90TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF
S R RANGANATHAN — A REPORT

To pay tributes to the memory of late S.R. Ranganathan on his ninetieth birth anniversary, a meeting of Delhi librarians was organised jointly by four library associations, viz., the Indian Library Association (ILA), Indian Association for Special Libraries and Information Centres (IASLIC), Indian Association of Academic Libraries (INDAAL) and Delhi Library Association (DLA). The meeting was held at the CSIR auditorium on 11th August 1982 and was presided over by Professor Rais Ahmed, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission. Mrs Sheila Kaul, Honourable Minister for Education and Culture was the Chief Guest and Professor D S Kothari, Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, was the main speaker. More than 150 librarians in the capital attended the meeting.

In his address of welcome, Shri T S Raja-gopalan, Vice-President of DLA, mentioned that free public library service is an essential component in the development of a nation. Ranganathan worked for this cause throughout his life. He mentioned the importance given by the Government for library development. Delhi Library Association, he mentioned, has decided to name its building as Ranganathan Bhavan.

While paying tribute on behalf of the ILA, Prof P B Mangla, its president, recalled the association of Dr Ranganathan with ILA. He was the founder member and president during the years 1948-53, which, Prof Mangla described as the golden period of ILA. He also highlighted the contribution of S R Ranganathan in the international field. Recapitulating the many-fold activities of Ranganathan during his 50 years of association with the library field, Prof Mangla called him a true Karmayogi and a doyen among librarians. Prof Mangla also suggested
the constitution of a national commission, on
the lines of the US National Commission, to
recommend proper library service and to evolve
a national policy of library and information
services.

The next speaker was Shri B Guha, Vice-
President, IASLIC, who recalled, briefly, S R
Ranganathan’s association with IASLIC and the
library profession in general. In this context,
Shri Guha mentioned that Ranganathan’s proli-
fic writings not only enriched library literature,
but, what is equally important, he helped and
encouraged many young librarians to write and
communicate in an articulate manner. Shri Guha
said, “In his writings, Ranganathan was very
fond of making a point by giving his arguments
in the form of an imagery dialogue between
the librarian or a law or canon of library science
with a reader or an administrator or even the
education minister... In those days, the educa-
tion minister was, naturally, an imaginary person.
Today, we are indeed happy to have this real
dialogue with our Education Minister and also
two prominent educationists of our country”.

Prof D S Kothari, Chancellor of the Jawahar-
lal Nehru University, paid handsome tributes
by recalling his association with Ranganathan
at the Delhi University. He said, he was very
much impressed by Ranganathan’s great dedi-
cation, scholarship, and readiness to learn things.
He was a source of inspiration to many. Prof.
Kothari, then went on to elaborate the impor-
tance of library and information services in a
knowledge based society and suggested a num-
ber of new and useful indicators to measure
the performance of our academic libraries in
particular and other libraries in general.

Smt Sheila Kaul, the Education Minister,
then delivered her address. She said, “...if
librarians feel today that they belong to a
distinct profession and they too have an impor-
tant role to play in the enrichment of the
quality of our social life, it is largely due to the
pioneering work of persons like Dr Ranga-
than”. After mentioning some of the activities
and contributions of Ranganathan, the Educa-
tion Minister said that public library service in
the context of our country should mean dis-
semination of useful information from books
and other sources of information to our illiterate
farmers, artisans and others, in a form which
will be acceptable and profitable to them.
The library profession has to prepare itself to
provide a service of this nature. Professional
associations and the library schools have to give
a serious thought to this aspect on which will
depend the success of the public library move-
ment. The Minister concluded by saying that
she hoped the librarians would always be
inspired by the example of high standards of
scholarship, devotion to an ideal, courage and
perseverance set by Dr Ranganathan.

Prof Rais Ahmed, in his presidential address,
said that Ranganathan was truly a creative
person. Some of the methods of teaching and
learning, about which we have been talking only
recently, were being actually practiced by him
long back. Prof Ahmed also recalled Rangana-
than’s association with the UGC, and said, he
always worked for augmenting and helping
libraries wherever it was possible to do so.

Shri M I Ansari, President of INDAAL,
proposed a vote of thanks to the Honourable
Minister, Prof D S Kothari, Prof Rais Ahmed
and the guests on behalf of the sponsoring
associations.