute Library, Kasauli
8. Central Salt Research Institute Library, P.O.B.No.38, Waghawadi Road, Bhavnagar
9. Commercial Library & Reading Room, Dept. of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, 1, Council House Street, Calcutta
10. Deccan College Research Institute Library, Poona
11. Delhi University Library
12. Film Library, Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Krishi Bhavan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-2
13. Harcourt Butler Technological Institute Library, Kanpur
14. Indian Council of World Affairs Library, Sapru House, New Delhi-1.
15. Karnatak University Library
16. Kerala University Library, Trivandrum
17. Kurukshetra University Library, Kurukshetra
18. Madras University Library
19. Miller Memorial Library, Madras Christian College
20. Ministry of Finance, Dept. of Revenue Library
21. Ministry of Labour & Employment Library, Central Secretariat, New Delhi
22. Poona University Library, University of Poona, Ganeshkhind, Poona
23. Sanskrit College Library, College Street, Calcutta

Appendix III: List of Delhi University Colleges using CC

1. Indraprastha College for Women
2. Miranda House for Women
3. Delhi School of Social Work
4. Lady Shri Ram College for Women
5. Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya
6. Sri Venkateswara College
7. Moti Lal Nehru College
8. Kamla Nehru College
9. Laxmi Bai College
10. Bhagat Singh College
11. Maitery College
12. Mata Sundri College
13. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee College
14. Vivekanand Mahila College
15. Bharti Mahila College
16. Satyawati College

Appendix IV: List of Indian Universities using CC

1. University of Kerala, Trivandrum, Kerala
2. University of Calicut, Tenhipalam, Kerala
3. Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar
4. Karnatak University Dharwad, Karnataka
5. University of Mysore, Karnataka
6. University of Madras, Madras, Tamil Nadu
7. Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu
8. University of Poona, Pune, Maharashtra
9. Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P. (now changed over to DDC)
10. Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, U.P.
11. University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan
12. University of Udaipur, Udaipur
13. University of Delhi, Delhi
14. Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi (along with UDC)
15. Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab
16. Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana
17. University of Jodhpur, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Appendix V: List of some other important libraries using CC

A DELHI

1. Administrative Reform Commission Library, New Delhi
2. Ministry of Labour and Employment Library, Central Secretariat, New Delhi
3. Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis Library, New Delhi
4. Indian Institute of Mass Communication Library, New Delhi
5. Gandhi Peace Foundation Library, New Delhi
6. Rattan Tata Library, Delhi
7. Indian Council of Historical Research Library, New Delhi
8. Indian Institute of Technology Library, Delhi

B RAJASTHAN

9. N.B.N.Engineering College Library, Jodhpur
10. Malviya Engineering College, Jaipur
11. Veterinary and Animal Science College Library, Kaladera
12. Rameshwar Lal Saharia College Library, Kaladera
13. S.K.Govt.P.G.College, Sikar
14. Seth Moti Lal College Library, Jhunjhunu

C OTHER PARTS OF INDIA

15. Karnataka State Central Library
16. Connemara Public Library, Madras
17. Romain Rolland Public Library, Pondicherry
18. National Aeronautical Laboratory Library, Bangalore
19. Indian Institute of Science Library, Bangalore

Appendix VI: Some other libraries of Delhi using CC

1. A & U Tibbia College Library
2. Agricultural Economic Research Centre Library (1956)
3. Bharati Mahila College Library (1971)
4. Central Inst.of Res.& Training in Public Cooper.Library
5. Delhi University Library (1922)
6. Department of Administrative Reforms Library (1964)
7. Department of Labour and Employment Library (1917)
8. Food Corporation of India Library (1965)

9. Gandhi National Museum Library (1949)
10. Gandhi Peace Foundation Library (1969)
11. Gargi College Library (1967)
12. Indian Adult Education Association (Jha Library) (1957)
13. Indian Council for Africa Library (1959)
14. Indian Council for World Affairs Library (1944)
15. Indian Institute of Mass Communication Library (1965)
16. Indraprastha College for Women Library (1965)
17. Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis Library (1965)
18. Institute of Economic Growth Library (1958)
19. Jawahar Lal Nehru University Library (1970)
20. Law Commission Library (1955)
21. Maitrey College Library (1967)
22. Ministry of Law and Justice Library (1937)
23. Miranda House Library (1948)
24. Modern College for Women Library (1964)
25. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1965)
26. Office of the Registrar General of India Library (1954)
27. Patriot Newspaper Library (1963)
28. Press Institute of India Library (1963)
29. Rajdhani College Library (1964)
30. Ratan Tata Library (1949)
31. Sri Shankar Lal Institute of Music Library (1969)
32. School of International Studies (1955)
33. Shyama Prasad Mukherji College Library (1969)
34. Sri Venkateswara College Library (1961)
35. Vivekanand Mahila College Library (1970).

International Congress on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering

The newly founded "Association for Terminology and Knowledge Engineering" in cooperation with the Commission of the European Communities, the University of Trier, and Infoterm is organizing - under the auspices of UNESCO - an international Congress from Sept.29 -Oct.1, 1987 in Trier.

A pamphlet on this Congress was distributed by Infoterm, Vienna, in June 1986 with a Call for Papers. The purpose of this Congress is outlined as follows: "to provide a forum for presentation and discussion of basic terminological tools and techniques which can be fruitfully applied to knowledge engineering. It will bring together researchers and practitioners of diverse disciplines such as terminology science, information science including classification theory and information, linguistics as well as artificial intelligence research and software engineering in order to consider and discuss the influence that knowledge representation and terminology work can have on problem-solving effectiveness and communication efficiency by combining efforts and giving mutual support. If the findings of terminology, machine translation, artificial intelligence, and informatics are not combined in practice, the problems of compatibility will increase in number and severity and jeopardize the further development of workable expert systems which offer a whole range of services for the specialist starting from document retrieval and translation and leading to conceptual clarification and fact finding." The Congress will be supplemented by an exhibition. Program inquiries and suggestions should be submitted to: International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm), Postfach 130, A-1021 Vienna.

Micro-Computers without Classification?

The Second International Conference on the Application of Micro-Computers in Information, Documentation and Libraries took place from March 17-21, 1986 in Baden-Baden, FRG. Some 350 participants from 53 countries discussed 101 papers organized in 15 sessions. There was no paper which considered the application of classification methods with the use of micro-computers.

From the three papers on expert systems, of which abstracts had been handed in, only the following one was held: "KOFIS: An expert system for information retrieval in offices" by H.-J.Appelrath, M.Ester, H.Jaspers, and A.Ultsch from the ETH Zürich, Department of Computer Science.

Thesaurus Database now available

According to an "assignment" by the Commission of European Communities (CEG), the GID (Gesellschaft für Information und Dokumentation), Frankfurt/Main established a database of thesauri which are existing in at least one of the official languages of the CEG. Therefore thesauri are included especially from France, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. However, the thesauri from USA and Canada are also represented to a large extent. Besides this, the database contains a collection of English and French language thesauri from the whole world.

In December 1985, the database contained altogether 1009 thesaurus descriptions of which 498 are extensive and 511 only short ones. Exactly 141 thesauri are available in multi-lingual form, 441 in English, 226 in German, and 180 in French.

The printed version "Thesaurus Guide" has subject indexes in three languages (German, French and English) as well as indexes to institutions and persons.

The following access possibilities exist:

1. THESAURUS GUIDE. Analytical Directory of Selected Vocabularies for Information Retrieval, 1985. Amsterdam: North Holland 1985. XXXVI + 748 p., ISBN 0-444-87736-3 74.- dollars or 200.- Dfl.
2. Database THESAURI. ECHO - European Commission Host Organization. Customer Service, 177, route d'Esch, L-1471 Luxembourg. Tel.: 352488041, Telex: 2181
3. Thesaurus Collection. Library of the GID-Information Center. Lyoner Str. 44-48, D-6000 Frankfurt 71, Tel.: 069-6687-374

For any other information, please contact: Dr. Alfred Gerstenkorn, GID, Herriostr. 5, D-6000 Frankfurt 71, Tel.: 069-6687-299.